

# New guidelines employ a team approach to autism diagnosis and care

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Improving diagnosis and treatment for individuals with autism has been the focus of a growing body of research. New information from these studies led the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry to revise key parameters for evaluating and treating autism. Researchers led by Yale Child Study Center director Dr. Fred Volkmar have published the new practice parameters in the Feb. issue of the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*.

"Early diagnosis of children with autism spectrum disorders means treatments will be introduced that lead to more positive outcomes for children," said Volkmar the Irving B. Harris Professor of Psychiatry, Pediatrics, and Psychology at the Yale School of Medicine.

According to the [parameters](#), clinicians should routinely look for symptoms of [autism spectrum disorder](#) in young children undergoing developmental assessments, and in all psychiatric evaluations. If significant symptoms are detected, clinicians should then coordinate a careful medical, psychological, and communication evaluation. These evaluations should differentiate between autism and a variety of developmental and other disorders, as well as intellectual and behavioral disabilities.

"Our goal was advocacy for individuals with autism and their families, and to ensure that services are coordinated across clinical care," said Volkmar. "Our field is changing rapidly, and these parameters are meant to promote effective care and move professional medical methods closer



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