

# 2021 National Assessment of Pediatric Readiness of U.S. Emergency Departments During the COVID-19 Pandemic<sup>1</sup>

If all EDs were pediatric ready, at least 1,400 children's lives could be saved each year.<sup>2</sup>

In 2021, the National Pediatric Readiness Project – led by the federal Emergency Medical Services for Children Program<sup>3</sup> in partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American College of Emergency Physicians, and the Emergency Nurses Association – assessed EDs' pediatric capabilities according to the latest national guidelines. The results were published in *JAMA Network Open* in July 2023.

## About Responding EDs

**3,647**

EDs responded of 5,150 surveyed. 3,557 were used for analysis.

**81%**

treat fewer than 10 children each day.

**98%**

are not within a pediatric-specific hospital (i.e., they see adults and children).

**MEDIAN SCORE: 69.5** OUT OF **100**

## Improved Pediatric Readiness

Scores improved in five of six domains since the last assessment in 2013.<sup>4</sup> Examples of improvements include:

**97%**

of recommended pediatric equipment is present in EDs on average.

↑ up from 89% ↑

**75%**

of EDs weigh and record in kilograms to prevent medication errors.

↑ up from 49% ↑

**73%**

of EDs have a pediatric mental health care policy.

↑ up from 44% ↑

**67%**

of EDs have a policy for physicians' pediatric competency evaluations.

↑ up from 39% ↑

**50%**

of EDs have pediatric quality improvement plans.

↑ up from 45% ↑

## A Key Concern



The presence of pediatric emergency care coordinators (PECCs)—key drivers of readiness—declined, likely due to staffing shortages tied to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**29%** of EDs have both a physician and nurse PECC.

↓ down from 42% ↓

## How EDs Can Improve Readiness



A score of **at least 88** is associated with significantly improved survival.<sup>1,5</sup> Three components of readiness have the largest impact:

1. Designating PECCs – ideally both a physician and a nurse
2. Implementing pediatric-specific quality improvement plans
3. Ensuring staff includes physicians board-certified in emergency medicine or pediatric emergency medicine



Learn about pediatric readiness or access resources at [pediatricreadiness.org](https://pediatricreadiness.org).

Take the assessment at [pedsready.org](https://pedsready.org).

1. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2807059>  
2. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2800400>  
3. The program is part of the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau.  
4. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/fullarticle/2214165>  
5. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31444254/>