

Pediatricians have a role in encouraging play among children

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(HealthDay)—Pediatricians should encourage parents to ensure their

children play, according to a clinical report published in the September issue of *Pediatrics*.

Michael Yogman, M.D., from Harvard University and Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, Mass., and colleagues address the role of pediatricians in encouraging developmentally appropriate play with [parents](#) and peers, which is a unique opportunity to promote the social-emotional, cognitive, language, and [self-regulation skills](#) that build executive function and a prosocial brain.

The authors note that cultural shifts, including less parent engagement, fewer safe places to play, and more digital distractions, have limited the opportunities for [children](#) to play. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that pediatricians encourage parents to observe and respond to [nonverbal behavior](#) of infants during their first few months of life; advocate for protection of children's unstructured playtime; advocate with preschool educators to focus on playful rather than didactic learning by letting children take the lead and follow their curiosity; emphasize the importance of playful learning in preschool curricula; and encourage playful learning for parents and infants by writing a "prescription for play" at every well-child visit in the first two years of life.

"At a time when early childhood programs are pressured to add more didactic components and less playful learning, pediatricians can play an important role in emphasizing the role of a balanced curriculum that includes the importance of playful learning for the promotion of healthy child development," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text](#)

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