

Pathologizing Childhood, Cultural Ails And Shaming Top Year's Most Popular Pediatric Stories



By *Jamie Wells, M.D.* — December 28, 2018



Credit: Pixabay [1]

Ideology, not medical reality, and activism have infected much of modern parenting these days. From misguided, often well-intended activism surrounding how to feed an infant, mom-shaming and vaccines, cultural divides are more polarized than ever and don't need to be. Building resilience, focusing on raising independent, well-adjusted adults and appreciating the bigger picture have taken a back seat to intensive, overscheduled and fear-driven parenting. Responses to attempting to shift the pendulum from such extremes have been to use extremes, like legislation to allow kids to participate in independent activities to formal prescriptions by pediatricians to increase play time.

Such trends and more were the most read of my 2018 pieces on pediatrics and parenting:

1. [The Steady Demise Of Pediatrics](#) [2]
 - The good, the bad and the ugly of the trend of truncating pediatric care through regionalization and consolidation (eg surging inter-hospital transfer rates for common conditions due to declining capabilities).
2. [Hey CDC, Please Stop Pathologizing Infancy](#) [3]
 - When it comes to infant feeding, recent survey data from the Centers for Disease Control does more to add to the guideline burden than benefit a baby – let alone the parent.
- 3.

[The WSJ Helps Pathologize Infancy](#) ^[4]

- It is normal for a baby to be difficult to get to sleep, which is clearly exhausting for new parents. But, expensive "sleep consultants" aren't the answer. Creating solutions to manufactured "problems" sells services by pathologizing childhood (see [here](#) ^[5]) - all the while exploiting parental fears.

4. [Will Humans Be Able To Procreate In Space? NASA Studying Prospect](#) ^[6]

- Since we know little about reproductive biology in space, it's important to realize that even on Earth fertilization is not as simple as a sperm meeting an egg. If the thought of conceiving there or the potential of one day giving birth on the moon or other galaxy seem unimaginable and far-fetched notions, then think again. NASA is already studying the possibility.

5. [Our Culture Is Sick](#) ^[7]

- Pretty much everyone is behaving badly in the public sphere as politics is infecting everything. "Johnny made me do it" was not an acceptable argument in childhood, so why would it be now? With non-stop attacks on people and the accompanying perverse justifications and rationalization, clamors of "we need to protect children" and so forth fall demonstrably short. Why? Because the kicker with children is, they mimic what they see.

6. [Another Year, Another Failed Breastfeeding Policy Push By WHO, UNICEF](#) ^[8]

- When ideology not medical reasoning guides infant feeding policy, nobody wins.

7. ['Mom-Shaming' Got So Bad, Not Doing So Had To Become Official Policy](#) ^[9]

- The negative impact of "at-all-costs" breastfeeding campaigns, the political zeal of "lactivism" and societal pressures have done a proven disservice to women and families. So much so that formal health policy had to be changed.

8. [Are Breastfeeding Messages Actually Hurting Mothers?](#) ^[10]

- Though well-intentioned, "breast only" messages are routinely misguided. And even intellectually dishonest.

9. [Neighbors Calling Cops On Kid Selling Cookies Speaks To Bigger Societal Ail](#) ^[11]

- Due to the daily coarsening of civil discourse on social media, routine conflict resolution has gone out the window. If that is all kids see, then that is all they learn for their future.

10. [It Is A Sad Day When Pediatricians Need To Prescribe 'Play Time'](#) ^[12]

- When the American Academy of Pediatrics has to issue a report for pediatricians to write a "prescription for play" at every well-visit, our culture is in crisis.

11. [A Shifting Parenting Paradigm?](#) ^[13]

- Not unlike most trends, when the pendulum swings to an extreme, the overcorrection

follows it. It's resulted in parenting by guidelines and legislation, which misses the big picture.

12. [Don't Wish Away The Good Stuff In Parenting](#) ^[14]
 - Rushing through the seemingly mundane aspects of childhood might not be playing the long game.
13. [Is Refusal To Treat Vaccine-Hesitant Families The Sanders-Red Hen Of Medical Practice?](#) ^[15]
 - If the goal is guaranteeing the safety of children, as well as protecting the general population from infectious diseases, then why is the act of shaming playing any role in vaccine compliance?
14. [The Forgotten Children Of The Opioid Epidemic](#) ^[16]
 - With the opioid epidemic occupying center stage in media and political arenas, what's gone largely overlooked is that pediatric opioid-related hospitalizations, warranting the highest level of intensive care unit admission, doubled between 2004 and 2015.
15. [Are We Really At A Point Where A Child Walking To School Requires Legislation?](#) ^[17]
 - Considered a win for free-range parenting, a new Utah law that went into effect in May modifies the definition of child neglect. It allows kids "of sufficient age and maturity ...to engage in independent activities." But what does it mean that such an action had to be taken in the first place?
16. [In Divorce, Nobody Wins When Hatred For An Ex Trumps Love For A Child](#) ^[18]
 - When bitter custody battles hit the front page (e.g. the mom recently jailed for secretly baptizing her daughter), it is mostly the child who suffers.
17. [Thank You, FDA! This Action Against OTC Anesthetics For Babies Is Overdue](#) ^[19]
 - Society often pathologizes normal development, now more than ever. When this is done, a medicine must be made for treatment (needed or not). The FDA called out a group of over-the-counter drugs for being harmful and without benefit putting infants at most risk.
18. [Red Gerard's Olympic Lessons On Adolescence And Resilience](#) ^[20]
 - He oversleeps, can't find his jacket and still wins gold at the Olympics. The tale of 17-year-old Red Gerard's victory has lessons for us all.

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