

## 5 Proven Benefits Of Play

September 05, 2018

It may be a new school year, yet I come to sing the praises of trampolines and bubble-blowing, pillow forts and peekaboo, Monopoly and Marco Polo.

A [new paper](#) in the journal *Pediatrics* summarizes the evidence for letting kids let loose. “Play is not frivolous,” the paper insists, twice. “It is brain building.” The authors — Michael Yogman, Andrew Garner, Jeffrey Hutchinson, Kathy Hirsh-Pasek and Roberta Michnick Golinkoff — ask pediatricians to take an active role by writing a “prescription for play” for their young patients in the first two years of life.

“Play is disappearing,” says Hirsh-Pasek, a developmental psychologist who is a professor at Temple University and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. By targeting doctors, she explains, the paper hopes to build on the success of a literacy initiative called Reach Out and Read. That program reaches nearly 5 million children annually by giving out children’s books at [doctor visits](#). “You have an opportunity there” to change behavior, she says.

Prescribing play for kids? Really?