

# Playtime May Bolster Kids' Mental Health

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“Play has become a four-letter word.”

So says [Kathy Hirsh-Pasek](#), a psychologist at Temple University and one of the authors of a new paper about the importance of play in children's lives. The [clinical report](#), published by the American Academy of Pediatrics, recommends that pediatricians write a “prescription for play” at doctor visits in the first two years of life. Years of research have shown that play is an important part of a child's development, assisting in cognition, memory, social skills, and, to a lesser extent, maybe even mental health. Yet, according to the paper, children in the United States play less, and have less free time, than in decades past.