



Research Update



Survey shows most pediatricians find work rewarding but some are frustrated

from [AAP Research](#)

Over the past decade, early and midcareer pediatricians have reported strong levels of satisfaction with their chosen profession. Nearly nine in 10 pediatricians participating in the AAP Pediatrician Life and Career Experience Study (PLACES) agree their work is personally rewarding.

Career satisfaction is made up of many components that may change over time. These trends were examined in a new study, drawing on the unique strength of PLACES to follow the same pediatricians over their careers (Frintner MP, et al. *Pediatrics*. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2021-055146>).

In the study, two important components of satisfaction were examined over nine years — whether pediatricians feel their work is personally rewarding and how frustrated they are with work. The study also looked at factors that lead to more or less satisfaction at work.

From 2012-'20, which included the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, pediatricians consistently agreed their work is personally rewarding (see table). In 2019 and 2020, nearly four in 10 pediatricians reported they were frustrated with their work situation.

RESOURCES

- For more information on the AAP Pediatrician Life and Career Experience Study, visit <https://www.aap.org/places> or contact Liz Gottschlich at 630-626-6627 or lgottschlich@aap.org.
- The AAP Section on Early Career Physicians provides training, resources and support for early career physicians who are within 10 years of their residency or fellowship training. For information, visit <https://www.aap.org/soecp> or contact Britt Nagy at 630-626-6064 or bnagy@aap.org.

Changes in work characteristics and pediatrician satisfaction, 2012-'20

Work satisfaction

- 86% of pediatricians in 2012 and 2020 strongly agreed or agreed their work is personally rewarding.
- 26% of pediatricians in 2012 strongly agreed or agreed they were frustrated with their current work situation, increasing to 35% in 2019 and 37% in 2020.

Factors likely to lead to increased satisfaction

- Increased flexibility with work schedule
- Increased personal support from colleagues
- Increased time with patients during visits

Factors likely to lead to decreased satisfaction

- Increased stress balancing work and personal responsibilities
- Increased work hours

Source: Frintner MP, et al. *Pediatrics*. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2021-055146>

Pediatricians reporting increases in flexibility with work hours and support from colleagues across study years had the highest increases in overall career satisfaction. Pediatricians reporting increased stress due to difficulties balancing work and personal responsibilities showed decreases in reported satisfaction.

PLACES tracks pediatricians' career and life choices and experiences across their careers. This study of satisfaction trends included 1,794 pediatricians who graduated residency in 2009-'11 and 2002-'04 and practice primary, hospital or subspecialty care. The commitment among pediatricians participating in PLACES has been strong, with eight in 10 completing the survey each year.