

# PEDIATRICS

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Call for Submissions: *Pediatrics* SOPT Monthly Feature

2024 Essay Competition: “Launch into Health Literacy”

To the Pediatric Trainee Community:

Health literacy is a fundamental element of pediatric care, and pediatricians work hard to address it every day. This is in part because health *illiteracy* is so prevalent; studies estimate that [1 in 4 parents](#) have low health literacy, significantly impeding their ability to use health information and services to make decisions and care for their children. Despite efforts to limit unnecessary medical jargon and implement tools such as in-person interpreters and family-centered rounds, there are still significant gaps in caregiver understanding, especially among families from [systematically underserved communities](#). These gaps – often rooted in broader upstream factors, such as educational inequities, – drive further health disparities.

This year’s [SOPT Advocacy Campaign](#), “Launch into Health Literacy,” encourages trainees to learn about and advocate for families facing obstacles in pediatric care due to low English proficiency, sexual health illiteracy, and mental health illiteracy. It also encourages trainees to consider the impact of health literacy on families’ understanding of nutrition and vaccines – fields in which poor information, misinformation, and disinformation are particularly ubiquitous.

**Each year, the SOPT Essay Competition in *Pediatrics* reflects the SOPT Advocacy Campaign. As such, this year’s essay competition will feature trainee stories, experiences, and advocacy efforts related to health literacy.**

We encourage trainees to reflect on one or more of the following questions when crafting their essays: How have you witnessed patient/family health literacy act as a barrier to effective medical diagnosis and treatment? Have health literacy issues you personally experienced shaped your career path and identity as a physician? How can pediatricians recognize and improve on these issues during patient encounters, in training programs, and at the policy level?

We look forward to reading narrative reflections responding to any of the above questions or providing other thoughts, insights, and experiences broadly related to this topic.

To submit a piece for consideration, please follow the [author instructions](#) laid out on the *Pediatrics* website. The deadline is **April 29th, 2024, at 11:59pm EST**. Please ensure all submissions are in accord with [publication guidelines](#) on the SOPT *Pediatrics* website. Please limit articles to 1200 words, 4 authors, and 15 references. Feel free to reach out to [SOPTpediatrics@aap.org](mailto:SOPTpediatrics@aap.org) with any questions. Finally, thank you for all your hard work on behalf of your patients.



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