

# How to choose a pediatrician

By Kristi Wees

Choosing a doctor can be a daunting task for even the most savvy of adults. So when it comes to choosing a doctor for our own child, many of us feel completely overwhelmed. Where do I start? Right here.

**Determine what you are looking for in a pediatric provider.** In other words what is on your wish list. Are you a mom who works during the day and really needs the convenience of a doctor who has evening hours? Are you a dad who would prefer your child see the same doctor at every visit and therefore prefer a smaller practice? Write these "wishes" down in a prioritized list with your top three to five must haves.

**Start asking around.** Other parents are a tremendous wealth of information. Ask your neighbors, other moms, people at your church or work if they have any referrals, even online community Facebook groups can be a place to inquire. Make a short list of four to six names that you receive, making special note of those pediatrician's names you hear more than once.

**Check with your insurance.** You will get the "biggest bang" for your insurance



"buck" if you find a pediatrician who is "in-network" with your insurance provider. To figure out if the pediatricians on your referral list are in-network call the number on the back of your insurance card (usually member services number). Many insurance companies also have online systems on their website where you can look this info up, but it may require a user name and log in.

**Internet research.** Once you have narrowed down your list to those covered by insurance, it is time to dig a bit deeper and do a little Internet research. Google the names on your list and peruse what

you find. You may find their practice website which may answer many questions (sometimes found on the FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions section) or you may come across a review site where other parents have written the good or bad experiences they have had with this practitioner. Heed caution, knowing that everything you read on the Internet may or may not be true, so it is a good idea to verify if you can.

**Schedule a free consultation.** Depending on the age of the child, this next step may look different for different families. You may be looking for a pediatrician because you are expecting your first child or you may be looking for a new pediatrician for your 12-year-old because your doctor retired.

For new parents or parents to be, many doctors offices will schedule a free consultation (usually 15-20 minutes) to meet with the pediatrician to see if they are a "good fit" for your family. This is a wonderful time to ask about your top "wishes". If you feel comfortable with this doctor after the consult, call back to schedule your baby's first appointment with them. If your child is older, some offices won't offer this free consult but instead they will schedule you with the doctor of your choosing for your child's next well visit. Use this visit to ask all your questions and if you find this doctor does not meet your expectations, consider seeing a new physician the next check-up.

Above all, the most important thing to remember is that you must feel comfortable AND confident in your choice. If after a few visits you do not feel confident in the care your child is receiving, then it is ok to politely inquire about your concerns and if need be, seek a new doctor. Finding a pediatrician that considers you, the parent or caregiver, an integral PART of your child's team (known as a family-centered model of care) is being embraced by more and more pediatric practices

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## 27 Sunday - Easter



### Most Every Day

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**Carnegie Museum of Art** Mon-Wed & Fri-Sat, 10am-5pm; Thur, 10am-8pm; Sun, Noon-5pm; Tue: CLOSED • [cmoa.org](http://cmoa.org)

**Museum of Natural History** Mon-Wed & Fri-Sat, 10am-5pm; Thur, 10am-8pm; Sun, Noon-5pm; Tue: CLOSED • [carnegiemnh.org](http://carnegiemnh.org)

**Carnegie Science Center** Sun-Fri, 10am-5pm & Sat, 10am-7pm  
• [carnegiesciencecenter.org](http://carnegiesciencecenter.org)

**The Andy Warhol Museum** Mon, Closed; Tue-Thur, Sat & Sun, 10am-5pm; Fri, 10am-10pm • [warhol.org](http://warhol.org)

**Fort Ligonier** Closed for the season, opens back up in April, Ligonier • [fortligonier.org](http://fortligonier.org)

**Fort Necessity** Open daily, 10am-5pm, Point State Park, Pittsburgh • [heinzhistorycenter.org](http://heinzhistorycenter.org)

**Fort Pitt Museum** Open daily, 10am-5pm, Point State Park, Pittsburgh  
• [heinzhistorycenter.org](http://heinzhistorycenter.org)

**Friendship Hill National Historic Site** Closed for the season, opens back up in May, Point Marion • [nps.gov](http://nps.gov)

**Pittsburgh Zoo & PPG Aquarium** 9am-4pm, gates close at 3pm, January 2 through March 31, Highland Park • [pittsburghzoo.org](http://pittsburghzoo.org)

**The Duquesne Incline** Open 365 day a year, West Carson St., Pittsburgh  
• [duquesneincline.org](http://duquesneincline.org)

**The Monongahela Incline** Open 365 day a year, Station Square, Pittsburgh  
• [portauthority.org](http://portauthority.org)

Please submit info for our April Calendar by March 3  
[calendarinfo@pittsburghparent.com](mailto:calendarinfo@pittsburghparent.com)

**Dear Teacher...** *continued from page 19*

while older students should make sure the numbers in problems are properly aligned. It also helps at this level to reinforce basic concepts and to sing the basic math facts to make recalling them easier. In addition, there are a great number of websites that let children drill on the basic facts if that is part of the basic problem.

Students in middle school may find it easier to solve word problems if they use smaller numbers in place of the actual numbers in a problem. It also helps if they underline the key facts in a problem and cross out unnecessary ones. They should also circle the question that they need to answer. And sometimes drawing a picture can help in solving problems.

There is an old adage that math teachers use: The more problems you do, the better you will become at doing them. Try this approach. If only the odd problems are assigned, ask your children to also do the even ones. ■

*Parents should send questions to Dear Teacher, in care of Pittsburgh Parent, PO Box 395, Carmel, IN 46082-0395 Distributed by King Features Syndicate*

**Select a camp...** *continued from page 22*

campers that showed up on the Google search did not show up on the ACA search. For example, the ACA search for a co-ed camp in Pennsylvania for a twelve-year-old girl returned 22 camps with only three located within driving distance of Pittsburgh. Google pulled up five types of camp at just the local YMCAs, plus hundreds of other that fit my search criteria.

And the fourth place to search for camps is at KidsCamps.com whose motto is "Because every child deserves a summer at camp." This website has a summer camp directory that is search-



able by the broad categories of sports, academic, adventure, arts, teen, special interest, religious, special needs and more. A search for day camps for 11 to 15-year-olds in Pennsylvania pulled up thirty-two pages of camps from all over the state. The camps included everything from an all-girls STEM camp to a fine and performing arts camp that lasts from two to eight weeks, a digital media academy to camps for every kind of sport...in addition to the traditional camps where kids learning canoeing, horseback riding, games, songs, crafts and water sports.

Popular camps fill up fast (meaning by spring) so if you and your child have determined that a specific camp experience is important, plan ahead and register early.

*Jill L. Ferguson is a freelance writer from Renton, WA.*

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across the region. This type of doctor/parent/patient relationship can lead to very positive outcomes for your child and you! ■

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**Doula...** *continued from page 28*

The fee to hire a postpartum doula ranges from approximately \$18 to \$30 an hour, which is a fantastic baby shower gift for any mom-to-be.

#### For more information:

- Pittsburgh Doula NetworkHeart to
- Heart Doula Service
- Shining Light Prenatal Education,
- Dona International ■

*Local author and speaker, Ann K. Howley, writes about her unique and amusing perspective of Pittsburgh and motherhood in her Mom About the Burgh Blog at <http://annkhowley.com/blog>.*

**baby blues...** *continued from page 30*

ences lets them know they're not alone. It also creates a better climate for others to share their thoughts and feelings. Sometimes helping a friend means being present with them through their storm and reminding them that they are not alone, it's not their fault and there is help. ■

*Ruth Hanley had PMD after each of her two children were born and has a special interest in helping moms advocate for themselves and know that they are not alone.*