

Too many U.S. kids lead stressful lives

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The United States has strayed so far from the Victorian ideal of childhood that pediatricians should include "stress checks" in child exams, a report says.

A new report by the Illinois-based American Academy of Pediatrics claims that overbooking of enrichment activities is impacting children's mental as well as physical health, USA Today reported.

Lead author of the academy report, Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg of Philadelphia, says some U.S. children have no time for imaginative free play and are taken from one adult-organized activity to another.

"A lot of pediatricians are seeing stress in children with this kind of schedule," Ginsburg told USA Today. "It's not true for all kids, but it is a serious problem."

The report urges parents to tailor activities to their child's temperament rather than trying to keep up with the Joneses.

Psychologist David Elkind, whose book "The Hurried Child," provided similar advice 25 years ago, applauds the new report.

"They're late," says Elkind "but better late than never."

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