Today’s piece was prepared by Thelben Burrell, MD, based on a NY Times story [How to Raise a Creative Child. Step One: Back Off](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/31/opinion/sunday/how-to-raise-a-creative-child-step-one-back-off.html?_r=0).

This article is written persuasively, though not very scientifically. It makes the very obvious but often forgotten point of challenging parents to encourage their children to follow their passions. The journalist argues that child prodigies seldom become exceptional as adults, identifying that setting fewer rules (and emphasizing “development of one’s own ethical code”) encourages creativity and a likelier path to ingenuity.

Although the journalist makes a strong argument for allowing children to grow up with the freedom to choose their own path without rigorous restrictions, he makes overgeneralizations about an optimal parenting approach that may neglect children who benefit from highly structured, rule-based parenting. As an example, children in disadvantaged socioeconomic environments who may not otherwise find pathways to opportunity such as higher education, or to financial security, fame or other spoils of our culture if not naturally self-directed or creative might otherwise have a leg up with highly rule-based rearing (e.g., “practice makes perfect”, and “perfect” may open awareness and interest to opportunity that grooms further passion and excellence.

We as pediatricians can help families identify their own strengths and styles in parenting to find a balance that fosters creativity in children.

**RESOURCES IN FOSTERING CREATIVITY:**

[Greater Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/raising_happiness/post/7_ways_to_foster_creativity_in_your_kids) *A clearinghouse at UC Berkeley of “the best” research-based practices for fostering happiness, resilience, kindness, and connection, presented in a step-by-step format that’s easy to navigate, digest, and act on.*

[PBS The Whole Child](http://www.pbs.org/wholechild/providers/play.html) *Ideas on fostering creativity through play*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!