

Virtual Mentor

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VIEWPOINT

Perri Klass, MD

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Perri Klass is an assistant professor of pediatrics and medical director of Boston Medical Center's Reach Out and Read program, which integrates books and literacy into routine pediatric care. She has trained pediatricians around the country on how to counsel parents about books and reading to their children and how to integrate books and literacy into routine care and caring of the young. Through her innovative work with Reach Out and Read, Dr. Klass has combined her commitment to the care of young children with her love of books, stories, and the written word.

Dr. Klass has been a role model not only to the many physicians she has trained, but also to medical students, interns, and residents she has never met through the books she has authored. Many medical students can identify with and learn from the fears and the successes Klass describes in *A Not Entirely Benign Procedure: Four Years as a Medical Student*, a book written during and about her 4 years as a Harvard medical student. In *Baby Doctor: A Pediatrician's Training*, she writes about her experiences during her internship and residency and invites readers to understand that physicians-in-training are sometimes overwhelmed with responsibilities beyond their skills and knowledge. For example, she describes the time she ordered a CT scan for an infant who turned out to have colic. Most physicians have similar memories, but Klass' willingness to write publicly about these incidents helps young residents who may otherwise feel that they are the only ones who ever did a "stupid thing" while caring for a patient. *Other Women's Children*, a fictional story about a woman who must balance the demands of her professional life as a pediatrician with her personal life as a wife and mother, presents first-hand experience with which other young physicians who are balancing professional lives and parenting obligations can identify. Dr. Klass is also the author of numerous essays and short stories that have been recognized with 5 O. Henry Awards.

For Dr. Klass's dedication to the field of pediatrics, as well as her commitment to the use of the written word to heal and educate, we are pleased to present her with the Virtual Mentor Award for being an exemplary role model in medicine.

Audiey Kao, MD, PhD is editor in chief of *Virtual Mentor*.

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