

Council on Child and Adolescent Health

Age Limits of Pediatrics

The purview of pediatrics includes the physical and psychosocial growth, development, and health of the individual. This commitment begins prior to birth when conception is apparent and continues throughout infancy, childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood, when the growth and developmental processes are generally completed. The responsibility of pediatrics may therefore begin with the fetus and continue through 21 years of age. There are special circumstances (eg, a chronic illness and/or disability) in which, if mutually agreeable to the pediatrician, the patient, and when appropriate the patient's family, the services of the pediatrician may continue to be the optimal source of health care past the age of 21 years.

The recommendations in this statement do not indicate an exclusive course of treatment or procedure to be followed. Variations, taking into account individual circumstances, may be appropriate.

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