

Program Director Associations Guide for Residency Applicants

Pediatrics

The *Program Director Associations Guide for Residency Applicants* is a collaborative effort between the Organization of Program Directors Association (OPDA), Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), and American Medical Association (AMA). Its purpose is to provide specialty-specific guidance, application information, and resources.

This guide outlines specialty-level guidance and policies for applicants to Pediatrics programs. **Specialty-specific guidance reflects the specialty’s intent for applicant preparation and the residency application process but may not reflect all individual program requirements.** Applicants should review individual program requirements in Residency Explorer™ tool, FREIDA™, or on program websites.

Specialty responses in this guide were provided through a standardized web form. The corresponding questions from that form are referenced in the footnotes. If a specialty indicated “No specialty guidance,” it means the specialty does not provide guidance on that aspect of the selection process.

Table of Contents

Specialty-Specific Resources.....	2
Away Rotations.....	2
Use of USMLE and/or COMLEX-USA Scores.....	2
Application Process	3
Program Signals	3
Letters of Recommendation or Evaluation	4
Research/Scholarly Activity	4
Supplemental Information.....	4
Applicant Communications	4
Interviews.....	5
Open Houses / Second Looks	5
Match Platform.....	6

Specialty Guidance for the 2026–2027 Cycle

Specialty-Specific Resources

Pediatrics has published a statement: The Pediatrics Residency Recruitment Action Team will publish a statement closer to June 1, 2026 that will be shared with APPD, COMSEP, FuturePedsRes, and NextGenPeds and posted for viewing. The APPD letter once released will be available at <https://www.appd.org/resources-programs/recruitment/>

Away Rotations

Away Rotation Details	Specialty Recommendation
Away rotations in the specialty ¹	Optional, Not Expected Purpose: to gain additional exposure or confirm interest in specialty before applying
Number of away rotations in the specialty	–

Additional Guidance: Away rotations are optional and expectations determined by the institution and the rotation goals and objectives.

Use of USMLE and/or COMLEX-USA Scores

License Exam Details	Specialty Recommendation
USMLE transcripts required for DO applicants? ²	No, USMLE scores are not required for DO applicants

Additional Guidance: None noted.

¹ Even if an applicant’s home institution has a program in your specialty, are completing away rotations in the specialty optional, strongly recommended, or required for applicants?: Optional, Not Expected (to gain additional exposure or confirm interest in specialty before applying); Strongly Recommended (important to being considered, but not always required given certain circumstances); Required (will not be considered without it)

² Does your specialty require that DO applicants submit USMLE scores in addition to COMLEX-USA scores?: Yes, USMLE scores are required for all applicants; No, USMLE scores are not required for DO applicants

Application Process

Application Process Details	Specialty Recommendation
Main Residency Match Season	AAMC Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
Supplemental Offer and Acceptance Program (SOAP)	AAMC Electronic Residency Application Service (ERAS)
When programs start reviewing applications ³	No specialty guidance
Application materials accepted after the deadline ⁴	No specialty guidance

Additional Guidance: None noted.

Program Signals

Program Signals Details	Specialty Recommendation
Number of signals	5
Signal home institutions?	Yes
Signal programs where they completed away rotations?	Yes

Additional Guidance: Pediatrics asks all applicants to signal the 5 programs they are most interested in regardless of status as home program, away rotation, or other in the interest of fairness and equity for all applicants.

³ Which best describes when programs will start reviewing applications for this application cycle (2026-2027)?: Date applications are released to programs; Other

⁴ Is it acceptable for applicants to submit some application materials after the initial application?: Yes; No

Letters of Recommendation or Evaluation

LOR Details	Specialty Recommendation
Required number of LORs	No specialty guidance
Required letter writers ⁵	No specialty guidance
Is there a specialty-specific standardized letter? ⁶	No

Additional Guidance: Recommend at least one letter from someone in the specialty.

Guidance for Applicants from Transitional Year/Prelim Programs: no specialty-specific guidance.

Guidance for IMG Applicants: no specialty-specific guidance.

Research/Scholarly Activity

Pediatrics as a specialty values scholarly activity, volunteerism, involvement including leadership in extracurricular activities, work experience, and a large variety of other experiences that have helped an applicant in their personal and professional development. The most impactful of these can be described in the ERAS meaningful experience section and listed on a CV. In general, the quality of the work, the meaningfulness of the experience, and its influence on the applicant is considered more important than the number of scholarly works or activities.

Supplemental Information

Supplemental Application Materials	Specialty Recommendation
Supplemental application materials required? ⁷	No

Additional Guidance: None noted.

Applicant Communications

Pre-Interview Communication Guidance: Applicants should indicate interest in a program using ERAS preference signals.

⁵ Who is required to submit letters? (Select all that apply): Someone within the specialty (e.g., faculty, attending); Department chair; Program director; Physician preceptor at an away rotation (e.g., program director, faculty); Other

⁶ Does your specialty have a specialty-specific standardized letter of evaluation or standardized letter of recommendation?: Yes; No

⁷ Does the specialty require applicants to submit supplemental application materials (e.g., use of other assessments, supplemental videos or essays)?: Yes; No

Post-Interview Communication Guidance: We discourage post-interview communication unless it is:

1. A thank you note (and this is considered optional).
2. Specific follow-up questions from the interview day.
3. Updates to provide to an application (e.g., new publication, award).

Letters of intent are not expected and if sent, should only be sent to one program. Programs are not expected to reply to such communications.

Interviews

Interview Details	Specialty Recommendation
Universal interview offer date(s)	No specialty guidance
Typical interview offer window	No specialty guidance
Interview scheduling platform	–
Interview format ⁸	Virtual

Additional Guidance: Programs should extend interview invitations no earlier than October 5, 2026, to allow time for holistic application review.

Open Houses / Second Looks

Open Houses: Program-sponsored virtual information sessions and social “Meet and Greets”: in addition to the webinars mentioned above some programs may offer virtual information sessions. Programs should limit any individual program virtual open houses to one which is recorded and available for applicants.

Attendance at open houses should be optional and not used as an indication of an applicant’s interest.

Second Looks: Programs hosting in-person visits/second looks after interviews have concluded should participate in the NRMP Voluntary ROL Lock Pilot to ensure visits do not impact an applicant’s position on the rank list.

Open houses, in-person visits, second looks, and other program-sponsored events are optional and intended to help applicants learn more about programs. Attending these events is not necessary to

⁸ Which interview format does the specialty recommend that programs use?: Virtual; In-person; Hybrid (an applicant chooses either an in-person or virtual interview format); Hybrid (an applicant completes both virtual and in-person interviews)

“express interest.” Applicants should consider in-person visits or second looks only for a few programs (at most) that may help them make final decisions for their rank list.

NRMP Voluntary Rank Order List (ROL) Lock Pilot Initiative: Yes

Match Platform

Pediatrics participates in the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP).

Additional Guidance: None noted.