

PASSING THE PEDIATRIC BOARDS

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Passing the Pediatric Boards – The 3 MUST HAVE Ingredients

The 3 MUST HAVE Ingredients for Board Success

Passing the the pediatric boards is challenging, but it's far from magic. In this article I'm going to introduce you to the 3 main areas you must focus on to pass the boards.

By the end, you will have a much better handle on the general framework within which you will need to focus your energy. I predict that it's going to be quite liberating for you!

Let's start with a few stories...

Each year after the pediatric board results are released, I ask PBR members for feedback. "How was it for you?" The replies vary considerably, but there are specific overwhelming emotions which come through time and time again;

Relief

"a big weight has been lifted off my shoulders and I feel lighter and free."

– "Dr. Wiseman"

Celebration

"My family and I celebrated all day long. We cried tears of happiness knowing the endless hours of studying are over AND payed off!"

– "Shy Doc"

Gratitude

"I did not pass last year, found out about Ashish and Peggy. The rest is history.... Thank you Ashish, Peggy, and [Facebook crew](#). You have changed my life forever."

– Dr. J. G.



“If it wasn’t for your concise study guide, which was the only thing I used, I would not have passed that exam. You are awesome!!! Thanks again!!!”

– Dr. “Thankful”

And what do I learn from this feedback?

1. I love my job!
2. I learn **how** to better help PBR members in years to come. Along with the emotional sentiments shared with me, I also get to learn exactly **what it takes to pass a medical board exam**.

WHAT SHOULD YOU LEARN FROM THESE STORIES

Nobody said that passing the pediatric boards was easy. In fact, many pediatricians who turn to PBR have already failed at least one medical board exam in the past. What I’ve learned through my own struggles, and from the experiences of hundreds of pediatricians, is that **there are three main areas of focus that you must conquer in order to pass the exam**. Below, I’m going to introduce these concepts to you. In future PBR articles, I’ll expand on each of the concepts and give you more details and concrete strategies to take conquer them.

CONTENT
TECHNIQUE
COMMITMENT

#1 – CONTENT

“**CONTENT**” simply refers to the informational product(s) you plan on using to build your knowledge base for the upcoming boards. Most of us do not feel comfortable unless we have TONS of high-quality, high-cost materials in front of us. Unfortunately, more is NOT better when it comes to the boards, and it has proven time and time again to be a **recipe for disaster** (aka FAIL!)

The truth is, you simply need to focus on **ONE TRUSTED PRIMARY STUDY RESOURCE**, and know it **inside and out**.

PBR members have done just that. They choose to focus on the PBR Core Study Guide and Q&A Book on online and hardcopy formats (aka the **PBR Ultimate Bundle Pack**) as their primary study materials.

The results are **OUTSTANDING!**

Here’s what just a few of those who passed have had to say about concentrating on the PBR materials exclusively...

*“Ashish’s best advice was to stick with ONE resource and **get it down cold**. For me, **PBR** was perfect ... because it was straightforward and gave me the information I needed to pass.”*

– Dr. Kira



*"I was excited when taking the exam and saw that over 90% of the exam material was covered in the **PBR**. I felt very confident leaving the exam and was very pleased when I got my results."*

– Dr. J. Texidor, MD

Surprisingly, of the 3 ingredients, the **CONTENT** piece is the most important, but it's also usually the **easiest** one to fix. This one single change in strategy has helped SO MANY pediatricians go from FAILING the pediatric board to PASSING the pediatric boards.

QUICK TIP: Once you have a trusted resource in hand, you **MUST** resist the urge to look at anything else. Studying from more than one resource can result in "information overload" and you will struggle to take everything in.

#2 – **TECHNIQUE**

"**TECHNIQUE**" refers to **test-taking technique**. Of the 3 ingredients, it's by far the hardest one to tackle. For people who are intelligent, good teachers, good clinicians, etc... but still tend to **struggle with "standardized" tests**, this is usually the problem... but it does NOT have to be!

For some of us, **TECHNIQUE** comes naturally. For those who struggle on these exams, **there's usually something "broken" in the approach towards answering board-style questions**. This concept of having skill at answering board style questions is so foreign to some people, that I've even written an article focusing on



3 techniques you can implement immediately to increase your board scores today .

In particular, I've noticed that non-U.S. trained pediatricians (aka Foreign Medical Graduates) especially struggle. Even if they have a good handle on the **CONTENT**, they struggle with board-style questions because that's simply not how they were evaluated in their own country. Some had essay-based exams, and others had a large oral examination.

So foreign medical graduates often find the U.S.-based style of testing **FOREIGN**.

And for U.S.-trained physicians, the skill of approaching, evaluating, and answering a board-style question is one that has simply never been cultivated and practiced. Instead, we approach the question as though it is a living, breathing patient.

For example, have you ever spent 2 or 3 minutes on a test question? When you know that you're only supposed to spend 75 seconds? And you know that every other question on the exam is worth the exact same point value as this one?

Me too! And it's resulted in me missing out on 5-7 **EASY**, 2-line questions hidden at the very end of the exam.

I hope you're starting to get the idea about what I mean by TECHNIQUE. If you are someone has failed a medical board exam, I **insist** that you try to find an experienced test prep coach to figure out what your "broken" problems are so that they can be addressed through structured methods. Then, use TONS of questions for practice and reinforcement.

Unfortunately, test prep coaches are really hard to find. That's where

PBR's Test-Taking Strategies and Coaching course comes in.

See for yourself how our students feel about the influence of the test-taking strategies that they've learned from PBR's coaching courses...

*"...techniques are simple, intuitive and are essentially common sense. The problem is that **we as physicians ... get hung up on thinking that the questions on the exam are more complicated than they truly are.**"*

– Dr. "Wiseman"

*"I know that **this course alone helped me pass my Boards this year** as I had a streamlined, consistent approach to questions that I had not had before."*

– Dr. J. H.

*"It is really important to do everything [taught]... **I took that exam more times than I care to admit... I passed the FIRST time after working with [the Coaching program]... with plenty of room to spare.**"*

– Dr. "M. G."

So, if you think that you've ever had a TECHNIQUE problem on board exams, the **PBR's Medical Board Prep Coaching Course** could make all the difference in the world. And if you want **to read about 3 great techniques you can start to implement TODAY, just click here.**



#3 – COMMITMENT

“**COMMITMENT**” refers to your drive and ability to prioritize. It’s a VERY common reason that intelligent physicians tend to find themselves failing board exams. It takes a considerable amount of time and effort to become a board-certified pediatrician, and even for first time test-takers my recommendation is that a minimum of 300 hours of dedicated study time is scheduled.



Those who fail the boards often know that they didn’t put as much effort in as they perhaps should.

“My first attempt at the boards I used MedStudy and honestly didn’t study as much as I should have.”

– Dr. Tarheel, MD (Went on to pass in 2013 using PBR)

The solution is to start early, follow a study plan, use one resource, and stick to it. Because I’ll go into more details in a future article, and because I’ve already covered some of this information in the PBR article titled “[Need a Pediatric Board Study Plan?](#)”, I won’t go too deep here. In general, though, you’ll need to ask yourself...

- Am I prepared to...
 - Study at the right time of the day?
 - Study EVERY day?
 - Prioritize my studies above all else?
 - Sacrifice time with my family?
 - Sacrifice time at my job?
 - Sacrifice earned income with a longer-term goal in mind?

If you answered no to any of these questions, I’m not saying you’ll fail... but you must be prepared for the possibility that you will. Make efforts to set expectations for yourself, and to share those expectations with the ones around you.

If you can do that, you’ll be miles ahead of 90% of the pediatricians who fail the boards every year (over 1000!). I’m certain of it.

The overwhelming sense of joy and relief you get from passing the pediatric boards is almost immeasurable. You recapture time with your family, you can take vacations without having that nagging feeling in the back of your head that you should be studying for the boards, or and you gain a sense of freedom from any future repercussions, such as having to return to pediatric residency training for A FULL YEAR if you don’t get board-certified within 7 years of graduation.

PBR members can probably put it much better than I ever could...

*“I KNEW during the official exam that I was going to pass. I kept thinking of how I was finally going to be “free.” **My time off is now MINE**...the \$2500 (or however much it is to take this test) is now mine, and*

now I'm free to get any pediatric job I'd like."

– Name withheld as per request

*"If you could only see how happy I was yesterday at 6 am when I looked at my email on my phone. **I was shaking, ready to faint that the results were in.** My husband took my phone and opened up the email in another room (as he says to get himself together) if I had not passed. He came running to me crying from joy. **This was the happiest day of my life. I felt complete. My family would finally have me back. I can get my life back.**"*

– Dr. J. K.

And that, in a nutshell, is what passing the pediatric boards will mean to you. You can get your life back. You can move forward, and I guarantee you will never look back.

