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## Pediatric Bioethics

This volume offers a theoretical and practical overview of the ethics of pediatric medicine. It will serve as a fundamental handbook and resource for pediatricians, nurses, residents in training, graduate students, and practitioners of ethics and health care policy. Written by a team of leading experts, *Pediatric Bioethics* addresses those difficult ethical questions concerning the clinical and academic practice of pediatrics, including an approach to recognizing boundaries when one is confronted with such issues as end-of-life care, life-sustaining treatment, extreme prematurity, pharmacotherapy, and research. Thorny topics, such as what constitutes best interests, personhood, or distributive justice, and public health concerns, such as immunization and newborn genetic screening, are also addressed.

Geoffrey Miller is Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology at the Yale University School of Medicine, as well as a member of the Yale Bioethics Center and the Child Neurology Society Bioethics Committee.

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Edited by  
**GEOFFREY MILLER**  
*Yale University School of Medicine*



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*For Tricia*

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## Preface

I cannot really define what is meant by the term “bioethics.” It seems to mean different things to different people, depending on their situation and perspective. I do appreciate that it encompasses more than norms and codes of conduct for health professionals. Its sources are many and include the heterogeneous tentacles of moral philosophy; the instinctual nature of cultural norms; the development and wrangling compositions of common and statutory law; and lessons from history, the humanities, the social sciences, and the study of human nature. With such broad and variable origins, it is not surprising that the questions that concern bioethics give rise to such vigorous debate, for they entail the age-old arguments about how we might treat each other as individuals, as special or privileged persons, as groups, and within a state, and how these things should be prescribed and proscribed. Underlying all of this is the recognition and government of harmful behavior, potential or otherwise, that has been, is, and evidently will be practiced by human beings, often with the participation of health professionals in clinical and academic medicine. At particular risk from this harm are vulnerable populations such as children. This book presents approaches to this concern that arise in pediatric bioethics. The contributors represent the fields of philosophy, medicine, law, and the social sciences. A broad array of topics is addressed, including theory and principles, genetics and the newborn, therapies, and end-of-life issues. The intention is that from these contributions the reader will be able to derive a good ethical approach to the practice of pediatrics and avoid poorly reasoned responses to ethical questions – responses that are cloaked in misinterpreted word and fashionable phrase. As Hannah Arendt wrote in *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, “There is a strange interdependence between thoughtlessness and evil.”

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2009

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