

Chiropractic and Children

Hardly a week goes by where there isn't someone (usually a representative of the medical profession) suggesting children should not go to chiropractors. They even go so far as to say that chiropractic cannot help children. Let's look at this hot topic a little more closely.

The following is taken (with permission) from Dr. Alan Rosenthal's excellent and very interesting children's book, *Show Me Where It Hurts*. Here Dr. Rosenthal discusses the basis for chiropractic care beginning in childhood:

"It is an old saying: 'As the twig is bent, so grows the tree.' We all know how important the formative years are in determining the health of our children as they grow older. It is for this reason that chiropractic care is particularly vital to your child's health.

"A bold statement? Perhaps. But true nonetheless. Bear with me a minute, and I'll explain why it is true.

[Dr. Rosenthal goes on to explain how some people commonly define health and then leads the reader to show that health really comes down to function -- healthy function.]

"When is the best time to start seeing a chiropractor? It is before a small problem is becoming a big one ... We try to keep our children's teeth free of cavities and take them to the dentist. In other words, begin as early in life as possible ... A healthy, properly functioning spine is just as or more important than teeth to give children a healthy start in life."

Dr. Rosenthal concludes by telling parents that their child will in all likelihood enjoy going to the chiropractor. Most children do, he says, because the care is very gentle. He says the most important reason to take a child to the chiropractor is to prepare them for a life of excellent health, one of the greatest gifts a parent can give to their children.

How about that? When you watch a child read *Show Me Where It Hurts*, not only do you see that the child is impressed with the wonderful storybook layout (the children love the pictures) but you get the sense that they see how important it is to take care of their spine. Stop and think about this for a moment from a child's perspective. Do you recall being told to take care of your teeth when you were young? Of course you do. What did you do about that advice? You brushed your teeth every day and saw the dentist from time to time to make sure your teeth stayed healthy.

What impresses me most about the book is the backdrop of prevention, teaching the child to actively take care of their spine -- keep to healthy, take care of it every day, and see the chiropractor from time to time to make sure the spine stays healthy. The most powerful message of all is given to the child -- spinal degeneration and injury is largely preventable (just like dental disease and injury).

In my view, teaching children about spinal health is a great public service. Who better to do so than the chiropractic profession? Should a podiatrist teach preventative care for the teeth? I think not. Of course, a dentist is best suited for this purpose. The same applies to chiropractic and spinal health.

So, should children see a chiropractor? Yes. Can chiropractic benefit children? Absolutely yes.

With each article I encourage you to write questions you may have, commentaries on patient care, or thoughts to share with your colleagues to me at the following address:

Darryl Curl, DDS, DC
2330 Golden West Lane
Norco, California 91760

Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Thank you.

MARCH 1995