

## Parents Need to Know

Peter Fysh, DC

Four years ago when I was invited to write this regular pediatric column for "DC," I was asked to supply it with a title. Without hesitation I chose "Kids Need Chiropractic Too!" To me it makes a statement about a most important task facing the chiropractic profession: educating the general public, and especially our patients, about why spinal check-ups are so important for children.

The need for such education was highlighted for me some years ago by one of my patients, and I have never forgotten his rather pointed message. It seems that this patient, let's call him John, had been sitting in the clinic reception area waiting to see me for his regular chiropractic check-up and happened to see a family with children going into one of the treatment rooms. When it came time for me to see John, I arrived in the treatment room with the traditional Aussie greeting, "G'day," to which John replied, "Hey Doc, I want to ask you something. I saw some kids come in here before; don't tell me you treat kids in this clinic too!" I replied, "Of course we do, kids need chiropractic care just as much as adults do."

John's statement had a concerned yet inquiring tone, and the question he asked really floored me: "What could kids possibly have wrong with them, that they would need to see a chiropractor?" How could one of my patients not know that kids need chiropractic too? The truth of the matter was that in my busy practice, I had not regularly taken the time to educate my patients about the need to bring their children in for regular spinal check-ups. On recollection, most of the children that I was seeing had just seemed to arrive, without any concerted effort or influence on my part. John's question had all of a sudden made me feel rather badly. I was letting the kids down by not getting the message out to parents that chiropractic was for kids too. How many more of my patients had children who had not had their spines checked, I wondered.

It wasn't as if I did not know the benefits that chiropractic had to offer for children. After all, I had three little "ankle-biters" of my own whose health problems had responded dramatically to chiropractic care. Jacqueline's growing pains, Patrick's asthma, and Rebecca's tonsillitis had all rapidly responded to care by our first chiropractor, a fine mentor whose work inspired me to attend chiropractic college. Now here I was letting the team down. After John's challenge, I decided from that day onward not to let the kids miss out any longer.

Thereafter, I would consistently ask my patients as they were leaving the treatment room after their adjustments, "How long is it since your children have had an adjustment?" Now most of the time, I already knew the answer to this question. "Adjustment?" they would say, "Our kids have never had an adjustment!" Well, that was all the encouragement I needed to launch straight into a mini lecture on chiropractic care for kids. "You don't mean to tell me that you have never had their spine checked? Do you take them to the dentist?", I would ask. "Well, of course, we don't want their teeth to drop out," the parents would reply. "Then how about bringing them into the clinic so that I can check to see if they have any spinal subluxations, which may be producing early spinal problems?", I would suggest.

Usually these patients got the message right away.

My practical education in chiropractic pediatrics has been significantly influenced by the parents of the children that I have treated. From my experience, kids who have regular chiropractic care really just don't get sick very often, and if they do it is usually only a minor problem. Parents frequently tell me that since their children have been having regular chiropractic care, they keep significantly better health and don't lose nearly as much time off school. As chiropractic doctors, we hear this type of response from parents all the time. We know the great results that we get with kids, but we are usually too busy to stop and educate even our patients, let alone the public about what we have to offer. This must all change, if we want to continue bringing the benefits of chiropractic to the kids of the world. It is only by letting the public know that we really do have something to offer for kids, that pediatric chiropractic care will be accepted as an important part of a child's health care program, just as necessary as the dental check-up and sometimes a way to dramatically improve a child's health.

What better time to focus our clinic efforts more on children's health care than in our Centennial year!

*Peter Fysh, DC*  
*San Jose, California*

Editor's Note: Dr. Fysh is currently conducting pediatric seminars. He may be contacted at 1-800-999-7337.

MAY 1995