

# Pediatric Chiropractic: Our Growth of Family Wellness Care

Claudia Anrig, DC

The past 20 years have brought growth in the awareness of and access to chiropractic care for children. Surprisingly, this growth has come as a result of the work of many individuals in the earlier history of our profession.

## Early Publications and Curriculum

In 1910, D.D. Palmer released the earliest publication that validated the adjusting of children: *The Chiropractor's Adjustor*. In 1924, Dr. John Craven wrote about the care of children in the text *Chiropractic Hygiene and Pediatrics*. Additionally, technique chapters were written in 1968 by Dr. Clarence Gonstead and in 1976 by Dr. Dennis Stierwalt.

Chiropractic colleges introduced pediatrics as a part of their respective curriculums as early as 1915 (West Coast Chiropractic College in Oakland, California). Pediatric programs continued to be implemented from 1912 to 1948 in the majority of the chiropractic colleges, and continue to this day.

## Chiropractic Pediatric Clinics

Dr. Leo L. Spears of Denver, Colorado, first provided chiropractic care for children at a free clinic during the Great Depression. It has been recorded that at times he saw up to 900 children a week without charge. In 1954, Dr. Lorraine Golden started the Kentuckiana Children's Center for Education, Health and Research, Inc., which served "special needs" children, and in 1963, the Children's Chiropractic Center was established in Oklahoma City. Dr. Bobby Doscher has served as director since 1977.

## Two Chiropractic Pediatric Diplomate Programs

The first Chiropractic Pediatric Diplomates were graduated in 1996 from the Council on Chiropractic Pediatrics. Formed in 1993, the council is a branch of the International Chiropractors Association (ICA), and its 360-hour program is administrated through Palmer Chiropractic College. Drs. Maxine Mullin, Peter Fysh and Joan Fallon are credited for the program's development, as well as for teaching and being the primary examiners for the final diplomate test. Approximately 100 doctors have graduated from this program in the past seven years.

The Council on Chiropractic Pediatrics serves its membership with a quarterly newsletter, an annual national conference and the *Journal of Clinical Chiropractic Pediatrics (JCCP)*. Its 400-plus family chiropractors and diplomates are also served by a membership Web site: [www.chiropractic.org](http://www.chiropractic.org).

In 2004, the ACA and WCA formed similar pediatric councils. The councils are membership-based and operate under the umbrella of their founding organization.

Upon passing their final diplomate exam in November 2004, approximately 35 doctors will be granted diplomate status from the Academy of Chiropractic Pediatrics. This academy was initiated by the International Chiropractic Pediatric Association (ICPA), which has provided postgraduate courses for more than 10 years. Chiropractic colleges affiliated with the ICPA include: Cleveland Chiropractic College (Kansas City and Los Angeles), Life University, Northwestern University of Health Sciences, Parker College of Chiropractic and the Institut Franco-Europeen de Chiropratique, of France. The ICPA's 120-hour certification program (year 1) has been taught in the U.S., Canada and Europe, graduating over 1,000 doctors in 10 years. These graduates are eligible to take the year 2 and year 3 programs.

### International Organization

The late Larry Webster, DC, founded the ICPA in 1975. It remains the only organization dedicated solely to the care of children and family wellness. The ICPA currently has over 2,000 members worldwide and provides a host of services. As a locator of more than 150 postgraduate seminars a year, the ICPA is dedicated to advancing the field doctor's clinical skills and practical application. Members also receive a quarterly patient magazine, *Pathways*, which provides a positive family wellness message. Many doctors use this magazine as a chiropractic educational tool by providing free copies to other health care professionals.

### Current Textbooks

The ICA has self-published two textbooks over the past decade: Joan Fallon's *Textbook on Chiropractic & Pregnancy* (which is currently out of print), and Peter Fysh's *Chiropractic Care of the Pediatric Patient*. Both texts are easy to digest and helpful for the practitioner. The first comprehensive textbook on this subject published by Lippincott Williams & Wilkins is *Pediatric Chiropractic*, edited by Dr. Greg Plaughter and myself. More than 30 authors contributed to this 19-chapter textbook, which features over 1,000 illustrations. It is used in chiropractic colleges and by field doctors. Neil Davies' *Chiropractic Pediatrics: A Clinical Handbook* is a comprehensive pediatric textbook with chapters contributed by the medical community. It is well-referenced and useful.

### Research

As early as 1989, the *Journal of Manipulative and Physiological Therapeutics* published three articles regarding childhood complaints, and continues to publish articles indexed on Medline. The *Journal of Clinical Chiropractic Pediatrics* publishes graduating diplomates' case studies, and the *Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research* has published papers regarding pediatrics and pregnancy. The ICA's annual convention also includes a presentation of significant papers, and the Foundation for Chiropractic Education and Research (FCER), under the leadership of Dr. Anthony Rosner, is actively pursuing chiropractic pediatric research.

The ICPA currently offers the only full-time research department. Its research Web site, [www.icpa4kids.org](http://www.icpa4kids.org), is a tremendous resource, as it provides an accumulation of research and a membership directory for the layperson interested in chiropractic care for his or her family.

In 2002, Dr. Joel Alcantara accepted the position of director of research from the ICPA. He is currently engaged in numerous projects concerned with the safety and efficacy of chiropractic care for pregnant women and children. Collaborations with the University of Calgary, Logan Chiropractic College and FCER are underway. Utilizing the ICPA's 2,000-member base, Dr. Alcantara has set up the largest

practice-based research network in our profession.

#### Patient Education and Public Awareness

One of the earliest printed handouts was recorded as a patient brochure in 1918 by Eastern College of Chiropractic, Newark, N.J. It stated that "...minor falls and bumps of childhood could produce subluxations that would manifest as adult diseases." It further stated: "One adjustment in the child is worth fifty in the adult." Today, the vital role of multimedia family-wellness patient education is being provided by a number of education-based companies.

Public education programs have been a part of the outreach message from family chiropractors. In the early '80s, Dr. Judy Forrester and myself designed and promoted very effective public school classroom and scoliosis educational programs. Dr. Jeanne Ohm has a unique community outreach program, and Dr. Eric Plasker has also contributed to the family wellness movement.

In the early 1990s, Drs. Theresa and Stuart Warner launched "Kids Day America" ([www.chiropediatrics.com/kidsdayamerica/index.html](http://www.chiropediatrics.com/kidsdayamerica/index.html)), which has reached tens of thousands of children. The WCA has just initiated a free children's outreach program for its members: Children's Day International ([www.worldchiropracticalliance.org/councils/children.htm](http://www.worldchiropracticalliance.org/councils/children.htm)).

#### Call to Action

Those who do not understand family wellness care, inside or outside our profession, need to be educated. This should be done through many avenues. First, the increase of research will only help our endeavor, as we attempt to speak a language that others will understand. Second, the profession needs to be more proactive, to educate the general public about chiropractic care for families. Seeing this need, the ICPA is now raising funds to launch a national advertising campaign to raise public awareness about the importance of care for children and pregnant women. Its first ad in *Mothering Magazine* has already generated a flurry of activity and referrals. Finally, invite parents to join a grassroots educational program. For example, the ICPA's Family Wellness First ([www.icpa4kids.org/e-news.htm](http://www.icpa4kids.org/e-news.htm)) is a bimonthly e-mail that introduces parents to chiropractic care and empowers them to make informed health care choices for their families.

*Claudia Anrig, DC*  
*Clovis, California*

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