

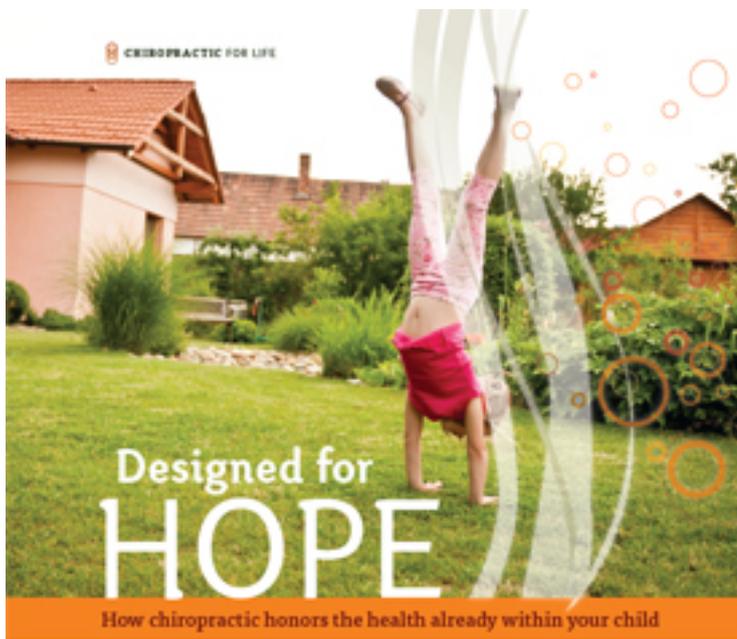
# Designed for Hope: How Chiropractic Honors the Health Already Within Your Child

Written by Nick Spano, DC

Friday, 01 June 2012 00:00 - Last Updated Tuesday, 28 January 2014 08:52

As chiropractors, we are confident that your child can live a healthy and abundant life. Chiropractic itself is based on hope...hope that you and your children are designed for health.

It's interesting that most people never think to ask a chiropractor's opinion when it comes to their kids. If you were to ask your M.D. why your children are constantly getting sick, he would probably admit that he doesn't know. And to be perfectly honest, that's not your doctor's fault, because diagnosing sickness and disease is extremely complicated. In fact, Dr. David Newman, associate professor of emergency medicine at Mount Sinai School of Medicine, once stated, "Somewhere in the range of 85 percent of what we do, we don't have adequate science to speak with certainty." The practice of medicine is focused almost entirely on the prevention and treatment of sickness and disease, with little concern for what it really means to be healthy. At first that might be difficult to understand because of everything that you've ever heard about health. But in order to help your children to be healthy, you need to think less about sickness (what is wrong with their bodies) and more about health (how to help them express their personal inner health potential).



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about health (how to help them express their personal inner health potential).

Health is not the absence of disease. That is a simple statement that has very important implications for the sake of your kids. If your M.D. doesn't know that true health comes from within—that you were designed to be healthy—then he doesn't know where to find health, and is only concerned with treating sickness. Maybe you've already resigned yourself to accept a lifetime of doctor visits and drugs for yourself, but I'm certain that you want something better for your children. They are not destined for sickness and disease. A culture of cynicism and distrust in the body seems to pervade the practice of medicine. Please don't allow it to affect the way you view their precious brightlight to be healthy. Ask a chiropractor why we are certain that your child has a natural ability to be healthy, and you might be pleasantly surprised by hope!

When it comes to hope, perhaps the cruelest cut comes from our culture's misguided understanding of the field of genetics. Parents have been told that the belief that their children are not only limited by their flawed DNA (being guilty yet?), but are destined to a life of suffering (because of it).

How can we trust that our children will be OK when we can't be certain what's behind Down Syndrome, Deaf Mother 1 or Deaf Mother 3 of their genetic code? The discovery of DNA was supposed to herald a new day that held out the promise of eradicating disease and infirmity. And yet it has brought many families and parents a sense that there is an exchange over their future. Somehow the takeaway message has been that our genes could turn on us at any time—in that when a chiropractor states that your children were designed to be healthy, it often falls on deaf ears. Parents have come to think that their child's DNA is a waiting time bomb that will one day explode in the form of one disease or another. And not in the very straightforward genetic research is a truly hopeful message that you can control your family's DNA! Read that again. You control the way that your children's genes will unfold.

"It is not the genes themselves that dispose us to disease, but rather those things within our diet and environment that act upon our genes," writes Nora T. Goldgarin, C.N.S., C.N.T., in her book *Primal Body, Primal Mind*. "In a very great sense we have control over this. Even for the most conservative of molecular genetics, we actually control anywhere from a 'low' of 10 percent to upward of 90 percent or more of our own genetic expression with respect to potential disease processes and even longevity." She also stresses that "a gene will not express itself at all unless the environment surrounding it becomes favorable to that expression." Not understanding that there is a chain between disease and true healthcare, most families rely heavily

**"The current environment in health care has left us with a sickness model that relies on drugs, which do nothing to truly bolster the health of the patient...The faster you learn that, the quicker you can get in shape, be stronger, and live a happy more vital life without drugs."**

**—DOCTORS JADE AND KEONI TETA, FROM "IS YOUR DOCTOR THE WORST PERSON FOR FITNESS ADVICE?"**

on their medical doctor for all things related to the body. It might appear that the majority of people prefer that someone else make decisions for them and their kids, but chiropractors believe that this is not the case. If you assume that people sincerely want what is best for their kids, why do many of them give so much medication to their children? Perhaps the answer is that it's easier than sorting out all of the information about health and disease for themselves. Or maybe because worried parents can't bear to watch their children suffer and just want to do something, even when they're not certain if it's the right thing.

Chiropractors prefer to teach people how to take better care of themselves using the basic principles of nutrition, exercise, stress management, proper sleep, social connections and spinal health, and leave it up to each person how to live out those principles. We like to say, "Healthy living is not living according to someone else's prescription, but according to innate principles." It is our principles to guide our decisions and behaviors means that we must take responsibility for ourselves and our children, taking "the road less traveled." And not if you were to follow the more common path of "prescription living," you would find yourself walking on a well-worn trail that led the majority of people in our culture. It's the path of least resistance.

Chiropractors are convinced that the drugging of America's children is the result of the undue influence of the pharmaceutical industry, an industry that has indoctrinated people into dependency. With unlimited resources for advertising and a very powerful lobbying machine in Washington, the drug industry has won

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When it comes to hope, perhaps the cruelest cut comes from our culture's misguided understanding of the field of genetics. Parents have been force-fed the belief that their children are not only limited by their flawed DNA (feeling guilty yet?), but are chained to a life of suffering because of it!

How can we trust that our children will be OK when we can't be certain what's behind Door Number 1, Door Number 2 or Door Number 3 of their genetic code? The frontier of DNA was supposed to herald a new day that held out the promise of eradicating disease and infirmity. And yet it has brought many families and parents a sense that there is an ax hanging over their future. Somehow the takeaway message has been that our genes could turn on us at any time—so that when a chiropractor states that your children were designed to be healthy, it often falls on deaf ears. Parents have come to think that their child's DNA is a walking time bomb that will one day explode in the form of one disease or another. And yet on the very forefront of genetic research is a truly hopeful message that you can control your family's DNA! Read that again. You control the way that your children's genes will unfold.

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Not understanding that there is a chasm between disease care and true healthcare, most families rely heavily on their medical doctor for all things related to the body. It might appear that the majority of people prefer that someone else make decisions for them and their kids. But chiropractors believe that this is not the case. If you assume that people sincerely want what is best for their kids, why do many of them give so much medication to their children? Perhaps the answer is that it's easier than sorting out all of the information about health and disease for themselves. Or maybe because worried parents can't bear to watch their children suffer and just want to do something, even when they're not certain if it's the right thing.

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Chiropractors are convinced that the drugging of America's children is the result of the undue influence of the pharmaceutical industry, an industry that has indoctrinated people into dependency. With unlimited resources for advertising and a very powerful lobbying machine in Washington, the drug industry has vast tentacles that reach into every aspect of our society, and unsuspected into every home. Individual medical doctors are often well-intentioned, offering what they believe is the best approach to a given illness. So the real problem is not necessarily the doctor as much as it is the culture of dependence created by a multi-billion-dollar pharmaceutical industry. Your doctor may not be at fault, but he or she doesn't have the answers for your family's health. The truth is that we are on a journey of discovery together. Research continues to confirm many of the principles that chiropractors have been advocating since the profession began in 1895, but as we continually reevaluate what it means to "live naturally" or "live by design," careful analysis has helped us to refine those principles. With today's rapid exchange of communication, the different schools of thought regarding natural living are now converging, as we discover that there is broad agreement with one another and with modern science. It is an exciting time for the chiropractic profession, as research confirms our fundamental trust in nature.

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What about specific recommendations? Don't chiropractors give people something more than a guideline for taking care of their children? Yes, we try to help our patients understand how a general principle would apply in a given situation. But our recommendations are more likely to

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fall into the category of “teaching someone to fish” rather than “giving them a fish.” A different kind of doctor said it this way, “You have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose. You’re on your own. And you know what you know. And YOU are the guy who’ll decide where to go...” That doctor was Ted Geisel— Dr. Seuss—from his book, *Oh, the Places You’ll Go!* We don’t want to replace the mantra, “Listen to your doctor” with “Listen to your chiropractor.” We would rather teach our patients the principles that will guide them in making their own decisions, and then say, “Now, listen to your heart!”

I don’t think that it’s a surprise to anyone to hear that the one of the most important keys to healthy kids is exercise. Yes, exercise will burn calories and help them maintain or lose weight, but just as important, it will properly mold the connections to their brains. When children jump, run or play, they are creating new connections in their brains that will not only determine whether they will be healthy, but can help forecast their whole outlook on life!

Interestingly, many studies have already been done concerning the aging process as it affects adult wellbeing. Baby boomers represent a large segment of our population who are attempting to find a way to turn back the clock, or at least slow it down. Much of that research strongly suggests that the brain and body are malleable; they grow and change according to the stimulus that we provide. That is good news for adults and seniors, but it is even better news for those who are just starting out in life, who are just beginning to form those connections between body and brain. In fact, there is an entire field of science dedicated to longevity. Most of us are aware of some of the benefits that have been discovered in recent years through those efforts. But only a few are aware of research into the changing brain, and of something called “neuroplasticity” that intersects with our interest in the aging process and yet applies to a child’s brain. Chiropractor Gary Easter, D.C., explains it as follows:

*We are living in the golden age of neurological research. Since the early '90s, our understanding of brain function has grown by leaps and bounds. For instance, we used to think that the brain you are born with is the brain you are stuck with, and no new neurons were ever added. Now we know that we add new neurons our entire lives and new connections between them as well. This process, called neuroplasticity, is driven by input, mainly sensory input. Of all sensory input, the one thing we can sense 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, is gravity and its effects on muscle and joint receptors. This input is called proprioception. The largest source of proprioceptive input is the spinal column and related structures.*

*As the brain develops, this proprioceptive input is matched with input from the eyes and vestibular canals in the ears to develop a spatial map of our body in its environment. This forms the basis of motor development skills: rolling over, sitting up, crawling and walking. Once we*

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*have reached the level of walking upright, we have laid the foundation for cognitive development and speech starts.*

*The brain further develops hemispheric specialization for certain skills, such as speech in the left hemisphere and interoception on the right.*

*Understanding the process of brain evolution, growth and development allows us to help people with neurological problems that don't respond well to traditional medical interventions. In the case of kids with ASD it means finding the parts of the brain that are not functioning well, and stimulating neuroplasticity in those areas with specific input, including chiropractic adjustments. These stimulate the proprioceptive system, and by process of developmental wiring, the whole brain to some extent. This stimulation, combined with nutrition to enhance brain fuel delivery and remove inflammation, helps to increase the rate of neuroplasticity to increase the function of the under-functioning brain areas.*

Many of the same mechanisms that help restore function in an aging brain or in someone who has suffered a stroke are similar to the things that shape the developing brain of a growing child. When it comes to the study of the central nervous system, the concept of neuroplasticity suggests exactly what the word implies—brain development is more like plastic than it is like concrete. The brain can be formed and molded by a stimulating and nurturing environment, even more so during the growth and development of a child.

So what does that have to do with health and chiropractic? Apparently everything!

When the motion between two vertebrae is restricted due to a misalignment, movement signals are reduced to the brain. Those signals are essential for normal brain function and development. Some believe that movement signals coming from the spine may be the most important information required by the brain. The subluxation (misalignment) is a bottleneck for the constant sensory traffic that normally provides these signals. The “language” of exercise and movement is translated by the brain as your desire to live and thrive. Ignore a vertebral subluxation and you are telling the automatic part of your brain that controls the rest of your body that its services are no longer needed. Chiropractic helps restore the sensory traffic to and from the brain by correcting vertebral subluxations.

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The truth is that most people have settled for a life by default rather than life by design. For adults, getting the body back in touch with the brain is actually the second step to living life more fully. The first step is knowing that it's possible. It is the way that life begins, and it is the way life is designed to be lived.

Chiropractic works with a respect for your child's innate potential, helping to restore the spinal pathways to and from the brain and guiding your family toward what it means to live according to nature's design. The medical profession may not even "believe" in design. Your chiropractor wants to stand alongside of you and encourage your children to live up to their personal potential. We don't ask ourselves how we are going to fix your kids—because, frankly, we don't think that they're broken. We ask ourselves what has gotten in the way of your child's natural ability to express his or her birthright for health. And we are certain that each child has more potential than even you, as their proud parent, has ever fully known.

Our goal as chiropractors is to help parents transfer their trust in doctors, drugs and other therapies, that all come from the outside-in, and place that trust in nature's potential that comes from the inside-out! "Developing an attitude of unlimited potential starts with the parent. One of the greatest attributes a child can possess is the belief that they have potential," says family counselor Elaine Olson. "But a child will only believe about himself what his parent believes about him."

A pediatric chiropractor is trained to help you look for those things that have interfered with your child's optimal function. Chiropractors don't just believe that your child has unlimited potential—our job is to unlock it. And that's why, when you ask a chiropractor about your child, you will be pleasantly surprised by hope!

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