

Talking Points & Resources

Hello Pathways Connect Group Participants,

Preliminary note: There is no wrong way

To run your Pathways Connect Gathering, the steps below are to help guide you. However, we encourage you to embrace the flow of your gathering and allow for your meeting to take on its own momentum in whatever direction it might go.

Step 1: Select topics

Prior to your group gathering, find and select one or more of the magazine articles that you found interesting and want to share. Pick topics that make you passionate, as these are the easiest to talk about and spark discussion.

Step 2: The Gathering

Welcome everyone present in the group and ask each person to introduce themselves and share a little about themselves. Be sure to share about yourself as well.

Step 3: Introduce the topic

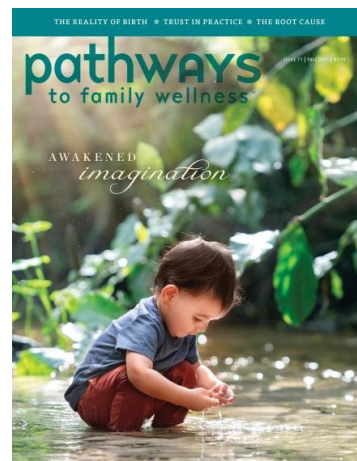
Share with the group your topic and why you chose it, why it interests you, and the importance you see in it. Summarize the article (some article summaries are provided below). You can read the entire article or article summary out loud to your group and share your thoughts at this time.

Step 4: Encourage conversation

We provide questions after each summary section that will help people to engage. Make use of these questions or devise your own.

Step 5: Make the chiropractic connection

At the end of each article summary are notes about how this topic relates to chiropractic. If you utilize these meetings to educate parents on the importance of chiropractic care you will be benefitting your office growth and the health of your community!



PW #71 Introduction

Welcome to the Fall 2021 issue.

In this issue we delve into the topic of childhood education and how we can evolve childhood learning despite current conditions facing the world. Children grow and develop by natural design, organically. What we do as parents depends on our trust in this fact of life. Trusting children to be inherently good, we can choose to refrain from utilizing rewards or punishments designed to compel children to “be good.” We evolve to allow them to express their own inner compass, while also offering children a steady, firm, responsible guidance.

Additionally in this issue, we discuss the value and importance of chiropractic and birth skills for birth preparation. Similar to parenting, we discover how to trust the process and act consciously in accordance with the natural process of birth. How do we establish real, dependable trust in the birth process? This issue discusses some specific skills and concepts that we can learn to keep us above the waters of our fears and doubts—skills intended to bring us into a more active, self-directed and participatory role in birth, so that we (mothers and fathers) can navigate the birth process with confidence, ease, and control.

Lastly, we present the topic of the power of imagination to shape our lives. One idea which has existed throughout history is the power of our beliefs. We know this to be true in the area of health and disease, scientifically referred to as the “Placebo Effect.” What we are coming to realize is that the Placebo Effect is just the tip of the iceberg. A whole new view of the world emerges that is above and beyond the material-mechanistic view. We are living beings, on a living planet. Life is more than biochemical miracle; it is a miracle of consciousness. Life is the expression of the power of our imaginative spirit—our dreaming power—that shapes and sustains our journey in life. The meaning you derive from your life today, your purpose, is part of this powerful force of evolution. May we all discover our meaning and purpose, and work in harmony with the beauty and love that is at the heart of this intelligence of the universe.

PW #70 Talking Points, Group Questions, and the Chiropractic Connection**Editorial***Inherently Good*

By John Ohm

The pivotal idea expressed in this issue is that children are born inherently good, which means they are born with an inner moral compass of right and wrong. This inner knowing automatically develops and grows as they age and mature within their unique social environments and cultures. More often than not, our attempts at “moral training” using “rewards and punishments” end up stifling a child’s inner sense of direction. More than anything, children need to learn the virtue of courage, which allows them to stay connected to their inner wisdom and express their innate potential.

Since children are not born *inherently courageous*, parents and educators can take up the responsibility of drawing forth this within their children by taking up a courageous, non-reactive approach to parenting and teaching. When children learn to grow their own confidence—when the adults in their lives place more value and emphasis on courage over morality (designed to “make them be good”)—then children receive the honor and respect they deserve, to grow according to their individual strengths.

The benefit of educating courage over morality is that it increases the child’s connection to his or her inner compass to navigate life beyond the womb. It also opens the way for a child to exhibit his or her own unique imagination.

A liberated imagination (unencumbered by fears of being “wrong” or “bad”) is perhaps the most vital ingredient to any child’s future, and the future of the planet.

TAKING THE STEP*Evolving to Early Childhood Attachment and Outdoor Play*

By Vince Gowmon

“Anxiety is meant to be regulated by the wild outdoors, by the loving arms of Gaia, whose instincts for connecting to and soothing the hurting child are far more mysterious and powerful than we understand.”

We are learning to return to our roots as human beings. We are discovering that outsourced educational solutions cannot possibly replace the primary bond we have with family and Nature. Without these primary bonds, we tend to grow up with anxiety, fearing what we are doing wrong, and the nervous system becomes cut off from its inborn state of growth and expansion.

Children crave the organic roots that stem from their families and the natural biosphere of which we are a part. But our current economic and social systems and pressures make it difficult to enter into the simplicity of our primal way of learning in nature and by nature’s designs.

The consequence of detaching from our natural roots, and restructuring childhood education to a more or less exclusive classroom environment, results in early childhood dependence to external authorities who are not actually invested in the child’s unique individuality. This translates into the child learning externally defined, homogenous values that stifle us, resulting in the anxiety that comes whenever we try to fit ourselves into the values of third parties, in contrast to our own inner compass. The beauty of fulfilling childhood education in ways that are aligned to our natural roots and evolutionary/biological expectations is that it re-instills the child’s inner guiding compass, which alone can lead him to his life’s fulfillment.

The first step in regaining a more congruent sense of childhood education is allowing us to detach from the systems that are currently in place, by being open to change and regarding change as positive and beneficial. Then, in an open investigation into “the mysterious and powerful connections” we can all share with Nature’s Intelligence, we can begin to allow a new and ancient kind of education to unfold, one where the weight of responsibility isn’t laid on us as parents alone, but on the intelligence that birthed us into existence.

Questions for Consideration:

- What are some of the hardships you have faced in the question of stepping beyond traditional education systems?
- In our efforts to do, do, do, all the time, do you end up feeling that something is still missing?
- In lieu of a readily available community effort to instigate a new way forward for childhood education, do you believe it is possible to effect positive changes in your family’s life and their education options?

- If you could envision any situation whatsoever as an ideal for your child's education, what would that look like?

Chiropractic Connection:

The nervous system is behind all intelligent operations of the body. The brain and central nervous system is responsible not only for all the body's internal processes, but also the way we think, feel, and act. The chiropractic philosophy assumes that behind the nervous system there is a Universal Intelligence that coordinates all life and makes this whole experience of life possible. The chiropractic philosophy and practice of caring for the nervous system exists from the major premise that we can help the living organism reach its highest potential by honoring its deepest roots of health. By this, we allow the intelligence of life to express itself more fully in each individual.

Thankfully, the intelligence of any living organism does not require our conscious orchestration or micromanagement. We do not need to "teach" a child a language, for instance. Rather the child's own innate intelligence picks up and absorbs language automatically as long as he or she is placed in an environment where language is expressed by others. To clear the nervous system of obstructions is to assure that the innate, organic intelligence of life grows and evolves as it is designed to, so it can learn and evolve. With this realization, we can relax as we are meant to, as loving observers, enjoying the ride. We can know that our job as protectors and guardians of life is met by an equal intelligence that coordinates all life. The chiropractic philosophy can be applied to all walks of life, for a more harmonious future.

TAKING THE STEP*Don't Call it Spanking*

By Naomi Aldort

Hitting children cannot be regarded as anything other than that—violence against a child. The consequences of hitting are profound. Naomi Aldort explains:

“No parent wants to hurt their child. If parents knew how to achieve connection, responsible behavior, cooperation, and kindness without hitting, threatening, consequences, time out, or punishment, they would do it. I don't judge parents who hit their children, yell, or punish; instead, I feel compassion and want to help them become who they truly wish to be, and bring healing to them and to their children.”

Here are some of the lessons internalized by any child who has been hit:

- Life is scary
- I must lie and hide what I do if it's not approved (since I cannot stop myself and my parents think I can because they don't understand)
- No one will understand me; I have to please the adults/authority
- I have to go against myself often, to appease authority and stay out of trouble.
- My parents are the boss/the police; I must evade and avoid them
- I am bad and should be ashamed of myself (a big emotional injury)
- I cannot trust those who care for me...or anyone
- I should obey just to avoid pain

Training children through violent force is, thankfully, a lessening reality of modernity. Why is this so important? There is great trauma that's instilled whenever a child receives violent punishments for whatever adults consider to be “immoral” behavior. Beyond the physical damage, there is an emotional imprint that occurs as well. Here's the heart of the matter:

“A young person is rarely able to see his parent as wrong.” Since seeing a parent as wrong for hitting is often too difficult and scary for the child to admit, a child will instead “take the judgment all on himself, seeing himself as bad, in order to preserve trust in his parents.”

This effect that's easily observed in child psychology of the child incurring the self-perception of wrongness as a result of being hit can be detrimental. And it exists for all moral punishments we enact against a child, even non-physical ones. This is why, restraining—as a hard rule—the use of physical, corporeal punishment grants children a most necessary space to maintain coherence in their emotional relationship with their parents. Not hitting is the first major step in evolving toward a healthier parent-child bond.

Questions for Consideration:

- Is there ever a time when hitting a child seems appropriate?
- What are some alternative methods to hitting (or even non-corporeal punishments such as yelling, or verbal abuse) if a child acts in ways that inflame us?
- Do you think a child can grow and evolve in healthy ways without any negative punishment? Or would this result in a maturity problem?

Chiropractic Connection:

Healthcare is currently undergoing a silent revolution. The reality is that much of modern medical philosophy and its approach to disease is unnecessarily violent, employed due to an outdated paradigm of biology that treats disease (and many biological processes in general) as malfunctions or deficient, requiring intervention. The new paradigm of health is arriving wherein we recognize that there is an inherent intelligence in life that can be supported and understood. Modes of action and intervention that honor our inherent biological intelligence is necessary, and can only be achieved when we recognize and adopt the major premise that life expresses intelligence. This is the chiropractic approach to health and well-being. Under the old paradigm that's ignorant of the innate intelligence of the body in all its expressions, medical interventions and procedures become all the more traumatic, overused, and in some cases, unnecessary. There is a better way. The vital shift in perspective that's growing in popularity today will lead to a much more sane, peaceful, and successful world of healthcare for future generations.

TAKING THE STEP*Dry Your Eyes*

By Michael Gurian

This article presents a balance to the aforementioned articles with respect to child-rearing. Michael Gurian explains when it is appropriate to tell a child, especially a male child, to “stop crying.” With many nuances to be appreciated in this delicate conversation, it is important to remember that children are in need of firm guidance that may go against conventional wisdom. This article explains the nuances of the question of masculinity, fathering, and when to put a stop to childhood crying episodes.

“Is it always wrong to tell a child to stop crying? Or, to put this another way: Because I said this to my son when I was raising him, did I ruin his life?”

According to studies from four different continents, men tend to get to the point of ending a child’s tears more quickly than women. One reason is a less active male insula, i.e., less mirror neurons. This has resulted in what Gurian and others have referred to as bi-strategic parenting—the application in child-rearing of both maternal and paternal nurturing styles, which have protected child development for millions of years. Despite the public psychological narrative, especially regarding boys, that the more coercive and masculine approach is always dangerous to a child’s development, Gurian offers key insights as to how firm direction can be helpful to a child.

Children need and want this kind of direction. Just as much as a child may need to cry, he may often need to be able to stop crying and act. The latter, even if it comes as a verbal directive “stop crying” can be a helpful guide for the child in certain cases. Brad Bushman of Ohio State University conducted research which reveals much about this topic. He found that, on social media, young adults who expressed feelings (ventilating, talking, crying, asserting, “how I feel”) led to more functional and successful adults. However, young people who spent ‘the most’ time in ventilating/expressive/ruminating behaviors were more depressed and less emotionally successful than people who did not.

Expressing feelings or crying can certainly be a good thing. But it can also be counterproductive. Bi-strategic parenting with both male and female psychological aspects is important for healthy childhood development, even if the gifts of the male “more masculine” approach at present are not held in high regard in society today.

Questions for Consideration:

- Would you say in your experience that male parents tend to take on a more “masculine” approach in parenting?
- Do you think the non-restricted expression of emotions and crying is a better alternative to suggesting or declaring “stop crying?”

- Do you think that generations of children and adolescents today need less “stop crying” modelled actions from their adult caregivers, or more?
- Have you ever experienced instances where a child was told to “stop crying?” And if it led to the cessation of his crying, do you think that was damaging to the child?

Chiropractic Connection:

Emotional connection with primary caregivers is an important part of the picture of chiropractic health and well-being. We know that the infant’s nervous system is primed from day one to utilize the social engagement branch of the autonomic nervous system—called the social-vagus— to satisfy their needs in relation to their caregivers. If this ‘method’ fails, for various reasons, the child will employ the use of sympathetic (crying, screaming) methods to achieve his or her needs. And if this sympathetic method fails, a child will resort to a parasympathetic “freeze” response. The preference, from a nervous system health and well-being point of view, is for the social-vagus branch of the nervous system to be the primary method a child utilizes to satisfy needs. The use of the sympathetic methods such as crying, resulting in heated anger, muscle contraction, and even outrage before a parasympathetic response is reached, can be a result of an overloaded nervous system. The greatest way to assure that the nervous system is working as best as it can, is to make sure the body isn’t limiting or impinging nervous system function. With a healthy functioning nervous system free of obstructions, we can be more confident that a child will utilize the ideal social-management skills in all of his wants and needs.

STAYING THE COURSE*Sickness and Health*

By Anik St. Martin, DC

A short article with a powerful message, Anik St. Martin discusses how common diseases are often a boost to children's maturation processes, emotionally and biologically, and that the hyper-fear surrounding disease today has limited the appreciation we once had for the power disease episodes (such as fever) has on the development of human beings.

For example, Marco, an 8-year-old child, was suffering from a high fever for four days. After the episode subsided (after much anticipation and worry) Marco woke up saying "Mom, I'm not shy anymore." Indeed, Marco demonstrated a much different demeanor after the fever episode passed. Moreover, his lifelong conditions such as bedwetting, sensitive stomach ("cyclic vomiting syndrome") fear of car rides due to carsickness, all went away. Leading up to the fever, the parents had tried many things such as dietary and behavior interventions. It wasn't until the fever came and passed that the child showed a developmental spurt.

In conclusion, Anik asks if society isn't missing the bigger picture in its hyper-fear of disease. "What happens when we Saran Wrap ourselves so tightly that we seal ourselves and our kids away from these physiological experiences?" Perhaps it is time to enlarge the conversation, as a sane and responsible culture.

Questions for Consideration:

- Have you ever experienced childhood fevers leading to a developmental spurt in your own children?
- Did you feel a need to lower the fever, because it was too high? Was the child lethargic during his fever episode, or was he still responsive, communicative, able to pee, eat, walk, etc.?
- Do you think fever is overly feared by parents today?
- Do you think the way we raise children through episodes of disease is important for the child's overall maturation, self-confidence, and success in life?
- Did your childhood come with a lot of fear of disease?

Chiropractic Connection:

Fear of disease is now recognized to be a major deterrent to health and well-being. Fears and negative emotions are fundamentally important parts of the clinical picture of health, as well as the new understanding of the primary cause of disease. The nervous system is intelligent in all its expressions. It turns out that disease manifestations in the body are part of biological adaptations to life-events and unexpected stresses—the symptoms of disease are integrally related to intelligent biological adaptations that go on, often unnoticed at first. The success of navigating diseases comes first and foremost with a confidence and trust in the intelligence of

the body. This allows us to support the body's source of wellness without doing unintentional harm out of panic. Then we can approach any interventions consciously if they are needed. The chiropractic philosophy was born out of a new approach to understanding the cause of disease as being fundamentally related to the brain and nervous system. The future of medicine is exciting once we recognize how this chiropractic philosophy is correct! Biology and consciousness and emotion are all fundamentally interrelated aspects of a vastly intelligent system—the human body. Once we see this, it is easy to understand how “disease” can lead to a renewed, developed emotional perception and maturity in children, and why it is that we as a culture must learn to overcome our fear of disease, if we are ever to reach a state of harmonious health and well-being (very different from what we see and have in healthcare today).

STAYING THE COURSE*Know Your Pelvis*

By Common Knowledge Trust

“Knowing the shape of your pelvic outlet will help you to understand how your baby might use the space within the bony pelvis to come through.”

Knowing the shape of your pelvis one of many practical skills that can help you to “do” the activity of birth, irrespective of how, where, when, or with who the birth proceeds (more can be learned at birthingbetter.org)

Mapping the pelvic outlet is important on your journey to birth. It is one of many “body skills” that will help you:

- Identify important parts of your soft pelvis.
- Appropriately prepare your soft pelvis for birth during the last period of your pregnancy, so you can remove as much internal tension as possible.
- Learn the skills to soften your soft tissue in the birth so you can help your baby’s efforts to move down, through, and out of your body, even when you feel the pain of labor contractions or during surgery

The soft pelvis is also important. These are the parts of the soft pelvis most relevant to birth:

- Uterus
- Cervix
- Pelvic floor
- Birth canal
- Perineum

The Internal Work

Preparing the internal tissue through gentle, directed massage can be absolutely vital for an easier and safer second stage of labor.

Benefits:

- You’ll respond better to any verbal reminder from your birth coach to relax the soft tissue of your vagina.
- You will also recover better if your labor’s second stage is efficient.
- There’s less chance of hemorrhoids or other short-term discomfort.
- There will be less long-term trauma to your birth canal, such as tears or being cut, which can lead to uncomfortable intimacy or other problems.

Questions for consideration:

- In your births, did you come across any “skills” that were relevant and helpful for the birth process?
- Did you know that you could learn “skills” to better “do” the activity of birth?
- How much of your pelvis do you know? Do you find it helpful to know more about it for the benefit of birthing better?
- How might your birth partners or husband participate in birth with greater clarity and purpose if you take time to learn skills together?

Chiropractic Connection

The Webster Technique is growing rapidly in popularity as a way to better prepare the body for birth. For decades, parents have been utilizing chiropractic care for birth preparation. The Webster technique is specifically designed to balance the pelvis and uterine ligaments to open space and create ease in the birth process. With the addition of learning skills in preparation for birth, parents can gain a greater amount of success, ease, and control over birth. Body skills for birth go hand in hand with certified Webster chiropractic care. It’s important to realize that in addition to trusting the intelligent physiological functioning of the body, learning birth skills can lead to much better birth experiences. This is the next chapter in the childbirth conversation, and it’s an exciting one with many great advances and possibilities for a new future in childbirth.