

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 Issue #75 Introduction: Natural Education

The term “natural education” expresses trust in the human being’s inherent ability to learn, evolve, and grow. From infancy onwards, children absorb information from their environments and miraculously learn how to integrate within their culture; they easily learn the basics of an entire language without any conscious “training” on our part. They learn how to physically move, act, and play equally so.

Education, like wellness, is a balancing act. On the one hand, children have an innate capacity to learn. On the other hand, we have the prerogative to “facilitate” learning. Education is about “drawing forth” a child’s unique gifts, just as chiropractic is about “drawing forth” a child’s innate wellness. We don’t try to “instill” anything into the child, but rather recognize that there is an intelligence within him that supersedes our human culture. There is a natural blueprint and sophisticated curriculum already at play that can be trusted.

“Natural education” occurs when we ease-up trying to educate knowledge, morality, or culture *into* the child, and allow him to patiently observe for himself our knowledge, morality, and culture, trusting that he will learn what is “good” or what needs to change, for the betterment of his generation and world. The child is always observing and imitating all that we are. We know this because children “mirror” us constantly. The child’s educational growth at every level depends on their mirroring of behaviors. We often try to stomp out their reflections of us whenever these reflections trigger our sense of self-deficiency. What children really want is the freedom to *pretend to be us*, even including what we believe to be our inadequacies—because only then can they learn how to organically *evolve beyond us* to become their own beautiful, unique, “updated” human selves. Nature has the inherent wisdom to harmoniously adapt each generation to an ever-changing world, when we learn not to leash or suppress it.

Authentic self-love for parents is essential for this process to unfold. We can emulate confidence, responsibility, and knowledge, and we will always inevitably emulate opposing qualities as well: fear, immaturity, and ignorance—that is okay! A child must be free to imitate the whole of us, to *become us*, so that he or she may evolve *beyond us* into a newly adapted form of human expression. When children mirror our cries, moods, insecurities, cultural fears, or any behaviors that we dislike, it is simply detrimental to punish them, because this diminishes the child’s entire mirroring intelligence—or wisdom—through our own projection of the idea that “we” are wrong. To prevent this, we should remind ourselves that *we are exactly perfect, for the unique life we have been given*. Our children believe this. Not because they are naïve, but because it is part of a natural design. Their belief in us safeguards this design, but they need us to trust in it, through self-love. This frees up their innate intelligence so that they may confidently express the self-correcting, self-evolving wisdom of life.

PW #73 Talking Points, Group Questions, and the Chiropractic Connection**Feature*****Homeschooling***

By Patrick Farenga

Don't let it scare you, children are learning all the time.

Amidst the chaos of remote learning, parents are getting a sour taste in their mouths regarding homeschooling their children. What most don't realize is that implementing the same curriculum and rigidity that school inflicts onto children does not encompass all that homeschooling can be. Many parents who choose to educate their children at home use the term "unschooling" rather than home schooling, because learning at home doesn't have to occur only at home, nor resemble learning in school. Anyone who does their research or experiences home-schooling first hand recognizes that "grades, standardized test regimens, and school's seat-time metrics" are not necessary. They do not properly nourish or convey a child's capacity to learn. A child's progress can be measured in how well they can use the information obtained through real life applications.

Children integrate core subjects outside of school settings all the time! Children have a natural hunger to learn from the world and participate in its experiences, and we can allow them to learn alongside us. If a child craves knowledge beyond our own skill sets, we can adapt their education as necessary through external means. We all know we don't retain most of the information we've learned in traditional schooling, and likely felt the same frustrations as our children when they question or rebel against it. Maybe we give our children the same responses our parents gave us, that we must do it because we are told to, conveying to our children that it's not our highest priority to do what's prosperous for us, but rather to obey the commands of those empowered over us. This creates further rebellion in children and distrustful habits.

We can easily update our model of schooling, and drastically improve the essence of our children's well-being. We can help our children pursue skill sets that they show interest in and that will be useful to them. We can provide them with opportunities for socialization and play (which are vital activities afforded the least amount of time in traditional schools). Children learn more from how they are treated by adults than by what they are taught by adults, and we can nourish their self-directed learning effort for the betterment of both.

Questions for Consideration:

- What experiences of learning do you remember most from your childhood?
- Were you a part of the school system as a child? Were you graded and tested on material less than children today?
- Did you feel ready to “take on the real world” after you graduated?
- What benefits/disadvantages do you see in the school system as it currently is?
- What benefits or concerns do you have about unschooling?
- Do you have children in the school system? What feelings do they communicate to you about school? How do you react when they voice their concerns?
- Do you believe children are more receptive to their own family structure or the structure of individuals outside of their family?
- It has been found children learn best through play. Do you feel the school system works hard enough to harmonize with this finding?

Chiropractic Connection:

Unschooling is a perfect term to describe the shift in consciousness at the educational level, of “un-learning” many generations of conditionings instilled by traditional models of education. The same shift has to occur in all elements of society. And just as it is exciting and fun for parents who have learned to adopt the unschooling curriculum with their kids, so too can each shift in the other elements of society be exciting and fun. Chiropractic represents an “unschooling” shift in the field of healthcare—in the beliefs we have learned about our own body. In its natural habitat, the body, like the mind, can thrive in wellness. Chiropractic is about finding that natural habitat, understanding what lets the body express health, and assuring that these keys are safeguarded and supported. The gift of unschooling for children is similar to the gift of chiropractic. It’s the opposite of a strict regimen, interventions, or suppression technologies. Instead, it’s the recognition of responsible trust in the individual, which allows the individual to discover herself, her own resilience, and to grow.

Living the Journey
The Amazing Human Body

By Jamie L. Cortese

Innate intelligence allows our bodies and the bodies of all living beings to miraculously adapt, change, and heal all on its own. The wisdom of innate intelligence allows it to absorb some nutrients while rejecting others, grow and develop our bodies and maintain our health throughout our lifetime.

Every cell of our bodies are connected and controlled through our brain and spinal cord, with our nervous system acting as the master communication network for innate intelligence. The health of our nervous system determines the health of every organ, muscle and tissue in our body. A healthy, subluxation-free nervous system ensures that the brain can get the sensory signals the body is receiving and send the motor signals back to the body so it can act coherently.

It is crucial that the body has an open and flowing communication with the brain. This ongoing connection restores, repairs, and heals any malfunctions or injuries we could experience in our day-to-day life. It allows us to adapt to our ever changing environment and circumstances. If that network is disrupted at any point along its path, the signal will be weakened or even lost altogether. Only 10mm of Hg pressure on a nerve can restrict the signal by 50%. If a body part loses total communication with that network, it will begin to lose its proper function and become out of sync with the rest of the body. This will cause a ripple effect as we become weaker and weaker, or more susceptible to injury or trauma because our nervous system cannot optimally support us.

Chiropractors free the nervous system of its subluxations and restores proper function to the body. That's why chiropractic can aid in so much more than just pain, including problems such as asthma, headaches, and so much more. Chiropractic's main goal is to allow a clearer expression of your innate intelligence! Your innate intelligence supports your body to thrive with health, and chiropractors are here to support that innate capacity for well-being.

Questions for Consideration:

- When have you witnessed your innate intelligence at work in yours or another's body?
- Did you have any beliefs similar to innate intelligence prior to learning about it from your chiropractor?
- What did you first visit a chiropractor for?
- What kind of results have you experienced or seen in your family since maintaining a subluxation-free nervous system?
- Do you talk to your kids about their innate wisdom? How do you explain it to them?

Staying the Course

Play: Why You Should and How You Can

By Clay Drinko

As a society we have recognized how essential it is for children to play. Yet, once we are “adults,” we tend to neglect our desire for joy, play, and fun. As we onboard more responsibilities, we naturally think we have to de-prioritize play—but where did we ever get this idea from?

To restore play into our lives, we can observe children’s tendencies. Children learn through play, and they find joy in the ordinary, like marveling at a mushroom on the ground or imitating the hoot of a barn owl. Be curious, don’t be afraid to act silly and make mistakes. Take a lesson from the kids and forget what people think about you. Enter the zone—what researchers call the “flow state.” It’s doesn’t come by chance, it comes the more you play.

Play is creative. The reality is though, that you can make every day routines creative. You can complete your to-dos by turning them into games. And this may be the most important “to-do” you could ever do. Add points, rules, time-constraints; challenge a family member to add an element of competition. Most importantly, be creative. You can get the activity accomplished and have fun doing it, and in this way, the activity serves two purposes: 1) completion of the task, and 2) growth of the inner being of love!

Please play more. Find the game of life!

Look for patterns around you to find the “game” to play. The purpose of patterns is to play using them. “Finding the game” in any moment is about being genuinely tuned in and curious about the world and then joining in the fun when you can.

Collaborate and improvise with friends, build off of each other’s imaginations. When a child does something spontaneous, you do something spontaneous. Before you know it, you may be rolling down the hill together into a pile of leaves!

Keep a play journal to remind yourself of what you enjoyed. Reference it when you need a dose of silliness. Take a dose of silliness for what it is—the best medicine nature invented. Take the time out of your day to prioritize play. You don’t need a game plan, if you’re feeling stuck just start to move your body to get unstuck.

Play helps us absorb the moments. It lowers our stress levels, boosts our creativity and our memory, (and helps us forget what doesn’t matter anyways!) It keeps us moving, benefitting our cells, and there is no doubt cells play too whenever we play. Bodies can be agile into old age, and old age can remain a curse for only the wretched. For play creates friendships and treasures, and it imbues memory with love. Love, love, and love. But most of all, it nurtures our child, who only ever wants to grow up if it means new dimensions of play. That’s a future you can help him to keep. Just prove to him that it never has to end...

Questions for Consideration:

- Do you ever “allocate” time for play? (or just hope it will happen when it does?)
- What does play look like to you?
- How long should playing last before getting back to normal life?
- Do your children ask you to play with them every day?
- What would your kids think if you played with them every day?
- Is it difficult to put responsibilities to the side to play?
- Have you ever completed responsibilities playfully?
- What allows you to let loose and play?
- Why do you think play isn't as typical for adults?
- Does school breed play out of children?
- How can you add play to your everyday life?

Chiropractic (philosophical) Connection:

Most mammals exhibit playfulness. Play is essential to life, beyond learning, growth, or even health. Play is, as Joseph Chilton Pearce once said, the secret of life itself. Most of what limits playful behavior in animals can be boiled down to stress and the perception of stress. A lot of this stress can be stored in the nervous system, and when that happens, stress is held beyond its rightful purposes, and turns the natural yearning for play into something else. When we allow the habituation of stress into our system, (instead of addressing it at the root level right away) we can eventually grow to exhibit apathy, boredom, and resistance to life and resistance to change itself, instead of keeping our natural underlying sense of playfulness, which very well may be the natural state of animals...We just don't know how to observe that animals are in fact playing most of the day! (Chickens, ducks, seagulls, and geese—when in the company of others, oh boy do they know how to laugh together.)

Staying the Course

The Activity of Birth

By Wintergreen

While birth is often unpredictable, every birth is fundamentally an activity we each will do. Birth skills are valuable assets to helping us move through this activity with a fundamental sense of coherence.

“Mothers and fathers who learn positioning and body-centered skills will know and understand the pregnant body with greater awareness leading up to birth, allowing both to work together as a team as the birth unfolds.”

Beyond positioning and body-centered skills, parents can come together to learn relaxation and coping skills, breathing skills, tissue softening and tissue preparation skills, communication skills, and many other skills leading up to birth. The importance of these skills, especially the body-centered skills can be demonstrated by the following story:

“In a birth where a woman was advised to get off her back in labor, she was encouraged, and desired to squat. Unfortunately, after many hours of pushing, she had a cesarean section. She was quite upset and felt that she had done everything possible. Wishing to have more children, she hoped for a vaginal birth next time. When she learned the birth skill of "mapping" her pelvis, she discovered that she was quite narrow between her sit bones and very long front to back. Working with various body positions, she discovered that squatting contracted her muscles that run from the sit bones to the sacrum, thus immobilizing her sacrum. Knowing this, she found positions that would permit her sacrum to be mobile. During her next birth, she paid attention internally and readjusted her body positions to stay open, subsequently birthing a larger baby vaginally.”

Body-centered birth skills focus on ways to open and “soften” the birth canal. Other relaxation-centered skills afford the same benefit, as well as offering pain-coping benefits.

The importance of birth skills really extends to all pregnant women. With skills, any birth experience can become more manageable, and less likely to cause emotional overwhelm or trauma. One under-recognized cause of birth trauma today is a mother’s (and father’s) sense of control being lost, unable to manage the intensities or changes in the birth process together. Skills remediate this tremendously.

In addition, birth skills help elevate a family’s sense of coherence and manageability in relationship to their birth providers. This allows birth providers to feel more at ease, and especially for midwives to feel less depended upon as families themselves take more control over the birth process.

Questions for Consideration:

- Did you squat for birth? For you, did it make you feel more open or closed?
- Do you know the unique shape of your pelvis? Did you know you can feel and map your own pelvis?
- What was some of the challenges of birth that you think could have been alleviated if you and/or your husband had learned skills together?
- Some people don't think women (or men) need to learn skills for birth. What are your thoughts on that idea?
- Before today, did you ever tend to consider birth primarily as an "activity" you will do?

Chiropractic Connection:

When pregnant, it is normal and beneficial to receive chiropractic care and to self-learn birth skills and use those skills in the activity of giving birth. Chiropractic care and birth skills do more than support an individual's desire for a specific outcome. Chiropractic and birth skills transform the quality of our experience of the birth process itself. Webster chiropractors use a chiropractic technique to balance the pelvis and nervous system. And there are many simple, common-sense birth skills that families can learn for themselves. Some skills are used to open, relax, or soften the pelvic space. Others are used to mentally or physically cope and "manage" through the labor, especially for mothers and fathers to work together as a team. Families can maintain an empowered experience if their body and nervous system is prepared, and if they maintain leadership over the activity of their birth process using skills. It's a great gift to know that learning skills helps protect families from the downward spiral of guilt, shame, or victimization, if their birth deviates from the birth plan. It gives them something to "do" to respond to the stressors, no matter the circumstances.

Beyond achieving a natural birth outcome, families can achieve a "Salutogenic birth experience" regardless of outcome, when navigating the fears, stresses, and challenges of pregnancy and birth using skills. Birth skills engage fathers to be more present at birth, to play a truly helpful role for the mother. And when families internalize the concept that we can physically prepare for the activity of birth, Webster chiropractic care becomes much more common sense!