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Can a 3-Year-Old Toddler Suffer from Grade 4 Sciatica?

By Victoria Arcadi

Little Zachary limped into my office accompanied by his mother. It was evident that he was in extreme pain.

I had seen Zachary for the first time within hours after birth, and had adjusted him from time to time for preventative care or structural complaints, which were quickly alleviated. Zachary's health for his three years on earth had been excellent, which I attribute to early newborn chiropractic adjustments. I had never seen a young toddler present himself to my office in such a condition, let alone my little patient from birth, Zachary.

His mother stated that three weeks prior he had stepped on a rock and stumbled. Since the accident, he had seen his pediatrician and a pediatric orthopedic surgeon. Both doctors diagnosed his foot to be the injured part. The orthopedic doctor referred Zachary to an orthopedic/podiatric surgeon. At this point his mother remembered me and decided to get a chiropractic opinion, her last alternative before surgery.

Examination of Zachary's foot revealed pain to palpation at the second metatarsal/phylangeal joint. I adjusted all subluxations found in the foot with no reduction in pain.

Frustrated, I decided to start from the source, the spine. In the prone position, palpation revealed tenderness from the sacrum along the sciatic nerve to the bottom of the foot. At that moment I realized that I had a grade 4 sciatica in a young child. The question then was, "How do I manage a child with this condition?" The answer: the same as any other patient. Fix what you find and have the parents administer cryotherapy at home.

After the initial adjustment, Zachary walked out of the office without limping. After two more adjustments, the sciatica was eliminated.

Following this experience, I had several more young children with sciatica neuritis.

Remember, when in doubt, always go back to the spine. Most complicated cases will reveal themselves by going back to the basics.

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