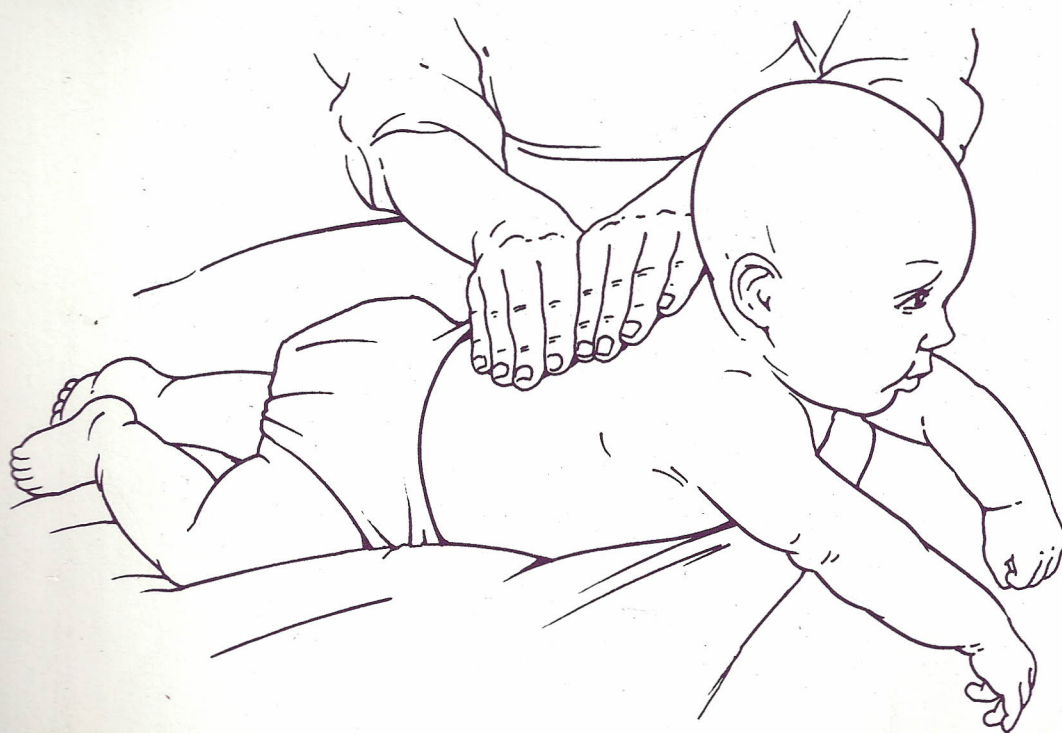


Pediatric Massage



For the Child with Special Needs

Kathy Fleming Drehobl, B.S., OTR, and Mary Gengler Fuhr, B.S., OTR/L



Forewords by Shereen D. Farber, PH.D., OTR, FAOTA, and Melvin L. Morse, M.D.

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Foreword

Pediatric Massage: For the Child with Special Needs will be an essential manual for anyone working with or caring for children with special needs. It is practical and easy to understand. The authors have a national reputation in the art of massage, and they combine that expertise with a sound knowledge of the medical and psychological needs of children with cerebral palsy, development delays, colic, and sensory-motor dysfunctions, as well as other children with special needs. Parents, physical and occupational therapists, speech pathologists, special educators, nurses, and other medical professionals will find this book to be invaluable.

The power of touch to heal has been overlooked in recent years, largely because of exciting advances in medical technology. Children with cerebral palsy who are handicapped by poor motor function are realizing their intellectual potential because of special joysticks that they can use to operate computers. Premature infants who formerly would have died are now living as the result of advances in ventilator support for their immature lungs. Surgical techniques such as rhizotomies have given new hope for spastic diplegics.

Pediatric Massage is a welcome counterbalance to the prevailing emphasis on medical technology. With it, parents, medical and educational professionals can relearn the ancient art of massage. The authors give specific techniques for virtually all clinical situations. For example, a colicky infant requires specialized massage techniques to avoid overstimulation. The authors share their expertise and clinical skill gained by working with children with conditions ranging from prematurity to complex neurological disorders.

Massage promotes warmth, love, and bonding between the parent/professional and the child. The authors demonstrate unusual sensitivity and compassion for the psychological needs of these families. Massage can infuse parents with a sense of mastery and control as well as a joyous and relaxing experience.

Medical science is just now realizing the value of massage. Premature infants who are massaged for fifteen minutes three times a day grow better and have higher growth hormone levels than the typical infant who suffers the unrelenting sensory deprivation/overload of an infant intensive care unit. A recent editorial in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (June 1988) lamented the loss of actually listening to patients with a stethoscope instead of handing them a sheaf of requisitions for laboratory tests. The authors describe physically touching the patient (with a stethoscope) as providing a much appreciated therapeutic opportunity for the patient to share feelings and concerns with the practitioner. Far too often, we forget to spend time simply touching and listening to patients. Spending time touching and massaging critically ill or severely handicapped patients can help to overcome the sense of isolation and despair that such illnesses often generate.

Pediatric Massage addresses an important topic in a practical and sensitive way. I am not aware of any other book like it. It will be widely used by parents, nurses, therapists, and educators who work with children with special needs, from colic to cerebral palsy to terminal illness.

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