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The Family Wellness Doc



Claudia Anrig, DC

5 Ways to Enhance Your Family Practice

Every practice has a personality style. A practice that caters to athletes, PI cases or adults, for example, projects differently to patients than a family wellness practice. If you want to develop a family practice or keep up with how to maximize your success with families, here are five suggestions to consider.

Note: Please keep in mind that while I provide specific examples, I do so based on my own experience and am not endorsing one product / service over another within the chiropractic marketplace. Many companies are doing great things for our family wellness practices and deserve our support!

1. First Impressions

When walking into your office, what five things suggest you are a family wellness practice? A children's corner or activity table is a standard, but can you do more?

The reception room is key when it comes to creating a family-friendly environment and encouraging parents to learn and engage. My reception area has a lending library, magazines that are wellness oriented (including *Pathways* from the ICPA (www.pathwaystofamilywellness.org), a display stand that carries newsletters and handouts I have written (please go to www.drclaudiaanrig.com/free_stuff.aspx to download the backpack handout and more) and children's pamphlets.

A few other magazine suggestions include *Fit Pregnancy* (www.fitpregnancy.com) and *Mother Earth Living* (www.motherearthliving.com).

Another great idea for educational materials that can be displayed is the Wisdom Keepers Collections, available at the *Pathways* store (store.pathwaystofamilywellness.org). These discs come with specific topical *Pathways* articles saved in PDF form that can be printed and placed in your reception area.



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2. Have Fun

It takes very little of your time to put a little fun back into your practice. A quick visit to Target or a similar store to see what is trending may provide that one fun idea for the month.

Here is an example I gave a group of doctors I currently teach: Purchase seeds or starter plants in spring and create a "pizza or salad" garden for children. For parents, hand them a newsletter titled *Gardening for Wellness*. You can download this newsletter for free by going to www.drclaudiaanrig.com/free_stuff.aspx and personalize it yourself. The children in my practice were then encouraged to take pictures and show us in the office.

One of my little guys in the second week of November gave me a big grin and from behind his back, presented me with a bag priming with small tomatoes. "Look, Dr. Claudia, these are from your tomato plant that you gave me in May!"

Here's another idea: For the premieres of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" and "Finding Dory," I showed older Blu-ray movies of their predecessors a week in advance while handing out stickers and taking photos with props to post on Facebook.

3. The Adjusting Room

The adjusting room is where we live and I strongly suggest that your office go the extra mile here. You could always have thematic rooms; the Marvel or Disney princess franchises are currently very popular. And an amazing basket of toys and books for kids under the age of 5 would be ideal.

One of my favorite chiropractic children's books is from Maria Luchsinger, *Sammy the Centipede Goes to the Chiropractor* (www.marialuchsinger.com), which was just released in Spanish this year (make sure you download her free coloring sheet). Maria, a mom, wanted to tell the chiropractic story of when her daughter, who had significant asthma as a child, "was completely healed from it" only after starting chiropractic care.

Sharing this amazing story and illustrations with your child patients will give them reasons to be excited, not anxious, about what to expect when they visit the chiropractor.

A newcomer with great chiropractic toys is Dr. Joe Fiorino (www.chirocept.com), who has developed three amazing toys: a spine and vertebrae that move, a colorful stackable vertebra (with a great atlas and axis!) and my favorite, the amazing nervous system. This toy shows how the brain and nervous system communicate to muscles, organs and glands.



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On any given day, you can catch me sitting on the floor in the adjusting room, showing children that the nervous system can have interference. While playing with the nerve tracks, I will put my finger in the track to stop the movable piece and then ask the children what is stopping them from moving the impulse. They point to my finger.

My next question is, "How do we remove the interference"? We all say, "an adjustment," which they perform on my finger and then remove the interference to move the piece.

For those colleagues who use a hand-held instrument to adjust, the ChiroClicker (www.chiroclicker.com) is a great way to mimic an adjustment. And the next time you are at a chiropractic conference, pick up a "Chiro Kids" T-shirt and put it on a stuffed animal in your office.

With a quick Internet search, you can find amazing chiropractic adjusting tables for your little ones, featuring an array of animals (fishes, turtles, zebras, etc.), fire trucks and dinosaurs. And within our profession, many of our printing vendors have developed delightful coloring books, stickers and more.

A new addition for the family wellness practice is the free Facebook meme service from Jason Deitch called AmpLIFEied. There are literally hundreds of postings available; if you go to www.shareclaudiaanrig.com, you can find more than 30 I have contributed for our profession to use.

4. Stay on a Budget

I'm a big advocate of seasonal changes in your office. To stay on budget, you should wait until after the holiday or season to shop, when everything is 50-75 percent off, and prepare early for the next holiday season.

For new DCs and those with a limited budget, shop at a discount store, where gently used toys can be bought for just a few dollars. Rather than receiving traditional birthday and holiday gifts, ask your family members to purchase items that will help you share your chiropractic message.

Also consider subscribing to Dr. Matt McCoy's *Journal of Pediatric, Maternal & Family Health Chiropractic* at www.chiropracticpediatricresearch.net. The abundance of case studies should be right at hand to give to your patients. The ICA Pediatric Council (www.jccponline.com) has additional case studies to add to your research collection.

5. Safety for All

It only takes a few minutes for a child's hands to go in the wrong place or into their mouth, so take the time to safety-proof your office. Two areas that need extra precaution are your restroom and adjusting tables.

Start with under the sink in your restroom by removing any toxic chemicals. Bathroom sprays should be environmental friendly and not laden with chemicals (because so many of our patients are



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sensitive). A step stool for children to wash their hands is great, as is a spare key to open a door should a child forget how to do so. (Our spare key is utilized at least once a month.)

And for the sake of our little ones, please place additional warnings labels on your adjustment tables. Although many manufactures of tables may have warning signs, they are probably not big enough for parents to pay attention to. You can visit my free stuff page (www.drclaudiaanrig.com/free_stuff.aspx) to download warning signs. Here are three examples:

- "Please do not let your children play or sit on this table. Thank you!"
- "Please do not let your children touch this table, as the mechanisms can damage little fingers. Thank you!"
- "Please do not let your children play with the pedals that lower this table, as this is very dangerous to anyone under the machine at the time and they could be crushed. Thank you!"

I recommend printing warning labels on bright paper, laminating them and then mounting them on your tables.