

Parents Misled By Media Reports on Health Hazards of Children Sitting in the 'W Position'

OAKVILLE, CT, Feb. 17, 2016 – Popular media reports are misleading parents about the dangers of children sitting in the "W Position". A recent spate of stories downplayed the long-term health hazards of children sit in the "W Position," which two local medical professionals dispute.

"We often see children sitting on their bottom with their knees bent and rotated on the floor behind them in the shape of a W, which we believe is hazardous to their sensory motor development. Recent stories about this are providing misinformation about this to parents," says occupational therapist and child development expert Catherine Risigo, MS OTR/L. She, along with Pediatric physical therapist Erin Senior, PT, DPT, caution that this advice does not look at the whole child. "The neurodevelopmental ramifications of a child using W-Position are significant. We know that children who choose this position as their preferred way of sitting can be hindered in their overall development," says Risigo. "We are concerned that recently released information telling parents they need not heed previous warnings about this position are incorrect. Our experience tells us that sitting in this position can have dire consequences as children age."

Risigo, who has 29 years of pediatric experience in sensory motor and child development, says the W-position is not part of the natural development of a child's motor skills. "This position limits active trunk control, which is essential to development of hand dominance and refinement of sensory motor skills," she says.

Pediatric physical therapist Erin Senior, PT, DPT adds, "When a child is in a W-position, it limits their progression of movement and may impact their development. Children sitting in this position don't need trunk rotation, weight shifting, or righting reactions. "This will have major impact on their development of necessary foundational skills. This position does not allow the child to move in and out of sitting to reach for toys in their environment, develop fluidity of movement, balance skills and trunk strength. All of these skills are necessary for children's long-term health."

Risigo also warns parents that children who favor this position could be sending up a red flag that they have low muscle tone or poor core strength. "Children who primarily choose this position could lack a solid base of support to build higher level skills such as motor skills, eye/hand coordination and postural control. If these issues aren't recognized and treated, they could impact learning and behavior later in life. Many parents come to us with their concerns about this. They are looking for advice about ways to encourage their kids to change this habit and sit in the 'crisscross applesauce' position. That is a valid concern. It is something that parents should bring to their pediatrician's attention because it is easy to remedy with proper support if caught and treated early."

About Jumpstart Therapy & Fitness Network

The Jumpstart Therapy & Fitness Network is an organization dedicated to developing strong bodies and minds of children. It includes Jumpstart Therapy; Jumpstart Fitness and Kangaroos Korner Early Learning Center. The Jumpstart Therapy & Fitness Network is dedicated to enriching the lives of families with children who have a full spectrum of abilities. It offers an array of therapy, fitness, wellness and childcare services. Located in Oakville, CT, it was founded in 1987 by Catherine Risigo, MS, OTR/L a licensed, registered Occupational Therapist with a Master's Degree in Nutrition. For more information, call (860) 945-1301.

Media contact

Andrea Obston aobston@aomc.com
(860) 243-1447 (office) (860) 803-1155 (cell)
(860) 653-2712 (home)