Do You Have What it Takes to Be a Pediatric Massage Therapist?

Pediatric Massage Therapy is a growing field in the healthcare industry, with an increasing need for certified therapists. Research has shown the positive effects that pediatric massage therapy has on children in various stages of health.

What is a Pediatric Massage Therapist?

Today’s pediatric massage therapist is a certified healthcare professional who works closely with doctors, nurses, and other therapists in providing a holistic medical approach to healing children in all forms of sickness and health. Like adults, children respond to nurturing touch, but not all healthcare facilities have a certified pediatric massage therapist on staff.

What Does the Research Say About Pediatric Massage Therapy?

Research studies indicate pediatric massage therapy helps in a variety of ways, including physical mobility, muscle tone and strength, increased stability and balance, and decreased pain and other symptoms. It also seems to increase appropriate social behaviors while decreasing any aggressive behavior. There are studies that point to mental improvements in attention and response time, leading to improvements on standardized tests.

Research has shown that nurturing touch provided by a licensed pediatric massage therapist can stimulate nerve growth that aids in digestion and decreases stress hormones, thus affecting growth rate and physical well-being. This has a significant impact on pre-term NICU infants by reducing their hospital stay.

Pediatric massage therapy also helps young patients deal with chronic or terminal illnesses. Research indicates that pain and stress can be reduced as well as depressive symptoms in children.

There is an affect on parents of children receiving pediatric massage therapy. Parents can be taught massage therapy techniques that help them be proactive in their children’s care. This additional nurturing touch by parents augments both the child’s and the parent’s physical and emotional well-being.

What Characteristics Do I Need to Become a Pediatric Massage Therapist?

• You like children. A lot.

• You enjoy physically interacting with children of all ages.

• You have an interest in improving the healthcare of children.

• You are a strong self-motivator.

• You have excellent dexterity and physical strength.

• You have a heightened sense of empathy.

• You are a life-long learner.

If these points describe you, the next section will provide details on the professional education necessary.

How Do I Become a Pediatric Massage Therapist?

There are several accredited educational and professional organizations that provide certified training for pediatric massage therapy. The key is to identify a massage therapy program that covers all aspects of the medical practice, growth and development of children at all stages, and the emotional side of massage therapy as it applies to children’s illnesses, injuries, and even good health. But equally important are the cultural aspects that affect this practice. Be careful when choosing a program. Not all are comprehensive.

What’s Next?

Do your research. Thoroughly investigate your options, and don’t forget to interview several certified pediatric massage therapists about what to look for in a professional educational institution. Then choose the institution that meets all of your criteria.

Pediatric Massage Therapist is one of the most satisfying careers in the healthcare industry, one that will reward you in many ways, both financially and emotionally. What could be more affirming than helping a child?