

Holistic Bodywork

The newest tool for early childhood development is decidedly low tech.



Eleven-month-old Heath, the little guy on the cover of this issue, is the most even-tempered baby I've ever met. He's a people person who takes a very intense interest in adult conversation, even if he doesn't quite understand every word or phrase. He may be a gourmand, but let's face it, one variety of strained peas tastes pretty much like the rest and there's no sense getting picky about food at this stage in life.

Heath's moms, Amy Fortune and Rosie Velasco-Fortune, are raising him in a "Leave It to Beaver" neighborhood in Torrance. In

fact, the women are doing everything possible to help Heath navigate the twists and turns of infancy and toddlerhood with ease.

"Deciding to have a baby was a big decision for us, and we wanted a baby for the right reasons," Fortune said in a recent interview. "We decided that if we were going to do it, then we were going to have the most exceptional pregnancy, birth and child possible. We want to give him stepping stones to help him be the best he can be."

One of the most effective techniques they've found is infant massage.

Amy demonstrates massage techniques

on a very compliant Heath one afternoon, starting with his arms, legs and feet, and then proceeding to his stomach, chest, neck and back. As she runs her hands over his stomach in a circular motion, Fortune marvels at the happy, blue-eyed fellow smiling up at her.

"This really has a calming effect," she explained. "By the time he was four months old, he was sleeping through the night."

Fortune learned the infant massage techniques from her massage therapist, Karen Axelrod, who has a private

what could you and Tiger Woods have in common?

LASIK

vision correction



Tiger Woods: Satisfied TLC Patient Since 1999

Tiger Woods always had the vision to be the best. TLC just helped him do it without contacts.

LASIK may be the answer to better vision for you, just like it was for Tiger Woods. And TLC offers the most advanced technology in laser vision correction including CustomLASIK and IntraLase.

Find out if you are a candidate for CustomLASIK. Call today and come in for a free consultation or contact your eye care professional. Financing is available.



Wendell P. Wong, M.D.
TLC TORRANCE (310) 784-2020
1-888-CALL-TLC

TLC
Laser Eye Centers®
www.tlcvision.com

Can't find the time for fitness now that you're a *mom*?



Join Stroller Strides!

As seen on KTLA, and CBS... Stroller Strides is a total body workout! Get back into shape, make new friends and have a great time with your baby! Beautiful outdoor locations throughout Manhattan Beach.

Contact JJ Flizanes at jj@strollerstrides.net or call (800) 571-5722

Bring this ad and get your first class free!

www.strollerstrides.com





Karen Axelrod works with John Thomas. Amy Fortune (opposite page) bonds with son Heath. Photos by David Green.

“By the time he was four months old, he was sleeping through the night.”

nerve endings connect and the better the muscles respond.”

A few miles away, on a quiet cul-de-sac in Manhattan Beach, 10-year-old Zach Friedman shoots hoops in front of his home. The fifth-grader, who trains with basketball coach Dave Miller, misses just two out of a dozen shots.

He’s an easy-going kid with a wry sense of humor and a quick wit. He has a few stresses, he admits, including anxieties about school.

“One is this prissy little thing,” he grins. “I don’t want to move up to fifth grade ‘cause I really like my fourth grade teacher. He has an arts background.”

School, in general, is troublesome for Zach. “I just don’t like school,” he said. “It’s boring and it’s easy.”

Zach has been a regular client of Axelrod’s since he was five. Sometimes he goes to her for sports massage, other times for craniosacral therapy.

“It takes my mind off of things,” he explained. “Sometimes I completely forget what I’m stressed about for two hours.”

Zach’s mom, Andrea, also visits Axelrod for craniosacral therapy on a regular basis. The daughter of a physician, Friedman is open to complementary medical treatments for her family.

“Before I had my youngest son, Sam, I had three miscarriages,” she said. “I’m convinced that craniosacral therapy helped me get through my pregnancy with him.”

Craniosacral therapy has also helped three-year-old John Thomas Tan, a Redondo Beach boy who is overcoming a receptive

auditory disorder that makes it difficult for him to process speech. His mom, Traci Dalke, began taking the boy to see Axelrod shortly after he was diagnosed with the disorder in February.

“After a therapy session with Karen he seems to be calmer and more at peace with himself,” she said. “We’re beginning to see some breakthroughs.”

John Thomas also receives occupational therapy and speech therapy through the Redondo school district’s early intervention program.

“It can be an ideal therapy for many kids,” Axelrod said. “A lot of kids with sensory issues get craniosacral therapy because it’s a hands-on modality that helps them get in touch with their body and what goes on in their body.”

While most of her clients are adults, Axelrod finds that children respond very well to holistic bodywork.

“Adults have a thought process in their heads that may prevent them from healing,” she said. “Kids don’t have that.”

In addition to reducing stress and helping children relax, bodywork also increases blood flow, strengthens the immune system and stimulates the lymphatic system, she said.

practice in Redondo Beach. Fortune saw Axelrod for prenatal massage before Heath was born.

“I developed high blood pressure during the pregnancy and I had tremendous swelling in my feet,” Fortune said. “Karen was just wonderful. A lot of massage therapists don’t want to work with pregnant women, but Karen was great. She really knew what she was doing.”

After Heath was born, Fortune went to Axelrod for craniosacral therapy, a form of holistic bodywork that helps to restore the natural rhythm of the craniosacral fluid in the spine and head.

“That really helped with my recovery,” she said. “Doctors don’t prepare women who go through in vitro for what’s going to happen. I did not feel like myself after giving birth. You crash harder and faster because of all the hormones and drugs you’ve been on. I felt like I was living in an altered state.”

The benefits of bodywork – for both baby and mom – are significant, she said.

“We researched everything,” she said. “And infant massage definitely works. The more the baby is stimulated, the more the

Find out more about
Holistic Bodywork for Kids

Karen Axelrod
Phone: (310) 376-0113