



craniosacral institute of michigan, llc

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## Shaping the Heads of the Future

### Shaping the Heads of the Future: A Natural Option for Plagiocephaly



Vanessa Cayle, MSPT has been a physical therapist since 1994. She is a Certified Instructor in Frequency Specific Microcurrent and an instructor of CST. She teaches and presents both locally and nationally. She is the owner and director of the CranioSacral Institute of MI, LLC.

Plagiocephaly is the medical term for “misshapen head”. It has become a prevalent condition in our infants and toddlers. The current thoughts on the cause of this condition are “positioning” and “in-utero positioning”. General positioning issues are believed to be linked to the amount of time that babies are spending on their backs. In-utero positioning refers to how the baby was positioned in the womb.

The current medical/therapy treatment is a device called the “cranial shaping helmet”. These specially designed helmets reshape the head using pressure and cut outs to “push” the bones back into place. My pediatric physical therapy background allows me to understand the logic behind this. However, my extensive background in the craniosacral system (the system of the membranes of the brain and the cranial bones) gives me reason to be concerned about this approach.

A concern of mine with the current helmet therapy, are the cases of migraines that are occurring in a small number of these children. One such child made their way to my clinic. The child had a “good” outcome with the helmet, the plagiocephaly was reversed. However, within a couple of months following the use of the helmet, the child began having severe migraines. This continued for over 2 years, turning this family’s life upside down. The family eventually learned of craniosacral therapy.

Craniosacral therapy is a gentle therapy that utilizes the movement of the cranial bones. When restrictions or imbalances are discovered, very specific techniques are used to bring the bones and system back into balance. Parents aware of this therapy are turning to craniosacral therapy for the treatment of plagiocephaly. The results seen in our clinic, and widely reported by other practitioners, are very positive and consistent. At our clinic we recommend starting at 6 sessions for infants under one year of age. Most parents, however, report noticeable changes in the first 2 to 3 sessions. For the child with migraines, after only a few craniosacral sessions, the child remains migraine free to this date...over 8 months later. Individual results vary, yet the earlier the child is treated, generally the more quickly changes are seen.

When looking for a cranial therapist it is important to find a practitioner that has experience working with children and infants. Craniosacral practitioners may be physicians, chiropractors, physical, occupational, speech or massage therapists. Specialized training for cranial techniques are essential. There are numerous training programs for different variations of the work.

Websites available to search for practitioners are: [www.iahp.com](http://www.iahp.com), or [www.craniosacraltherapy.org](http://www.craniosacraltherapy.org).