

FAMILIES

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Max Ortiz / The Detroit News

Laura Benavides works with 2-year-old Jacob Goldberg as he undergoes CranioSacral therapy to help him recover from hydrocephalus.

Special touch therapy helps kids

By Ellyce Field
Special to The Detroit News

SOUTHFIELD

Laura Benavides has a healing touch.

The Providence Hospital physical therapist practices CranioSacral therapy, or CST, a light touch therapy that helps relax and assist the body in self-correcting mechanisms in the areas surrounding and protecting the brain and spinal cord. Benavides offers a light massage to the skull, face and mouth (cranium) as well as the tailbone area (sacrum).

"CST really teaches you how to work with subtleties of the system," Benavides says. "The cerebral spinal fluid is like a rhythm, like a wave in the water, and your hands can follow it through the tissues."

As a CST practitioner, Benavides offers infants and young children an alternative to traditional physical therapy.

She often works with nurs-

About the therapy

What: CranioSacral Therapy for Children and Infants.

When: Ongoing.

Where: Providence Hospital, 16001 W. Nine Mile, Southfield.

Cost: \$60 per session.

Information: For an appointment, call (248) 424-5820.

ing moms whose infants are having a hard time latching on to the breast.

"An otherwise healthy baby might have been twisted and turned at birth, creating a hypertension in the neck that makes it difficult to turn one way," she says. "CST can relieve those restrictions in the body and shift tension."

Benavides has worked with 2-year-old Jacob Goldberg since he was approximately 4 months old.

"Jake was born with hydrocephalus, but it wasn't diag-

nosed right away," Benavides says. "At 3 months, he had so much pressure in his head. They did an evacuation and put in a shunt, and then his head bones folded back on themselves very severely. Jake couldn't use the left side of his body, and he presented as blind."

After almost a year and a half of CST, Jake has gone from lying on his back to getting on his hands and knees and beginning to climb.

"He loves CST," Benavides says. "It's the first thing that isn't invasive. And he's made a whole year's gain in one year."

"CST is a modality of wellness," she says. "It helps create a healthy environment for the central nervous system and has been shown to be effective in treating colic, chronic ear infections, motor problems and autism."

Ellyce Field is a Metro Detroit free-lance writer.

F.Y.I.

It's finally happening and in the city of my birth - what a coincidence -

THANKS for all your hard work - we are making a bit of a difference

Payco John

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