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Robert Toporek

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Hands-on parenting: A practical guide to massage for happier, healthier, smarter kids and parents

The power and importance of touch in human growth and development cannot be overstated. Neuroscience is now verifying that from the moment we are conceived, our brains grow at the fastest rate until age five or six. Science has shown that touch is an essential part of our cognitive, physical, and social/emotional development. In an article on the importance of touch, author Crystal Leonard states, "Touch is by far the most interesting and necessary of the 'five senses.' Any movement requires an acute awareness of one's own body which is gained through proprioception, an internal form of tactile sense. The sense of touch develops before all other senses in embryos, and is the main way in which infants learn about their environment and bond with other people. This sense never turns off or takes a break, and it continues to work long after the other senses fail in old age. Throughout life, people use their sense of touch to learn, protect themselves from harm, relate to others, and experience pleasure. Interestingly, positive touch from others is necessary for an individual's healthy development. Despite the presence of all other life requirements, infants will fail to thrive without this positive touch. Rolfing is a highly specialized form of mind-and-body transformation. Robert is on the cutting edge of bringing this powerful form of touch and education to babies and children. He has worked with both babies and children that are perfectly healthy and those that have developmental challenges. He has worked with babies and kids with bowed legs, scoliosis, poor posture, cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, Asperger's, and other conditions. Robert has extensive long-term video and photographic documentation on the value of this work. His new book, *Hands-On Parenting: A Practical Guide to Massage for Happier, Healthier, Smarter Kids*, is full of easy-to-read common-sense approaches parents can use to advance their babies' and children's academic, economic, and social development.

Biography

Robert Toporek has produced an award-winning video documentary and published a monograph entitled *The Promise of Rolfing Children*. Since 1975, Robert has Rolfed and documented amazing transformations of more than 4,500 men, women and children. In 1978, Dr. Rolf chose him to develop a project to launch her vision of Rolfing babies and children. Robert is also a decorated Vietnam veteran and a successful nonprofit leader.

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