Van Every

FAMILY CHIROPRACTIC CENTER

THE PERFECT STORM

A Parent's Guide to Your Child's Nervous System

Why so many of today's scattered childhood struggles can trace back to one stressed nervous system, and what a gentle first step looks like

If you are here, chances are you have been worried about your child for a while. Maybe it is the meltdowns that come out of nowhere and last longer than they should. Maybe it is the trouble settling down at night, the constant catching of every bug that goes around, the tummy aches, the struggle to focus, or a baby who simply cannot get comfortable. Maybe you have already seen a few specialists, tried a few things, and still feel like nobody has connected the dots.

You are not imagining it, and you are not overreacting. You know your child better than anyone, and when your gut tells you something is off, that is worth listening to.

This guide is here to offer a different lens. Not a diagnosis, not a promise, just a way of understanding what so many kids today are carrying, and why it can show up in so many different ways at once. We call it the Perfect Storm. Once you see it, a lot of seemingly unrelated struggles start to make sense as pieces of one bigger picture.

THE HEART OF THE PERFECT STORM

Not one isolated symptom, but a pattern. A nervous system carrying too much, for too long, with too little chance to settle. So many kids today are carrying more stress than their young nervous systems were ever built to handle, and it is starting earlier than most of us realize.

What Is the Perfect Storm?

The phrase "the Perfect Storm" describes how several stressors can stack up on a developing nervous system over time. It is rarely one single thing. It is a combination: the way a child came into the world, the early bumps and stresses of those first years, the fast pace and constant stimulation of modern life, the screens, the go-go-go schedule that leaves little room to simply rest.

None of these on their own would necessarily be a problem. A child's nervous system is remarkably adaptable. But when enough of them stack up, especially during the years when the brain and nervous system are developing fastest, the system can get stuck in a kind of overdrive. It stays revved up, on alert, struggling to find the off switch. And when the nervous system is stuck in overdrive, it tends to show up in the body, often in more than one place at once.

How the Nervous System Gets Stuck in Overdrive

It helps to picture how the nervous system is supposed to work. Think of it as having two settings, a gas pedal and a brake pedal. The gas pedal revs us up: the alert, ready, fight-or-flight response. It is wonderful in the right moment. The brake pedal is the opposite: the calm, settle, rest-and-recover side, where a child digests food, sleeps deeply, fights off illness, regulates big emotions, and simply feels safe. A healthy nervous system moves smoothly between the two, all day long, like breathing.

The Perfect Storm is what happens when the gas pedal gets stuck down. When stress stacks up faster than a child can recover from it, the system can settle into a pattern of staying revved, staying on guard, even when there is nothing to guard against. The brake side gets crowded out and underused.

This is not the nervous system malfunctioning. It is the nervous system doing exactly what it was built to do, responding to the information it is getting. The trouble is simply that it has gotten stuck in the revved-up setting and is having a hard time finding its way back to calm.

When a nervous system spends too much time with the gas down and not enough on the brake, the effects ripple outward. Sleep, digestion, immune function, focus, and emotional regulation are all run by this same system. So when it is stuck in overdrive, several of those areas can struggle at once. That is why the signs often seem scattered, even though they trace back to one common source.

Why Early Stress Often Plays a Role

When we sit down with a family, one of the first things we explore together is history. Not to assign blame, and not because any one event decides a child's future, but because stress can begin earlier than many parents expect, and the nervous system tends to carry what it has not yet had a chance to release.

This is a gentle conversation, not a verdict. The question is never who did something wrong. The question is simpler and kinder: what has this child's nervous system had to adapt to, when did it happen, how intense was it, and how long has the system been carrying it? A few of the chapters we often look at together:

Before Birth

A pregnancy carried under a heavy stress load can be one early input among many. It is one piece of the picture, never the whole story.

The Birth Itself

Births that involved extra intervention, such as a long or difficult labor, a C-section, forceps, vacuum assist, or a cord wrapped around the neck, can place physical stress on a brand-new nervous system. Many of these are necessary and even lifesaving. We simply note them as part of the history worth understanding.

The Early Years

The ordinary bumps, illnesses, and stresses of infancy and toddlerhood, layered on top of a fast and stimulating modern world, can keep adding to the load.

None of these guarantees anything. Plenty of children move through all of them and adapt beautifully. We raise them only because they help explain why a nervous system might already be running on high alert, and why the pattern you are seeing today may have roots earlier than the first symptom you noticed.

The Signs Parents Notice

Every child is different, and these signs show up in different combinations. Most kids do not have all of them. But when a nervous system is stuck in overdrive, parents often notice clusters across several areas of life. See if any of this sounds familiar.

Focus and Attention

Difficulty sitting still or staying with a task to the end. A mind that races, jumps from thing to thing, or checks out. Big effort needed for things that seem to come more easily to other kids the same age.

Sensory and Big Emotions

Meltdowns that come on fast, run hot, and take a long time to come down from. Being easily overwhelmed by sounds, textures, tags, crowds, or busy places. Trouble with transitions and with shifting gears, in a way that feels bigger than the moment calls for.

Sleep

A hard time falling asleep, staying asleep, or settling at bedtime even when clearly exhausted. Restless sleep, frequent waking, or waking up still tired. A child who seems wired and tired at the same time.

Immune and Gut

Catching what feels like every bug that comes around, with slow recovery. Recurring ear infections, sinus congestion, or stuffiness. Constipation, discomfort, picky eating, or a sensitive stomach.

Babies and the Earliest Signs

A baby who is hard to soothe or seems uncomfortable much of the time (what many families call colic). Trouble nursing comfortably on one side, or a strong preference to turn the head one way. Frequent spitting up, or a tense, arched little body that struggles to relax.

The same underlying pattern can wear different faces at different ages. In infancy it may look like latch trouble, colic, reflux, or poor sleep. In the toddler and preschool years it can shift toward sensory overload and big, hard-to-settle emotions. Later it may show up as focus, behavior, anxiety, or a body that catches everything going around. The face changes. The thread underneath can stay the same.

How Development Builds, One Stage at a Time

Here is something that surprises a lot of parents, and it is one of the most useful ideas in this whole guide. Children do not develop in random order. Development climbs like a ladder, one rung resting on the one below it. The most basic, body-level functions come online first, and the higher, more complex skills build on top of them.

1. **Sleep**

   The foundation. A rested nervous system has the resources to do everything else.

2. **Eating and Digestion**

   Taking in and processing nourishment.

3. **Elimination**

   Comfortable, regular digestion all the way through.

4. **Sensory Processing**

   Making sense of sound, touch, movement, and the world coming in.

5. **Vision and Hearing**

   Taking in and organizing what the eyes and ears deliver.

6. **Language**

   Understanding and expressing.

7. **Behavior and Emotional Regulation**

   Managing impulses and big feelings.

8. **Higher-Level Focus and Learning**

   The complex skills school asks for.

When one of the lower rungs is stressed, the rungs above it have a harder time. A child who is not sleeping well, or whose digestion is uncomfortable, or whose sensory system is overwhelmed, is being asked to climb to focus and behavior and learning while standing on a shaky foundation. Sometimes the most helpful thing is not to push harder at the top of the ladder, but to ask whether the bottom rungs have the support they need.

This is not a checklist or a timeline to measure your child against. Every child climbs at their own pace. It is simply a way of seeing that the scattered struggles often connect, from the bottom up, through the one system that coordinates all of it.

Why the Nervous System Is the Common Thread

Sleep, digestion, immune function, focus, mood, and the ability to handle big feelings are all run by the same master system: the nervous system. It is the body's command center, the constant conversation between the brain and every other part of the body. It coordinates which systems are calm, which are alert, which are digesting, which are healing, moment to moment.

> **PERCEPTION, COORDINATION, OUTPUT**
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> One simple way to picture the nervous system's job. First it takes in information about the body and the world (perception). Then it organizes a response (coordination). Then comes what you actually see: sleep, movement, digestion, attention, and behavior (output). When the system is calm enough to coordinate well, the output tends to run smoothly. When it is stuck in overdrive, that whole chain has to work harder, and the strain can show up anywhere along it.

So when that system gets stuck in overdrive, you do not see the effect in just one place. The child who cannot settle to sleep, who melts down over small things, who keeps catching colds, who struggles to focus, and who has a sensitive tummy may not have a handful of unrelated conditions. Very often, those are several different windows looking into the same room.

This is why chasing each symptom on its own can feel like an exhausting game of whack-a-mole. When you step back and look at the nervous system as the common thread, a more hopeful possibility comes into view. If you can help that one underlying system find its way back toward calm and balance, you are supporting the foundation that all of those other areas depend on.

That does not mean every struggle traces to the nervous system, and it does not mean other kinds of care stop mattering. Good sleep habits, good nutrition, therapies, and your child's medical care all have their place, and we are glad when families have a full team. Other approaches are not wrong. We simply think the picture is incomplete when this central piece never gets checked.

How Gentle, Specific Care Helps Support the Nervous System

This is where we come in, and we want to explain it plainly, because chiropractic for children is often misunderstood. At Van Every, our entire focus is the nervous system. We are not trying to treat a symptom or chase a diagnosis. We are asking a simple question: is this child's nervous system stuck in overdrive, and if so, can we gently help it find its way back toward balance, so it can do its job of helping the child rest, regulate, and adapt?

The care itself is gentle, specific, and low-force. This is a long way from what many people picture when they hear the word chiropractic. There is no cracking. There is no twisting. There is no popping. With children especially, the input is light, calm, and precise. Many kids find it soothing. We use two techniques, both designed to deliver gentle, specific input to the nervous system without anything sudden or jarring.

Talsky Tonal

The upper neck and spine are among the most neurologically rich areas in the whole body, which means they call for the most careful, precise touch. Talsky Tonal uses very light, specific contact to offer the nervous system gentle, calming input. There are no sudden movements and no forceful turning. The idea is to invite the system to release tension it has been holding, so it can settle out of that revved-up state and spend more time in the calm, recover setting.

Koren Specific Technique (KST)

KST uses a small handheld instrument called the ArthroStim, which delivers a gentle, low-force, repeatable tap. (The ArthroStim is simply the instrument we use within KST, not a separate technique.) The light, controlled input is well-suited to a nervous system that is already running on high alert, because there is nothing startling about it. Most kids describe it as a light tap or a soft buzz. No force, no cracking, no discomfort.

Both techniques share the same goal: to gently and specifically support the nervous system, so that the child's own system has more room to regulate, rest, and adapt. We are not adding anything into your child. We are helping their body release something it has been holding onto, so it can do what it was designed to do.

A note on honesty, because it matters to us. We do not treat, cure, or fix any condition or symptom, and we will never promise a particular outcome. What we do is support the nervous system, the foundation, and then partner with you to watch how your child responds over time. We work alongside your family's medical care, never in place of it.

What to Expect at Your First Visit

We know that walking into somewhere new with your child, especially when you have been worried for a while, can feel like a big step. So here is exactly what the first visit looks like, with no surprises.

1

We Listen First

Your visit starts with us sitting down and truly listening. We want to hear the whole story: what you have been noticing, when it started, what a hard day looks like, what you have already tried, and what you are hoping for. You are the expert on your child.

2

We Test, We Do Not Guess

We use gentle scanning technology to get an objective look at what your child's nervous system is doing. The scans look at heart rate variability (how well the system shifts between gas and brake), thermography (temperature patterns that reflect nervous system activity), and surface EMG (the level of tension held in the muscles along the spine). No radiation, no discomfort. These scans do not diagnose ADHD, autism, anxiety, a sensory disorder, or any medical condition, and they are not meant to label your child. They simply give us an honest baseline, which we read together with history, exam, and your goals.

3

We Explain What We See

We sit back down with you and walk through what the findings show, in plain language, no jargon. You will leave understanding what we noticed and why, whether or not you choose to move forward.

4

A Plan Made for Your Child

If gentle care makes sense, we build a plan that fits your specific situation. There is no one-size-fits-all. Everything is tailored to what your child's nervous system is showing us. Where it makes sense, we are glad to work alongside your pediatrician or other providers as part of your child's full team.

5 **Gentle Care, Tracked Over Time**

The care itself is the gentle, light input described above. Because every child responds differently and meaningful change usually builds gradually, we check in over time to see how the nervous system is responding, and we adjust the plan accordingly.

Throughout it all, our office is built to feel warm and welcoming, more like a gathering of friends than a typical doctor's visit. Families come to know each other and the staff by name. We want both you and your child to feel comfortable and cared for from the moment you walk in.

Ready for a Simple First Step?

If you saw your child somewhere in these pages, the most helpful next step is also the simplest one: come in for a new-patient exam. There is no commitment beyond that, just a clearer understanding of the whole picture.

Book a New-Patient Exam

Text SKED to (248) 616-0900

You have been carrying the worry and doing the searching on your own for long enough. You do not have to figure this out by yourself. When your child's nervous system has a chance to settle out of overdrive, the rest of the system has more room to do what it was built to do: to rest, to regulate, and to adapt. Let us take that first step together.

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