

# IMPROVING PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS IN PAEDIATRIC ONCOLOGY THROUGH THE USE OF “MAGIC” MASSAGE

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## INTRODUCTION

The onset of cancer in childhood is devastating, despite positive trends in cure rates. The diagnosis has traumatic effects on the parents, and all of them describe the pain of watching their child suffer and being powerless to help. What can be done to ensure this experience does not leave too deep a mental, physical and sensory impact on them?

## MATERIAL & METHODS

A narrative review was conducted using three databases: Cairn, Pubmed and ScienceDirect. Twenty articles were reviewed from those published in the last 15 years. Our keywords cancer/child/touch or massage were the same as those used in developing magic massage.

## RESULTS

Massage reduces pain by releasing endorphins. It boosts the immune system, stimulates the circulatory and nervous systems, as well as the vestibular system. It is described as pleasant when it is performed slowly.

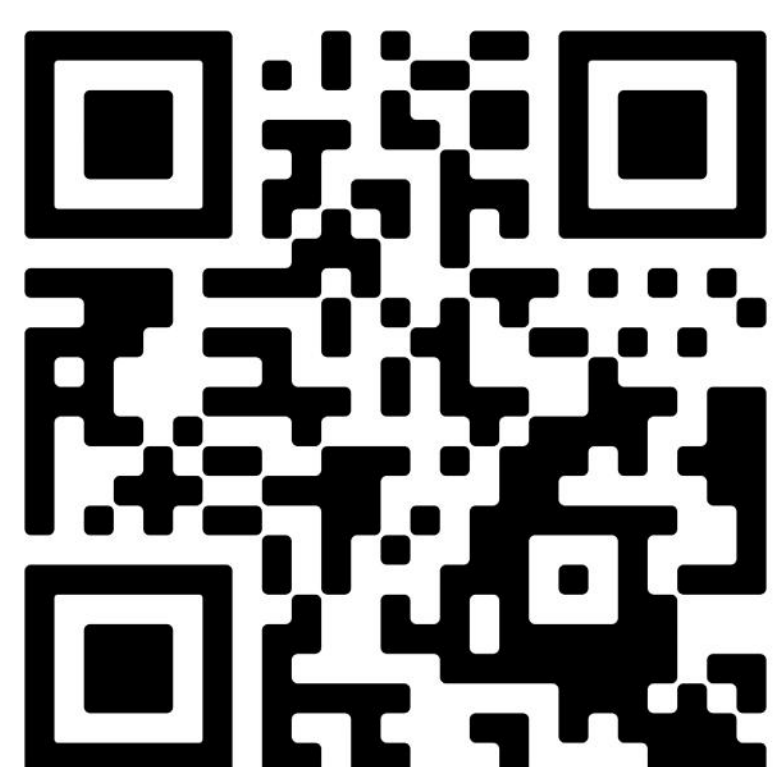
As it involves a relationship with another person, massage activates the mirror neurons and promotes the development of empathy. Massage strengthens the social bond through the release of endorphins.

Massage enables children to better appreciate and experience their bodies and to develop their emotional intelligence.

Magic massages are gentle strokes, simple and playful gestures for a tender moment before, during or after treatment. They are used to strengthen bonds and provide the child with physical and emotional well-being. The massages are presented as a game, to be accessible for everyone and playful for the children.



Figure 1. Cards developed for parents and caregivers



SCAN to access tutorials of the Magic Massages

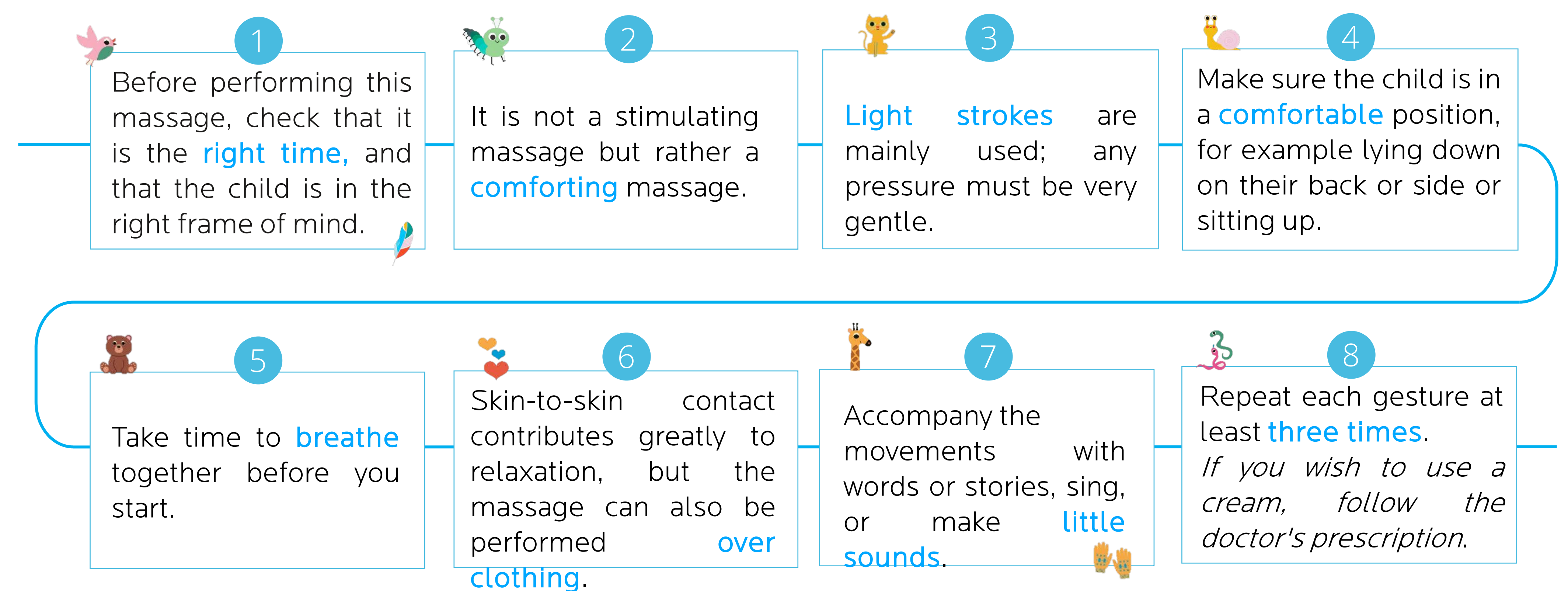


Figure 2. Recommendations for the use of Magic Massages on children with cancer

## CONCLUSION

This literature review was a basis for developing magic massage in order to support children's wellbeing. The purpose of these massages is for parents to reconnect with their child, and for the child to lessen its anxiety, reduce nausea and stress. Massage should be used in a well-established framework, respecting precautions and contraindications.

To obtain further evidence of qualitative improvement in the parent-child relationship, a study of a significant sample of families is currently conducted.

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### PRECAUTIONS:

- ✓ Wash and disinfect your hands well before starting the massage
- ✓ Gentle-pressure massage
- ✓ Avoid areas that are painful or are remembered by the child as being "at risk" (catheter entry point, scar, previously painful area(s))
- ✓ If the child has a central line with IV tubes, they should be seated or lying down on their side
- ✓ If platelets are very low (severe thrombocytopenia), avoid applying pressure and use light strokes
- ✓ For skull massages, consult your doctor and do what your child feels is best



### CONTRAINDICATIONS:

- ✗ Any tumour area regardless of the location (primary tumour or metastasis(-es))
- ✗ Recent surgery or scars
- ✗ Central catheter area (including insertion point, flow and outlet point)
- ✗ Avoid massaging with a fatty substance 2 hours before and after radiotherapy
- ✗ Avoid massaging if fever is present. This can lead to hypersensitivity of the skin, making touch/massage unpleasant

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