



What we do,
and why we do it

Our mission

Headstart4Babies is a registered charity (No 1112256) which aims to raise awareness of plagiocephaly and brachycephaly. As well as heightening the profile of both conditions, we also offer support and advice to families whose babies are affected, pointing them towards suitable treatment solutions where required.

We also aim to work with NHS professionals to educate parents about ways in which plagiocephaly and brachycephaly can be alleviated and to introduce both health workers and parents to the benefits of helmet therapy for babies with severe asymmetry.

Our longer-term objectives are to build a fund to assist families on low incomes to benefit from helmet therapy and, ultimately, to persuade the NHS to embrace and offer treatment across the UK.

Our vision

Our vision is that, by working with GPs, health visitors and consultants to offer advice on simple techniques to alleviate plagiocephaly and brachycephaly, we see fewer babies in helmets rather than more.

Where this is ineffective or not possible, our vision is that helmet therapy for severely affected babies will be available without charge from the NHS throughout the UK.

Founded in January 2005, Headstart4Babies is a UK registered charity (No 1112256) which helps to raise awareness of both plagiocephaly and brachycephaly, skull conditions which are increasingly prevalent in young babies.

The charity is run by Philip Saich and Karen Laker, whose son Ben was treated for severe plagiocephaly in 2004/2005. Since its launch, Headstart4Babies has given help and advice to in excess of 1,700 families.

In addition to raising awareness of the conditions and giving families help and advice, Headstart4Babies is also committed to building a fund to assist families on low incomes to proceed with treatment.

Families seeking to raise funds to pay for treatment can also access fundraising advice from the trustees of Headstart4Babies – see our fundraising leaflet for more details.

Further details on Headstart4Babies, including our latest news and blog, are available on our website at: www.headstart4babies.org



What is plagiocephaly?

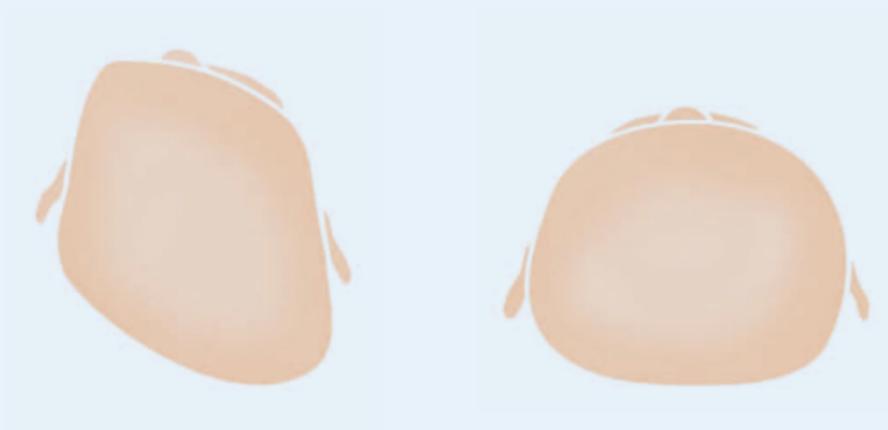
Plagiocephaly is defined as the 'oblique deformity of the skull, consisting in the greater development of the anterior part on one side and of the posterior part on the other'.

In other words, it relates to a partial flattening of the back of the head which gives a slightly distorted look to the head shape and which can cause a misalignment of the ears and eyes.

While it has not been identified as the specific cause of any medical problems in later life, any misalignment of the skull resulting from plagiocephaly may in severe cases contribute to jaw and dental problems and the negative psychological effects of teasing and bullying in the child's formative years.

Brachycephaly, as shown in the diagram below, is similar to plagiocephaly, but the condition is indicated by a flatness across the full extent of the back of the head, and occasionally by a corresponding flatness across the forehead.

Both conditions can be treated using a non-invasive helmet, and treatment is most effective between the ages of four and 12 months, as that is when the skull is experiencing its most rapid growth and is at its most malleable. Treatment in the UK currently costs around £2,000 per baby.



Plagiocephaly

Brachycephaly

Funding

Headstart4Babies is a completely independent charity, and we rely entirely on fundraising and donations for our income. We can receive donations by cheque made payable to 'Headstart4Babies' and sent to the address on the back cover of this leaflet.

Donations can also be made online via our Just Giving webpage at: www.justgiving.com/h4b

Needless to say, any donations we receive make a huge difference to our ability to continue our work and are very gratefully received.





Learn more, discover some inspiring success stories, sign up for our newsletter and make a donation at: www.headstart4babies.org

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