



the center for play therapy
Jacqueline Wright, MS MFT

Play Therapy Introduction

Before your child attends his/her session, please take him/her to the restroom. Play therapy can often be very emotionally freeing, causing the child to sometimes have to use the restroom during therapy. It is helpful if the child goes to the restroom before the session begins.

Also, if your child is coming from school and is hungry, please give him/her a snack before therapy starts. Only in rare circumstances will food be provided for a child in play therapy. In such a situation, this will be discussed with the caregiver.

Please know that the playroom has a variety of items that can be messy (e.g., easel paints, water-color paints, Play-Doh, clay, water, sand, etc.). Please dress your child in clothes that can tolerate mess or possible stains. In addition, if your child is allergic to any substance that falls into this realm, it is your responsibility to let the therapist know in order that appropriate modifications can be made.

When your child greets you in the waiting room following the therapy session, it is best not to ask such questions as, "Did you have fun?" While play is a natural, pleasurable activity for the child, children in play therapy are involved in playing out problems and emotional struggles and, therefore at times, "playing" may not be so enjoyable. Furthermore, when asked what the child did in play therapy, the child will typically respond with, "I played." This would be similar to asking an adult in therapy what he or she did in the session and receiving the response, "We talked."

Children in the playroom are not asked to clean the room. Since play is a child's language and toys are the child's words, having a child clean up the playroom following the session would be analogous to asking the child to clean up his/her emotional world. It would be similar to having an adult take back everything he/she said at the end of the therapy session. This is a unique stipulation to play therapy. Please know that the therapist does not advocate this action for other circumstances – only play therapy.

Please be sure to remain in the waiting room for most of the session in case it becomes necessary to end the session early. Occasionally there will be a situation where play therapy could no longer continue (e.g., child becomes sick, child breaks several toys, child chooses to leave and not return, the need for a parent consultation, the nature of the cleanliness of the playroom, etc.).

Approximately once a month, the therapist will meet with you to give feedback on your child. To protect your child's confidentiality, the feedback will only discuss overall play themes. However, at times, the therapist will discuss specific play behaviors and what this may mean for your child.

To better facilitate the play therapy process, the therapist will ask that you complete a "Weekly Caregiver Report." Your participation will provide valuable information to the play therapy process.

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