How can I continue to help my child at home?

At home, you can help the healing and growth process along by being alert to the feelings your child is expressing. Often it is their behaviors that are acknowledged and not the feelings behind those behaviors. It is through this awareness and communicating back to them that a child learns and expands on his or her own feelings vocabulary. This is easily done by stating to your child what you think they are feeling, such as, “You look angry, sad, happy…” Help your child to separate the feeling they are experiencing from the action or behavior they are taking, such as “I know you are angry, but I am not for hitting.”

Praise your child’s efforts and not the finished product. You want them to look inside for acceptance and validation and not outside of themselves. For example, “You worked so hard on that picture. You are very proud of yourself.”

We can get you growing...

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What is Play Therapy?

Play is an important part of childhood – it’s what children do naturally. It’s how they learn and communicate (but you already know that – you’re a parent). Play therapy is a type of therapy that uses play as a way to help children express themselves. Just as adults may talk with another adult to help them heal, play therapy is a way for children to use toys and play to “talk” without having to use words. Children often do not have the vocabulary to verbalize the feelings they are experiencing. Play gives them a way to “act out” what’s going on in their world. Even though it’s called Play Therapy, it is hard work for children!

Will I be in the playroom during my child’s session?

Sessions are private between the child and the therapist. You may even want to ask your child what happened during a session. We encourage you to allow the child to lead here. If your child wants to share, listen. If your child chooses not to share, it’s not because of you. It’s typically because he or she is still processing. If you would like to share information about your child with the play therapist, please do so in private when the child is not present. Since play therapy is hard work for children, it doesn’t make sense to tell them to “have fun” prior to the session. This consistency helps to support the relationship your child is building with the therapist, which is crucial to your child’s growth and healing. Your interest and commitment conveys to your child that you value what they are doing, which in turn helps the child to fully engage in the process. You are the most important thing to your child. When he or she knows you trust and value us, he or she will too. The therapist reserves time for your child each week, so please try to be on time. If your child is late, the therapist may not be able to see them for the entire 30 minute session time.

How can I help my child while they do the work necessary to heal?

One of the most important things you can do to help your child is to bring them to each session as scheduled. This consistency helps to support the relationship your child is building with the therapist, which is crucial to your child’s growth and healing. Your interest and commitment conveys to your child that you value what they are doing, which in turn helps the child to fully engage in the process. You are the most important thing to your child. When he or she knows you trust and value us, he or she will too. The therapist reserves time for your child each week, so please try to be on time. If your child is late, the therapist may not be able to see them for the entire 30 minute session time.

It is also not necessary for your child to be “good” when they are with the play therapist. The playroom is a special place where children get to do and say what they need to, and limits are presented only when necessary to keep your child safe. Your child may test these limits, which is perfectly normal, and should be viewed as part of the growth process. When testing the limits, your child may “limit out”, which means that their session may end early. For this reason, we ask that you remain in the waiting room while your child is in session. Please do just accept your child, even if he or she limits out, as this is a natural part of the process!

How long will it take?

Therapy can be a long process – please be patient. Each child is an individual and therefore it is not possible to determine the number of sessions a child might need to do whatever they need to do in play therapy.

Why should my child be rewarded with play therapy if they haven’t been behaving?

Children work hard during their play therapy sessions, and often enjoy coming. Sometimes it may be tempting to “punish” your child by taking away their play therapy time, but it is usually at those times that they actually need it the most!

In today’s world parenting can be very difficult. We can help!

Ask about our Child-Parent Relationship Training (CPRT)

It is a parenting program for parents of children under 10 years of age. New classes are continually forming.

There is no more important role you play than that of a parent!