

# Child or Adolescent Therapy

## Intake Paperwork

- For any minor (individual under age 18) receiving mental health treatment, a parent (**legal guardian**) needs to provide written consent. If the parents are divorced and have Joint Legal **Custody**, then EACH parent needs to CONSENT to the child receiving treatment. Please let us know if you'd like us to send the "Informed Consent" paperwork along with a letter explaining this process to the other guardian prior to the initial assessment.

## Session Structure

- The first session will typically involve the parent alone for at least half of the session in order to discuss background information on the child's issues and history, especially if the child/teen has never been in therapy before or has behavioral issues. Please make arrangements for any supervision accordingly, as we do not provide child care in our lobby.
- Subsequent sessions may include a 5-10 minute portion with the parent to discuss techniques and progress (with or without the child present, depending on the child's needs). This may be done either at the beginning of session or at the end of it.

## Why is play used in therapy?

- Play is very non-threatening and neutral, so it can be helpful in building the therapeutic relationship.
- Play is a reflection of the child's feelings, thoughts, experiences, and perceptions.
- Play helps children process stress and gain a sense of control over the event.
- Play provides a platform for modeling positive behaviors and practicing new roles in order to solve problems.
- Play is a form of communication for children not yet ready to verbalize their thoughts and feelings.
- Children learn better by using hands-on activities than they do by just listening because their concentration level is increased, and they're more able to remember.

## What types of play activities might your child's therapist use?

- Kinetic sand, beads, putty – For relaxation or fidgeting; Sand tray w/figurines– For illustrating their thoughts, feelings, & experiences; Puppets – For role-playing and problem-solving; Play-doh and/or art – For creative expression; Games – For building social skills and self-esteem; Scented items– Relaxation, deep breathing; Music – Relaxation and expression of feelings