



Non-Directive Play Therapy
(Can be blended with Hypnotherapy & Somatic Integrations)
Parent Information Sheet & Commonly Asked Questions

Q. What should I tell my child about why they are coming?

A. You can tell your child that they will be coming to a place with a special playroom, and they will be seeing Jillian there. **The encouragement is to tell your child that this is a place for them to have some special playtime where they get to *just be themselves*.**

If you wish to elaborate, you can let them know the playroom is a place where they can do *most* of the things they want to do. If your child asks why they are going there, you could say something such as, “When things are hard at school, home, with friends, changes (etc.), it can help to have a special place to play.” (You can adapt this depending upon your child's situation and circumstances).

With older children and if we are doing hybrid sessions, we may spend a bit of time at the beginning of the first session with you present, talking about why they are coming for sessions. This will have a similar theme, but in away that is more age appropriate.

Your practitioner does their very best to be quite sensitive with children in relation to talking about the “why” of the therapy and making certain to avoid any level of insinuating something is “wrong” with them that needs to be “fixed”. The goal is to create a positive/helpful experience for the child coming. *If* there has been a traumatic incident in the child's life, your practitioner may generally like to let the child know that they know about this during this first meeting. They will *not* expect your child to respond or talk about what has happened, the communication is simple to let the child know that it is not a secret. (This will be discussed with you in the first parent meeting, prior to your child's first session.)

Q. How long and how frequent are the sessions?

A. The sessions range from 60-120 minutes depending on the type of session and age of the child. This is dependent on the child's development stage and individual needs. This will be discussed with you at our first meeting.

For children coming in for emotional support and nervous system regulation, the sessions need to be held on a regular basis as this becomes your child's special play time. Predictability and consistency are key for the therapeutic process and will help your child to feel safer and more secure.

For children coming in for hybrid sessions including hypnotherapy, coaching and/or somatic therapy integrations, the frequency will be discussed with you during the interview. Often what this looks like is an hour in the Playroom to begin with, followed by moving to the session room and/or me recording of hypnotherapy for the child to listen to at bedtime.

****It is imperative that there is a commitment to attend regular (typically weekly) sessions until they display being in a regulated state and appear ready for graduation into less frequent support.** Consistency is important for children to feel safe when beginning something new. Safety is important for long term therapeutic integration.**

Q. Should/Can I be in the playroom with my child during sessions?

A. This can depend. **Typically, it is only encouraged if the child feels it is important for safety or expression.** In the case they want you there for safety the goal will be to transition towards them being in the playroom without needing you there. Ultimately it is important for this to be the child's special time where they can feel free to express in the way they need to and do *most* of the things they want to and a caregiver's presence can either support or hinder that - depending upon the scenario.

In the event that it is helpful for you to be in the playroom, it is important that you simply be there to silently observe and provide the comfort your physical closeness gives the child. Please only interact when invited by the child or practitioner to do so. At the same time, **it is most helpful if you can focus on regulating your own needs and emotions.** This means if you need to take some deep breaths or move side-to-side to be present, it is encouraged for you to do so. **The practitioner will use language that helps to guide things.**

We ask that **any encouragement for the child to do, or not do anything in the playroom is avoided** (unless there is a true safety concern in which case know the practitioner will step in). Notice your own activation with the desire to direct things and resource yourself by focusing on what your body needs to move through that. If/when the time seems appropriate the practitioner will give you the cue to return to the waiting room.

We ask you **do your best to not put any "good/bad" judgement on anything they do or invite you to do** around this experience. This includes anything they make in the playroom

Q. Do I need to stay in the office when my child is in the session?

A. This is dependent upon the child's needs. For **younger children, those with separation anxiety, and those new to the sessions it is important to stay** so that your child knows you are in the waiting room and that they can come to check, should they become anxious. Also, they may wish to invite you in to witness something important to them.

Please feel free to help yourself a cup of tea or water while you are waiting and make yourself comfortable. There are books and wifi available for you as well.

For children that are comfortable with you leaving (some children may even request for parents to leave), it is **important that you return to the waiting room 10-15 minutes prior** to the session ending. **It is imperative that you are there waiting when the child exits the playroom.** If someone else will be picking up the child, please let me know in advance so that I can remind the child when we are getting ready to finish our session.

Q. Can you tell me exactly how things will go for my child in sessions, and will you tell me all about what my child does, says or plays?

A. Every child is different and our work with your child will be focused on their experience and who they are. It is common to see stages generally in the process, and these can be discussed with you as they relate to your child. **Your child's practitioner will talk with you about themes they are seeing in the sessions.**

In addition, it is helpful to know that as the therapeutic process unfolds overtime the transformation does not necessarily always equal desirable behaviors. Sometimes **the child may need to process through uncomfortable feelings in order to land in a place of regulation** and homeostasis. If you have any questions or concerns, please know that the practitioner is more than open and willing to address that as well as to help make sure you feel you have the tools you need in order to orient to any challenges that may arise.

Your practitioner will often help with psychoeducation items to help you understand what may be going on with your child. In addition, will often suggest ways that you can support and assist your child - according to what they display and what is observed. In this child centered approach, we do not generally talk about the child's specific play or process as this can interfere with the child feeling free/safe to express what is there for them.

Q. What clothes should my child wear to sessions?

A. Please do your best to support your child in wearing clothes that can get dirty/stained. This way they do not have to be worried about getting paint, sand or water on clothes and shoes. If you are coming straight from a prior engagement, it is recommended to bring another set of clothes for your child to get changed into. This usually helps children feel less anxious in the playroom and can help children feel able to be freer and more expressive in their play.

Q. What should I say to my child when they finish the session?

A. It is best if you can follow your child's lead with this. It is recommended that you do **not** attempt to pry regarding how your child's experience was in the playroom, or if they had fun today. If your child tells you about what they did or what happened, this is perfectly fine. When the child engages you, the suggestion is to respond in a sensitive and positive/helpful way, showing interest in what your child is telling you by reflecting what you are hearing rather than asking questions. Sometimes after a session, children do not want to talk about what has happened in session. If your child brings a painting or picture out of the session, rather than praising your child or the picture, please try to respond more generally and without any judgement statements (positive or negative).

e.g. "You have used a lot of different colors in your picture" or "Looks like you took a lot of time doing that picture and that's it's really special for you."

If your child does choose to draw or paint, whatever the child does in session is of great value. This is the child's unique and special expression, and it is extremely important to not praise or critique in any way. This helps to encourage their own sense of self-worth rather than looking to others for it. ****Neutral and reflective responses only, please. ****

Q. What sort of contact will I/we have with you about my child's sessions?

A. Your practitioner will contact you after the first session to let you know how it went, and to check and see how they are doing after the session. We will have regular contact through virtual or physical meetings. The general timeframe you can expect is 30-60 minutes every 3-6 weeks. This can be flexible depending upon what we determine will be most beneficial for your child.

If anything happens between sessions that is worrisome, traumatic, or potentially disruptive for your child, please include this information in the "Returning Client" form at least 24-hours prior to the session. Also, when you notice positive changes in your child, this is also helpful to know and can be included in the form information as well. When you bring your child for Play Therapy sessions, this is their special time. It is important that you do **not** discuss with us what is happening or has happened for your child during the week. You are welcome to email with any concerns, shares, or questions that you may have.

This form of Mind-Body Therapy is about your child's inner growth and development. Your practitioner will do all they can to foster and nurture this through Play Therapy, Hypnotherapy, Somatic Healing, and time together with your child.

Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions

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