**Truehearted Counseling**

**Stephen Eller, LPC**

**Play Therapy Logistics**

**Generally Speaking…**

* Play therapy is a developmentally appropriate form of therapy for children. It allows them to grow and heal in the way that is most natural for them.
* Children have *confidentiality*, just like adults. I will only share general information, but will otherwise work with you and involve you as much as possible.
* Your child will not be asked to clean up. Because play is a child’s language, asking them to clean up afterward would be the same as asking an adult to take back everything he or she said in therapy. Note: Play therapy is a unique situation, and I do not necessarily advocate this otherwise.
* After school appointments are usually the busiest time of day for me. If you have an appointment after school, I ask that you respect that time and communicate with me if you can’t make it.
* Please keep in mind that if you are late for an appointment, we will still be ending at the same time.
* If something special comes up that is very important to your child (such as an extracurricular event or a visit from a beloved relative), don’t feel guilty about making those things a priority. Consult with me and use your best judgment. Therapy is important, but it’s often not helpful for therapy to interfere with things that help your child grow or heal.

**Introducing Therapy**

* If your child has questions about the reason he or she is coming to play therapy, you can say something like: “Sometimes when kids are having a hard time, they go play with someone who tries to help them feel better.” Saying that they are coming to therapy because they are bad or because something is wrong with them will make therapy less effective.
* A lot of children feel anxious during their first appointment. If your child seems to be having a hard time, I may invite you to walk them back or to come sit in the play room for a few minutes. If this happens, I ask that you watch quietly. I will signal you when it seems like a good time for you to slip out of the room.

**Parent Consults**

* YOU are an important part of therapy, too. Let me know if you have any ideas about how we can best work together.
* We will generally schedule parent consults after every four play therapy sessions. If something comes up and you need to talk sooner, please let me know. I can usually be flexible with this.

**Your Responsibilities**

* I will need updated information about custody arrangements. Please let me know as soon as any changes are made.
* Please keep in mind that it is your responsibility to inform me of any allergies your child has.
* In therapy, your child will have the freedom to express their emotional reality in whatever way they need to (within appropriate boundaries to keep them safe). Because of this, play therapy can be messy. Please bring your children to sessions in clothes that you wouldn’t mind getting dirty.
* I understand that sometimes important things happen that you want me to know about. I ask that you do not share your concerns or frustrations with me in front of your child. You are always welcome to call or e-mail me when something comes up. If necessary, you can also hand me a note before the session.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**The best way to handle things…**

**…before a session:**

* For young children, please take them to use the restroom before the session begins.
* If you’re coming after school, it’s helpful to make sure your children have a snack.
* Please remember to have clothing for your children to wear that you do not mind getting dirty.
* This is your child’s special time, and they get to decide how they use it. Please refrain from saying things like “Be good!” or “Remember to talk about \_\_\_\_\_,” because this may keep them from doing what is really important for their growth.

**…during a session:**

* I will need you (or another trusted adult who can be responsible for your child) to stay in the waiting room during the session. This helps provide a feeling of safety and comfort for your child. Also, there may be situations when we need to finish a session early.
* Sometimes, a child may be loud or messy during a session. This is perfectly normal and okay. Sometimes children need to be loud to process their emotions, and play therapy is a safe place for them to do so.

**…after a session:**

* Please refrain from asking your child any questions about their session (such as “Did you have fun?” or “What did you do?”). This is one way you can respect your child’s confidentiality, which helps therapy work better. It’s important for them to know that they have the freedom to do what is necessary for their growth, and the freedom to decide what they share about that process. If they decide to tell you themselves, then that’s fine.
* Some examples of things that are great for you to say when they get back include: “It’s so good to see you again!” “I missed you!” “Looks like you’re all done.” “I guess we’re finished. Are you ready to go?”
* Sometimes children may bring art with them. Another way you can work with me to make therapy more effective is to offer encouragement rather than praise. So, for example, rather than saying “That’s so pretty!” you might say something like, “It looks like you worked hard on that,” or “It looks like you’re proud of that one.” This lets them make their own internal judgments. Feel free to talk to me if you have any questions about this.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_