

# Wesley Center for Play Therapy

## Preparing your child for Play Therapy



### Clothing:

- Please make sure your child is comfortable.
- Please make sure they are in clothes that can get paint, clay, or other messy materials on them.

### Prepare:

- Please make sure your child has had a healthy snack before session.
- Ask your child to use the bathroom prior to the counseling session.
- Don't be surprised if your child tells you that "just played" during session. Sometimes children are not aware of the meaning of their play and may not know how to express it.
- Don't be surprised if your child's behaviors are different before or after a session. Just like adults, children may leave a session feeling great or emotionally off-kilter. Each play session is a personal experience and may affect them differently each week.

### Discuss:

- Discuss with your child about coming to play therapy. It may be difficult to discuss this at first. Below are some suggestions that other parents have used:
  - "You are going to be with (name of therapist) in a special play room, where there are lots of toys for you to play with."
  - If your child is asking why he/she may be going to counseling you could say; "You seem to be having a tough time at school (home, with friends, etc.) and, sometimes it helps to have a special play time just for you."
- After a session, allow your child to what he/she feels comfortable sharing. Play sessions are a special, private time. Your child should not have to feel obligated to report what happened when she leaves. Some children may share their experiences and others may not say anything at all.
- Please avoid using questions such as: "What did you do?" or "Did you have fun?" Instead, "Hi, we can go home now" will be more effective in allowing your child when to share with you their experience.
- Parents are a very important to their child's therapy; we will share more information with you at a later time. These conversations will occur over the phone or in a scheduled parent session.

### Be present:

- Parents are required to stay in the waiting room while the child is in session. If your child needs to leave a session early (i.e. an emergency), it is important that you are there to care for your child.
- There may be times when you are asked to participate in sessions where your child is asked to 'teach' or 'show' you something meaningful, or you may be asked to participate in 'playing' with your child. We ask that you be open to these moments and support your child as she shares with you.