

Frequently Asked Questions

These questions are designed to anticipate and address your concerns. Should you have further questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of our clinical team

Why is Play Therapy more appropriate for Children?

Play is a child's natural medium of expression. Just as adults use words to talk out their experiences, children use play. Children's play is meaningful and significant to them, for through their play they extend themselves into areas they have difficulty in verbally entering. Toys are words for children. They are able to use toys to express what they cannot say, do what they would feel uncomfortable doing and express feelings they might be reprimanded for verbalizing.

How can it help my child?

When a child is in a safe environment and safe relationship with the therapist, the child can fully express and explore his/herself (feelings, thoughts, experiences and behaviours). Play can reveal: what the child has experienced; the reactions to what was experienced; feelings about what was experienced; what the child wishes wants or needs; and the child's perception of self.

Through the process of expressing themselves through play, children can learn perseverance, pleasure in having the ability to choose, self-direction, self-responsibility, and they, along with their choices, are accepted. They get to be involved in problem solving which gives them satisfaction and develops self-esteem.

Why is it beneficial for the child to lead the session?

For a lot of children, they feel like they have little or no control over their life experiences. Even when you think they are the most controlling little person in the world, this behaviour is usually stemming from a deeper level of feeling out of control. In the playroom, the child generally leads and directs the session. It is the feeling or sense of being in control of the play therapy experience, rather than actual control, which is essential to a child's emotional development and positive mental health. Through the child expressing a specific behaviour i.e. anger in the playroom, and the therapist setting appropriate limits, the child can learn self control.

What is the difference between playing at home and Play Therapy?

Playing at home is important for your child's development. At Be Centre the child is playing with a therapeutic objective. The relationship between child and therapist also brings a therapeutic element to the

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room. It is different to the relationship between parent and child. As a parent in the home, you need to have a lot more structure and boundaries necessary for your child. The therapy session provides a consistent time for your child to 'just be' and not have to worry about all the do's and don'ts.

Should I talk to my child about what happens in a session?

It's best to leave it up to your child to decide if they want to talk about their session with you. Try to resist the urge to ask questions like 'what did you do?', "were you good"?, or "did you have fun"?. It's important for children to have a space where they can 'just be' and not feel like they have to report back to anyone about it. A simple statement could be "come on, let's go home now that you've finished".

If the child wants to discuss their session content with you than that is fine also.

What happens if the child misses a session?

We understand that children, parents and therapists get sick or life gets too busy. However therapy is most beneficial when it is consistent and predictable for the child. If you need to change your session time, speak to your therapist. Or if you need to cancel then please let your therapist know as soon as possible. If your child is ill, please do not bring them to therapy.

Why is it important to be on time?

When picking your child up from therapy, it is important to be on time. Sometimes children can feel anxious or worried when they walk out of session and their parent isn't there. To prevent this, please be ready for your child at the end of their session. Your therapist will also generally have another session following yours and needs to prepare the playroom.

As a parent, how do I support my child through the process?

Supporting a child who is experiencing emotional or behavioural difficulties can be challenging to manage as a parent and family. If you feel you need some assistance in supporting your child through this process, you are welcome to have some parent support sessions with one of our therapists.

What if I need to talk to the therapist about my child?

Try to avoid asking questions in front of your child before or after the session. If you have any questions or concerns you are more than welcome to call/email the therapist before or after the session to discuss. You also have the 'Weekly Parent Report' sheet to enable you to update your therapist on what has been happening for your child during the week.

What do I do when my child is in session?

In the initial sessions, perhaps stay in the waiting room or close to Be Centre in case your child feels anxious about starting and wants to know you are close by. As your child becomes more comfortable, you are welcome to drop your child off and be back in time to pick them up. However please ensure your mobile phone is on so you can be contacted if necessary.

Also during the session, if you have forgotten to fill out a 'Weekly Parent Report' sheet than you can do it then too – just ask your therapist for a copy.

Frequently Asked Questions - Continued

What happens if my child's difficulties become worse while they are having Play Therapy?

Sometimes the behaviour can get worse before it gets better. For a small number of children this can be the case. The Play Therapy process works with the child on many levels – consciously and unconsciously. The process can 'open up' the child and any repressed or ignored fears, anxieties or hurts can come out. This 'opening up' can cause behavioural or emotional difficulties to get worse, but be assured it is part of the process and it is a positive thing that the child is expressing these things. It is important to remain patient with your child and the process. Soon enough your child will develop the coping strategies to deal with these difficulties and their resilience will increase.

Why do we have to wait 6 weeks until the review session?

As a parent it is natural to want to know everything that your child is doing. The reason we have the review half way is because the Play Therapy process takes time and the therapist needs to get to know your child and vice versa. The first couple of sessions are treated like preliminary sessions where your child can get to know the room and become comfortable playing. After 6 weeks we will have more observations to discuss with you and there is a greater window for you to see any possible changes in your child.

Please feel free to chat to your therapist before the 6 week review if you have any concerning matters.

What should my child wear and bring to therapy?

If possible, dress your child in play clothes that can get dirty. Your child might be playing with wet sand, paint, glitter, clay etc that may leave some marks on your child's clothes. It's important your child has freedom to express themselves without worrying about getting into trouble for being messy. There are also paint shirts for your child to wear. Your child does not need to bring anything to therapy.