

# Recommended Resources for Leaders

## General resources

Center for Play Therapy (CPT) at the University of North Texas, <http://cpt.unt.edu>.

Family Enhancement and Play Therapy Center (FEPTC), [www.play-therapy.com](http://www.play-therapy.com).

IDEALS of Kentucky, [www.skillswork.org](http://www.skillswork.org).

National Institute of Relationship Enhancement (NIRE), [www.nire.org](http://www.nire.org).

## FT program resources

### Video resources for Meeting 1

If a commercial video is needed, instead of a live or video demonstration with a leader, we recommend either of the following:

*Filial Therapy* with Eric Hatch, Ph.D. (1989). An excellent demonstration of a CCPT play session. Show the demonstration play session to parents, and *not* the FT contents. Available from the National Institute of Relationship Enhancement (NIRE), [www.NIRE/bookstore](http://www.NIRE/bookstore).

*Filial Play Therapy* with Risë VanFleet, Ph.D. Again, show the demonstration play session to parents, and not the FT contents. Available from the American Psychological Association (APA), [www.apa.org/pubs/index.aspx](http://www.apa.org/pubs/index.aspx).

## Resource for the generalization phase

For additional input for leaders on generalizing CCPT skills to daily life, we recommend:

Guerney, L. (2013). *Clinician's and group leader's manual for parenting: A skills training program* (5th ed.). Silver Spring, MD: IDEALS. (Available from NIRE/IDEALS, 12500 Blake Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904-2056.)

## Suggested formal evaluation measures pre- and post-GFT program

Filial Problem List (FPL) (Horner, 1974).

Measurement of Empathy in Adult-Child Interactions (MEACI) (Stover *et al.*, 1971) (primarily for researchers).

Porter Parental Acceptance Scale (PPAS) (Porter, 1954).

Parenting Stress Index (PSI) (Abidin, 1997).

## Training and certification opportunities in FT

National Institute of Relationship Enhancement (NIRE).

Family Enhancement and Play Therapy Center (FEPTC).

# Setting up a New GFT Program Within an Organization<sup>1</sup>

The main steps towards successful organization of a new GFT program by filial therapists within an organization are set out here.

## **When GFT leaders are not agency staff**

When GFT leaders are not regular staff members, care needs to be exercised in bringing the program into an organization that is not familiar with not only the content but also what is required of the organization to support the offering of the program. When leaders are staff members and/or the agency itself has initiated a request to have GFT programs introduced, these steps can possibly be simplified.

As in all organizing, timing is most important. The organizational steps outlined here have recommended times assigned to them, based on our experiences with larger agencies. Other settings may differ. Leaders may find that these times can be condensed somewhat after they have run the whole program a few times. The steps for organizing outlined here are designed for introducing GFT to an agency in which the leaders, unlike staff members, are not able to introduce new therapeutic programs into the agency's current services themselves.

## **Step 1: (approximately 4–6 months before beginning meetings)**

### STARTING FROM THE TOP OF THE ORGANIZATION

Leaders already need to have the director's approval for running a GFT program in their organization. This approval, depending on the organization, may already have entailed several of the steps outlined here. Once agency approval is given, the leaders then need to contact the manager(s) responsible for such programs in the organization to outline the goals, methods, and benefits of the program directly to the manager. It is important for leaders to make the case for how FT can assist the organization in its work, if this was not done earlier. For example, leaders need to underline that this program is cost effective because it can increase families' well-being as a whole, rather than simply removing a child's presenting symptoms, or just "shaping up" the most difficult "marginal" parents, thus potentially reducing re-referrals. Agencies need to understand that the therapy provided in the GFT group is likely to reduce the amount of case work needed by staff personnel more generally.

Leaders also need to decide with managers the best way to introduce the program to the other staff to gain their enthusiastic cooperation. In order to succeed, the program must be a unified agency or organizational effort.

### REASONS FOR NOT OBSERVING GROUPS BY AGENCY STAFF

It should be made clear that staff members are welcome to contact the leaders in order to have questions answered and receive more detailed information about the program. However it also should be stressed that staff are not able to "sit in" as observers because the group has a therapeutic intent. There are issues of trust and confidentiality that may be undermined if other staff members attend some sessions. Among other things, parents may feel that they are being "checked on." Instead, leaders may wish to suggest email memos, and/or presentations with video contents to staff groups to inform them of the program in more detail. When initial intakes and assessments are conducted by professionals who will not be involved in the GFT program, more detailed information is required. Some families have key workers or referrers assigned to them who are responsible for overall delivery of services. The key workers' or referrers' roles as "resource people" for these families, and the feedback that group leaders will provide to them, need to be clarified in more detail both with staff, including managers, and the families themselves.

Finally leaders should ensure that other staff time is approved by management (e.g. administrative support for sending out letters, making room bookings) and indicate times when this help will be needed.

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<sup>1</sup> This has been adapted for GFT from Guerney, L. (2013). *Clinician's and group leader's manual for parenting: A skills training program* (5th ed.). Silver Spring, MD: IDEALS, with permission from the publisher.

## Step 2: (approximately 3–4 months before starting)

### STAFF COOPERATION AND INVOLVEMENT WITH THE PROGRAM

We suggest leaders offer to help the manager implement the plans that have been worked out to brief the staff. For example, a leader might write the first draft of the memo that goes to the staff, and offer to be present at the meeting in which staff members are informed of the program. These offers are not only ways of showing a spirit of cooperation: they are an opportunity for leaders to present the program in the best possible light, and an opportunity to prevent any attitudinal problems or misunderstandings that might otherwise arise. It also is a means to encourage staff members to refer families for specialist intake and assessment, and possible selection for the GFT program. However, GFT leaders should be careful to make the point that it is they who make the final decisions on group composition after the full specialist intake for GFT is complete.

Chapter 2 on intake and composition of the group addresses these issues in detail; we recommend that the chapter be read alongside this discussion. Agency initial intakes, and then specialized GFT intakes by leaders of the program, need to be conducted within a reasonable time frame for the agency involved, alongside the other tasks outlined here.

When an organization has more parents than can participate in a single group, the director and/or involved professionals, along with the GFT leaders, need to set some priorities as to whom to include in the first round of the program. Each organization, of course, will want to arrange its first group in accordance with its own priorities and situations. However, past experience in running initial GFT programs indicates that it may be wise to avoid including the most serious referral problems in the first group. This strategy is suggested in order to ease the implementation of a new program. It may be helpful to seek out group members who are reasonably adequate in their roles as parents, likely to attend sessions regularly, and whose children range between the ages of 3 and 11. This allows new group leaders an opportunity to practice delivering the program under less difficult circumstances, before conducting groups with more clinically demanding families.

### CHOOSING A NAME FOR YOUR PROGRAM

Giving the program a user-friendly name may help promote interest by parents. Professionals know this program as “Filial Therapy” and “Group Filial Therapy”; these terms should be included in the description offered in the parent information leaflet. However, this labeling in our experience is overly formal for introducing the program to parents. Thinking about delivering “therapy” to their children can sometimes be unduly anxiety provoking for parents initially. For example, one GFT program was called the “Powerful Play Program” in leaflets for parents, when it was delivered by the second author and her colleague. This seemed to set a positive and less formal tone at the outset. (See Appendix 4 for an example of this leaflet.) The leaflet will need to be ready for the initial intake stage to hand out to parents.

### TIME, DATE, AND LOCATION

Leaders need to determine a time that suits the leaders, participants, and the organization, taking into account all known organizational and community limitations (e.g. Wednesday night church services). Along with choosing the dates and time for the program, leaders decide on a location for their meetings.

### SPACE REQUIREMENTS FOR GFT MEETINGS

Ideally the location should be a place that people associate positively with receiving help or support and which is convenient for most parents. One large room with movable chairs enables people in groups with larger numbers of participants to move out into smaller practice groups. Another smaller room, which is used for play demonstrations and parent-child play sessions, should have a video link or one-way screen. An adjoining room and/or a kitchen for break-time refreshments is highly desirable. Children accompanying their parents to sessions also need facilities and adult supervision in a separate room. These physical arrangements are ideal. In a pinch, leaders can bring in coffee or tea to the group meeting room and breaks can be provided there, usually 30 minutes in length. Many leaders have improvised in other creative ways to allow for the necessary space needed to cover all the demands of a GFT group.

### **Step 3: (approximately two months before starting)**

#### **FURTHER INTAKE FOR POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS**

After an agency intake and identification of potential participants, further specialist intake of families by group leaders begins.

### **Step 4: (approximately one month before the first meeting)**

#### **CONFIRMATION OF A PLACE IN THE PROGRAM**

Each family selected requires a confirmation letter. Again, this letter needs to be backed up with email, text/cell phone, or telephone contact. See Sample Confirmation Letter To Parents which leaders can use as a guide. When families have key workers or referrers assigned who are responsible for overall delivery of services (e.g. a case manager), these professionals need to be copied into the confirmation letter.

### **Step 5: (one week before the program starts)**

#### **FOLLOW-UP CONTACT**

A phone call and email follow-up to the invitation are highly recommended. It works best in our experience if the agency or organization staff do this; leaders need to provide them with the list of names, phone numbers, and email addresses for the designated participants.

### **Step 6: (between the first and second weeks of the program)**

#### **NON-ATTENDANCE AT THE FIRST GFT MEETING**

Sometimes parents who agreed they will attend do not come to the first meeting. Before the second meeting, leaders need to call and email these people to let them know that it is not too late to start. If a few parents have changed their minds about attending, leaders may try to find out why. At this point, leaders may add some latecomers or parents who had not been able to get into the original group, if original members make it clear that they are not continuing.

# Information for Agency Intake Professionals and Referrers who are not GFT Leaders

The following information can be adapted by GFT leaders for distribution to intake professionals and referrers who refer families onto specialist GFT intakes with filial therapists.

## Introduction

The X Program (*insert the popular name of the program offered here*), known in the therapy literature as Group Filial Therapy, is a well-integrated model of family change based on non-directive, child-centered play therapy and family therapy principles. Its basic premise is that parents or carers can be taught to have child-centered play sessions with their own children and serve as effective therapeutic agents of change for them. It is a family-based intervention—all family members are encouraged to be included, if they are willing to do so.

## Is the X program an established program or a new and unproved idea?

Group Filial Therapy is very well established. There have been over 40 years of practice and research on this method, also called Filial Therapy, in the USA. There also are different ways that have been developed to carry out this approach: groups have been well researched in the USA, both shorter group models of 10–12 weeks in length and longer group models of 20-plus weeks in length. The other way in which families are helped is in individual Filial Therapy. For these programs, a 10–20-week training and supervised practice period is the usual length of time for moderate clinical problems. Filial Therapy is increasingly practiced worldwide.

Filial Therapy has improved parent-child relationships when there have been a wide range of difficulties reported by parents and teachers, or when there have been family problems. For example, children with attentional difficulties and behavior problems, children who have had traumatic experiences, and children who have had depression and other anxieties have been helped by Filial Therapy. Also, children and parents who have had difficulties in their relationships due to a variety of causes (e.g. late adoption after maltreatment by birth parents; divorce and separation) have been helped.

## Who is included in the X program?

Children and parents who... (*insert the program's inclusion criteria here*). All children between the ages of 3 and 11 are eligible and their parents or carers. Because Group Filial Therapy is a family-based program, later in the program parents are helped to spend special playtime or activity time with their younger (under 3 years) and older (over 11 years) children. Parents are encouraged to begin conducting special playtimes with all of their children ranging in age from 3 to 11, and not just the child referred. If both parents in a two-parent family are unable to participate, parents unable to actively take part are encouraged to come along for the training and introductory meetings in order to be able to give active support to the parent who is participating and carrying out the program.

## How long is the program?

The set program is 20 weeks long (*insert dates of program meetings here, including any breaks*). Parents need to be motivated and committed to attending each week, and bring their children along for practice play sessions during some of the meetings. If the group decides they wish to continue further, there is the option of... (*insert any planned additional meetings here, if already known*).

## Where and when will the program be held?

The meetings will be on (*insert day of week*) for 2.5 hours from (*insert time*) at (*insert venue*).

## What happens during the X program?

This program is well structured to ensure that families are helped as a dynamic unit. It trains parents to deliver special playtimes to their children. The program assumes that children communicate their emotions most effectively and earliest through their play, and that play is both empowering and enjoyable for children and their parents. The X program teaches parents the basic skills of child-centered play therapy, a well-recognized approach, and helps them to conduct these play sessions under supervision and then independently under indirect supervision at home. It does not train parents to become therapists! Parents conduct play sessions only with their own children.

The entire group learns together to conduct special play sessions, concentrating on four skill areas. Group leaders demonstrate these play skills with each child in the program; they hold group discussions and parents have practice opportunities. When the initial training has been completed, parents have practice play sessions with their own children, supervised by the group leaders and observed by the rest of the group. After parents' play skills are established, they transfer play sessions to their own homes. During later group meetings, parents receive more help in consolidating their skills, and in understanding the underlying meaning of their children's play and their own reactions. The final phase of the program helps parents transfer their child-centered skills to their daily lives.

Please note that this training is a skills-based approach; it is a step-by-step process; parents are helped to practice special play skills under supervision *before* they transfer these skills to their homes and daily lives.

## What are some of the issues adults have when learning new skills? How are these addressed in the X program?

The anxieties adults feel in new situations usually disappear quickly when they realize that the approach used by the program leaders is very supportive. Leaders assume that adults learn best when their strengths are pointed out, and the skills they already have are built on. Group leaders employ ways to learn for adults that are enjoyable, and emphasize ways group members can support and encourage one another. The group leaders appreciate that parents are the main people who are important to their children, and who should have the greatest understanding of them already. The leaders want to help parents find the best ways of helping their children, and they take a collaborative approach with them.

## How will participants be selected for the program?

When intake professionals or referrers decide Filial Therapy is an option for a family, they give the family general information on the program, set out in the leaflet given to parents (see General Leaflet on the X Program for Interested Parents). If parents express an interest in considering the X Program, a referral is then made to the filial therapists conducting the program to arrange further intake appointments with the family. Filial therapists will contact the family to explain the next steps in the intake process further. Intake professionals explain to families that the filial therapist will contact the family to arrange a time that the family comes in again to play together; then the adults talk with the therapist about what occurred and the X Program.

# General Leaflet on the X Program for Interested Parents

**Is the .....  
Program right for you and  
your child?**

Do you have a child or children  
between the ages of 3 and 11 years  
old?

Do you find yourself arguing and  
shouting at your child more often  
than you would like to?

Do you feel you have lost touch with  
what your child thinks and feels?

Do you sometimes feel that your  
child is the one in charge, rather  
than the other way round?

Would you be willing to learn  
to improve your parenting and  
relationship with your child?

**WE ALL  
KNOW THAT**

**PARENTING CAN BE  
CHALLENGING!**

**WE ALSO  
KNOW THAT...**

**YOU ARE THE MOST  
IMPORTANT PERSON IN  
YOUR CHILD'S LIFE**

We want to help...

(Insert name of organization)

Tel. ....

**POWERFUL  
PLAY**



**Information for parents  
of children under  
12 years of age**

## The ..... Program is for parents and their children

Its aim is to help parents learn proven skills for communicating with and disciplining their children by means of special (healing) play methods that parents learn and later apply at home.

Play is "pleasant to swallow" and rewarding for both parents and children. Play is a very good way to develop more positive and closer relationships between parents and children.

It is a family program: all the children in your family between the ages of 3 and 11 years old can take part. And if your children have two significant parent figures in their lives, both are urged to come along and participate.



## WHAT IS THE ..... PROGRAM?

The ..... Program (also called Filial Therapy) is a week group program (with ..... additional, optional weeks afterwards). It helps parents learn some of the same skills Play Therapists use to help children who have problems. The group leaders in the ..... Program can help parents be as effective professionals in helping their own children.

You and your children will be given direct help in group meetings before you take these skills home with you.

These are some of the skills you will be learning:

- Limiting setting.
- How to get your children to listen to you.
- How to listen to your children.
- How to be more in charge and in control as a parent.

By the end of the ..... week program, you will see a real difference in:

- Your relationship with your children.
- Your children's behavior.
- Your confidence and competence in your parenting skills.

## When is the program held?

*(Insert day of week, time of day and length of program.)*

Childcare is available on site for all the children of families who attend (or give other childcare arrangements)

## Where are the meetings held?

*(Insert information here.)*

## What is the group like?

You will meet with other parents to learn new skills



to become more effective parents. First the leaders help you practice skills together. Then they supervise parents having special play times with their children. Afterwards parents will be able to apply them at home.

## Who are the group leaders?

*(Insert names of leaders.)* They are qualified Play Therapists who specialize in Filial Therapy. They plan to make these group meetings as relaxed and enjoyable as possible for everyone.

## How do I register?

You will be invited to participate by the Assessment Team at your local ..... Service.



# Letter Arranging the GFT Assessment Phase for Interested Families

*(Insert letterhead of agency)*

*(Insert date)* .....

Dear *(insert names of parents)* .....

Thank you for your expressed interest in the X Program. You have already been given the general leaflet on the program, and we discussed in our telephone call recently what the next appointments are for. I am writing to confirm the two appointments with me to decide on the program's suitability for your family: *(Insert dates, times, and venue for meetings here.)*

Since it is important for all family members to attend this first meeting, we have set it up so that it is possible for everyone to attend together. It also would be useful for you to bring along a supportive adult to mind your children during the second half of the appointment. There will be 20–30 minutes at the beginning of this appointment when I watch your family play or do an activity together. For the second part of this time, I meet with you parents separately, so that we can talk together about what happened.

The second appointment is all about the X Program, and is only for the parents to attend. You will receive further information on the program, or have another option for services proposed to you, as well as having all your questions arising from these meetings addressed.

We realize that you will want to tell your children what the first meeting they attend is about. We suggest that you give children who are old enough to understand the following brief explanation:

*Our family wants to get along better together and we are going to see (name of place or organization) for some help. (Name of leader) wants to watch how our family does some playing together. All you need to do is play almost any way you want with the toys in the room. You do not need to perform in any way. Just have fun. Whatever we all do will be fine with them.*

Parents may also add, for children who need further explanation:

*Nobody else will be with us, but (name of leader) will be able to watch through an observation window (if available, or on a video) all the things we've been doing. (Name of leader) would like to see how we do things together as a family. They would like us to enjoy our time together. Then we parents will talk it over with (name of leader) and decide in a little while what comes next. You will be waiting for us for a short time with ..... (caretaker) while we talk.*

Thank you again for your interest in the X Program. Please confirm your attendance with our administrator *(insert name and contact details)*. And please call, or email me personally, if you have any questions about these next two meetings.

Sincerely,

..... *(filial therapist's name and contact details)*

# Family Play Observation Hypotheses

## Suggestions for Leaders

Below are suggestions for leaders in organizing their hypotheses during FPOs. The first areas to consider are from a family therapy perspective and the second areas are from a child therapy perspective.

### Family therapy perspective

- Parenting styles and the strength of the parenting alliance.
- Family structure and unresolved family dynamics issues.
- Attachment styles within family dyads (Stollack, Barley, & Kalogiros, 2000).

### Additional family play dynamics

*Attuned play:* Are participants joining together for the same intent? Are the affective states similar? Are physical rhythms the same and participants in close physical proximity?

*Expressive momentum:* Does the play activity become more elaborate and include new ideas and creative movement over time? Is this expressive momentum shared? Is it enjoyed, and is it flexible?

*Flow/break:* How, by whom, and when is the momentum broken? Is one participant changing the rules, emotional states, etc. quickly?

*Form and energy balance:* Can boundaries and focus be established? How can rules, planning, redirecting, and verbalizing help this or hinder this?

*Play metaphors and imagery:* What verbal or play images are repeated in the play? Which ones suggest strong emotional themes? Are these expressed together by family members or in isolated play? Are these themes actively addressed or resolved?

*Parent-child roles:* Are parents primarily facilitators and children players (the usual roles)? Do parents follow their children's leads? When parents introduce contents, can they return easily to a supportive role (Harvey, 2000)?

*Kinds of interactions* between each child and each parent (attuned or misattuned).

*Interactions between target child and siblings:* (separately for each pair, if more than one sibling is present).

*Level of interaction among all participants.* Note degree of interaction among all family members present, any absence of relating among subsets, and if certain types of interactions tend to prevail until a parent or another child enters in.

*Locus of control* in the family; locus of control among the children in sibling groups.

*Methods used by parents* to control their children (Rye & Jaeger, 2007; Guerney L., undated handout). Smith's (2000) 9-point scale categories, used for structured observations of parent-child dyads, also may be of general interest to leaders, but see our cautions against using checklists during FPOs.

*Parent's affect:* from "no affect" to "free range of affect and pleasure in play."

*Parent's intrusiveness:* from "continually structured" to "non-directive."

*Parent's praise:* from "no praise, negative comments" to "good amount for effort and completion of tasks."

*Parent attention:* from "ignored child" to "attended to positives and ignored negatives."

*Parent's developmental sensitivity:* from "almost all interactions over- and/or under-estimated child's development" to "high sensitivity to developmental level."

*Parent's responsiveness to child's interactions:* from "parent did not respond or engage child" to "parent highly responsive."

*Parent-child involvement:* from "no interaction to high level of verbal and non-verbal interaction."

*Child's social responsiveness:* from “completely withdrawn from toys and parent” to “child friendly, social and inviting.”

*Child's attention to activities:* from “activity for <1 minute” to “sustained interest in most activities.”

*Child's activity level:* from “overly active” to “no excessive movements.”

*Child's aggressiveness:* from “argumentative, destructive, aggressive frequently” to “never aggressive, etc.”

*Child's responsiveness to parent's interaction:* from “no response to parental attempts” to “responded almost all the time.”

*Child's responsiveness to questions:* from “did not respond to parent's questions” to “responded to all questions.”

## **Child therapy perspective**

The following areas may be relevant to consider during FPOs for referred children and their siblings:

- Attachment style.
- Emotional and social development.
- Cognitive and language development.
- Play development.
- Physical development.
- Verbal and non-verbal affective expressions of the child.
- Neurological or unusual signs (speech difficulties, attentional problems, etc.) (Rye & Jaeger, 2007).

# Sample Confirmation Letter to Parents

*(Insert letterhead of agency)*

*(Insert date)* .....

Dear *(insert names of parents)* .....

At our last meeting, we agreed you will attend the X Program. We are looking forward very much to having you in the program. We are now confirming this in writing. As you know, the first meeting will be held *(insert date, time, and venue details here)*. It is important that you attend this meeting. You will meet the other parents, along with the other leader, and we will begin the program contents.

If you cannot attend the first session for some reason, it is important to let us know right away. We will try to work out ways to accommodate you and the group in your absence for this meeting, and to catch you up to attend the second meeting. *(If there is an incentive prize, or attendance certificate, mention that here.)*

Please contact us as soon as you become aware of a problem. *(Contact details for both leaders to be inserted here.)*

Sincerely,

.....

GFT leaders

# Creating an Informal Group Atmosphere at the Outset<sup>2</sup>

1. Generally, circular or horseshoe seating arrangements work out well because they “include” everyone more or less equally. However, as time goes on, leaders may find that a different arrangement works better for some groups.
2. Use members’ first names from the beginning, and encourage parents to call you by your first name. This is particularly important if there is someone in the group of high social status (e.g. doctor, lawyer, county commissioner). Establishing a first-name basis with everyone creates an equalizing effect that encourages the shy to participate and allows higher social status people to feel comfortable, even when they make mistakes.
3. While leaders want participants to view the GFT program as an educational approach, and to appreciate the advantages of being taught skills for improving communications with their children, they do not want to make the experience seem too much like “school.” Leaders promote this unnecessary association if they distribute too much written material during the first meeting. Suggestions are given in Chapter 5 on the handouts needed by parents and their placement during the first meeting.
4. Jargon-free language and a vocabulary suitable for all group members should be used in order to make the contents as user-friendly as possible.
5. Have the coffee/tea/juice ready, so people can get some immediately, if they wish.
6. Remember to inform participants about venue rules and layout (e.g. toilets, fire, smoking). If smoking is permitted, describe where parents may go to smoke at break time.
7. During this first meeting, leaders may want to circulate a list for volunteers to sign up to supplying snacks for the coffee break held midway through each meeting. Leaders need to supplying a simple snack for the first meeting themselves.

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2 Excerpted from Guernsey, L. (2013). *Clinician’s and group leader’s manual for parenting: A skills training program*. (5th ed.). Silver Spring, MD: IDEALS, with permission from the publisher.

# Sample GFT Videotaping Consent Form

I have parental responsibility for:

(Insert name[s]) .....

.....

I understand that the professionals viewing the tapes agree to keep the information confidential.

I understand that the tapes and this form will be kept by the group facilitators in a locked file when not in use.

**YES/NO** (circle one) I agree to the videotaping of my play with my child for intake purposes at (insert the venue).

## **Section 1: Videoing for clinical supervision**

I agree that the following can be videotaped and used for the facilitators' clinical supervision:

**YES/NO** (circle one) Demonstrations of play skills with my child/children by the group facilitators (insert names of leaders) at (insert the venue).

**YES/NO** (circle one) My practice play sessions at (insert the venue) during the X Program meetings.

**YES/NO** (circle one) My sessions at home, where video equipment is available.

## **Section 2: Videoing for training and teaching purposes**

I agree that the following can be used by the facilitators for teaching and training purposes with professionals:

**YES/NO** (circle one) Demonstrations of play skills with my child/children by the group facilitators (insert names of leaders) at (insert the venue).

**YES/NO** (circle one) My practice play sessions at (insert the venue) with my child/children during the X Program meetings.

**YES/NO** (circle one) My sessions at home, where video equipment is available.

Signed.....Date .....

# APPENDIX 10

## Participating Children's Leaflet

### Children's booklet

Hi, our names are  
*(insert names of leaders  
and their photos).*

You came with your family  
to play and met one of us.



Then one of us watched  
your family play.



Your parents are coming more times  
to see us, with other parents, so that  
everyone in your family learns to  
have more good times together. The  
parents are all learning to do special  
play times with their children.

You will come more times too. The  
first time you come will be to play  
with one of us for a short time. All the  
parents will watch us play, and then  
talk about what it was like. You can  
do most things while we play. No one  
will tell you what you have to play.

You will come more times after your  
parents learn more about special  
play times. They will have short play  
times with you, while we watch and  
learn more. Later on, your play times  
will be longer with your parents.

If you have brothers and sisters, they  
may have special play times too, all  
by themselves, just like yours will be.

?

You might have questions about what  
will happen. Your mom or dad can talk  
to you about it all. If they don't know  
the answers, they can ask us next time.

# Overview of Filial Therapy

## **The aims of Filial Therapy**

Filial Therapy has been shown to be an effective program for numerous reasons. It is beneficial for children in many ways, including helping them to develop a better understanding of their own and others' feelings, and learning to express their needs and feelings more appropriately. Usually children's presenting problems decrease because in special playtimes they can work through difficult experiences and conflicts they have had with others, and find ways to work things out for themselves. This increases their self-confidence and they also learn to trust their parents more.

The program benefits parents as well because they understand their children's feelings, motives, and development better, learn firsthand the importance of child-centered play, and expand the ways they communicate with their children and promote their trust. Parents learn effective ways to enhance their authority with their children too. All of these things lead to less frustration in parents and more competent parenting.

Families as a whole benefit also; the program tries to involve all family members. It has been shown to improve ways families communicate and cope with difficult events, as well as helping them find more enjoyable ways of being together.

## **The sequence for Filial Therapy**

- Initial evaluation of the children and family.
- Discussion of the rationale, content, and process of Filial Therapy.
- Demonstrations of child-centered play sessions with children while parents observe and then discuss.
- Skills training and "mock" sessions.
- Practice play sessions, followed by feedback from leaders and discussion.
- Home-based sessions and discussion (practice play sessions may continue during meetings).
- Generalization of Filial Therapy principles to daily life.
- Evaluation of the program and ending.

## **Important principles for conducting GFT play sessions by parents**

- Parents develop warmer relationships with their children.
- Parents accept their children exactly as they are.
- Parents establish a feeling of permissiveness in their play sessions, so that children feel free to express their feelings completely.
- Parents are alert to recognizing the feelings their children are expressing, and reflect those feelings back to them in such a manner that the children understand their behavior better.
- Parents maintain a deep respect for their children's ability to solve their own problems, if they are given the chance to do this. Children are the ones to make choices and change themselves.
- Parents follow their children's lead and do not direct their children's actions or conversation.



- Children set the pace of the play sessions. Sometimes change is a gradual process for children that is respected by their parents.
- Parents set minimal rules in play sessions; these are the ones to help their children feel safe and accepted. The way parents set rules promotes their children's ability to develop self-control.<sup>3</sup>

## **Home play sessions**

After training and practice during meetings, parents conduct their weekly play sessions independently at home, with additional supervision and extra practice from filial therapists during meetings when they are needed.

## **Selecting toys for home sessions**

Filial therapists help parents select specific toys and materials that are needed for their home play sessions. Toys for special play sessions are intended to help children express their feelings and they lend themselves to interactive and imaginative play.

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3 Modified from Axline, V. (1947) *Play therapy: The inner dynamics of childhood*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

# The Structure of the GFT Program

## MEETING 1

Introductions to the program and one another.  
Summary of GFT's aims and objectives.  
Brief demo (live or video) of CCPT with a non-participating child.  
Overview of basic child-centered play skills.

## MEETINGS 2–5

Demo of a play session with each participating child by leaders.  
Discussion of the skills used and feedback from parents.  
Skills training with parents.  
“Mock session” training.

## MEETINGS 6–10

Practice play sessions by parents with each of their participating children.  
Feedback by the group leaders and discussion.  
Additional skills training.

## MEETINGS 11–12

Planning for home play sessions.  
Processing of each parent's first home session.

## MEETINGS 13–15

Practice play sessions by parents, either weekly or occasionally.  
In-depth supervision of selected families' home play sessions.  
Group reports of home play sessions.  
Discussion of play themes.

## MEETINGS 16–19

Practice play sessions by parents, weekly or occasionally.  
In-depth supervision of selected families' home play sessions.  
Group reports of home play sessions, including play themes.  
Generalization of skills to daily life.

## MEETING 20

Ending and evaluation of the program by participants.

## OPTIONAL FOLLOW UP MEETING(S)

Discussion of issues for parents who continue home play sessions/special times.

# Leaders' Agendas for Each Meeting of the 20-Week Program

## **Meeting 1: Introduction to the program**

### **Aims for Meeting 1**

- Begin to develop group support.
- Help parents effectively manage their anxieties over both their group membership and their skills as parents.
- Introduce Filial Therapy skills on a general level.
- Prepare parents for the whole of the program.
- Prepare parents for the next meeting.

### **Pre-meeting tasks for leaders**

1. Final checks on venue, break arrangements, and participants' list.
2. Room and equipment ready for video recording group meetings.
3. Demo (optional) arranged; room and equipment ready for conducting a live session with a child outside the group, or for playing a DVD.
4. Parents' manual and handout on preparing children for the GFT program copied and ready for distribution near the end of the meeting.
5. Copies of program structure, along with dates for meetings, ready for distribution near the end of the meeting.

### **Agenda for leaders during Meeting 1**

1. Leaders introduce themselves and briefly address confidentiality and recording issues.
2. Introduction of group members to each other, including what parents' personal goals are.
3. Brief overview of GFT's effectiveness, program goals, and contents, and parents' role in program, along with rationale for play sessions and how the method will relate to the desired goals of the parents.
4. Introduction of rationale for demos with each child in the program and logistics for observing and discussing demos.
5. Leader shows a video or conducts a demo for parents live.
6. Leaders conduct discussion with parents about what they observed when watching the session.
7. Coffee break.
8. Handout "Introduction to the four basic CCPT skills" introduced to parents and each skill discussed; brief introduction to toys and materials used.
9. Preparing parents for next meeting's agenda, including demos with their own children; skills learning.
10. Parents preparing their children for the program; handout on this topic distributed.
11. Working out a demo schedule.
12. Distributing the Parents' Training Manual, to be read by next week and brought along each week.
13. Leaders give handout on the program structure and meeting dates, then end the meeting positively.

NB: If there are any pre-GFT measures to be filled out, these may be finished at the end of the group, while demos are finalized, or given to parents to take home and return.

### Post-meeting tasks

1. Debrief with co-leader.
2. Receive supervision.
3. Decide on how demos and post-demo discussions will be divided between two leaders during next several meetings, and how teaching components will be divided.

## Meeting 2: Beginning demos and skills learning

### Aims for Meeting 2

- Continue to develop positive group support.
- Show parents during demos the skills they are being taught for their own play sessions.
- Help parents begin to view their children in more objective terms during demos.
- Motivate parents to continue to participate in the program and begin thinking about the main CCPT skills in action.
- Foster parents' interest in conducting play sessions.

### Pre-meeting tasks for leaders

1. Administrator to remind parents whose children are participating in demos, and remind all parents of next meeting's time and date.
2. Room and equipment for live demos, observation by parents, and recording of demos set up.
3. Finalize childcare arrangements for children coming in for demos.
4. Make extra Parent's Training Manuals available for each meeting.

### Agenda for leaders during Meeting 2

1. Leader conducts demos with children in program, and other leader gives brief *sotto voce* comments to parents observing.
2. Discussion of parents' reactions to their children in the demos.
3. Coffee break.
4. Discussion of leaders' CCPT skills shown in demos, and answering of parents' questions regarding skills shown.
5. If fortuitous moments arise early, begin formal teaching of skills of structuring or empathic responding.
6. Briefly preparing parents for next meeting's demos and skills training, including reminding parents of the children scheduled for future demos.
7. Ending the meeting.

### Post-meeting tasks

1. Debrief with co-leader, including reviewing order of demos, shared teaching plans, and success of childcare arrangements.
2. Receive supervision, as needed.

## **Meeting 3: Continuing demos and skills learning**

### **Aims for Meeting 3**

- Maintain group support and cohesion.
- Continue to show parents during demos the skills they are being taught for their play sessions.
- Continue to help parents to view their children in more objective terms during demos.
- Motivate parents to continue to participate in the program.
- Begin training parents in “showing understanding” skills.
- Foster parents’ interest in conducting play sessions.

### **Pre-meeting tasks for leaders**

1. Remind parents whose children are participating in next week’s demos.
2. Leaders to prepare packets of toys and play scenario cards for “showing understanding” skills practice.
3. Leaders to collect their own small toys to use during skills training, preparing toy packets and scenarios on cards for pairs to use for all the skills training in the next two meetings.

### **Agenda for leaders during Meeting 3**

1. Leader conducts demos with children in program, and other leader gives brief *sotto voce* comments.
2. Discussion of parents’ reactions to their children in the demos.
3. Coffee break.
4. Discussion of leaders’ CCPT skills shown in demos, and answering of parents’ questions regarding skills shown.
5. Beginning of formal teaching on skill of empathic responding: large group exercise, and first role-play exercise.
6. Discussion of the role-play exercise.
7. Briefly preparing parents for next meeting’s demos and skills training, including reminding parents of children participating in demos.
8. Ending the meeting.

### **Post-meeting tasks**

1. Debrief with co-leader, including demos, success of shared teaching arrangements, and parents’ reactions to early skills training.
2. Receive supervision, as needed.

## **Meeting 4: The final demos and more skills learning**

### **Aims for Meeting 4**

- Maintain group support and cohesion.
- Show parents during the final demos the skills they are being taught for special play sessions.
- Continue to help parents to view their children in more objective terms during demos.
- Motivate parents to continue to participate in the program.
- Train parents in following children’s lead, structuring, and limit-setting skills.

- Foster parents' interest in conducting play sessions.
- Prepare parents for next meeting's mock sessions.

### Pre-meeting tasks for leaders

1. Administrator to remind parents whose children are participating in demos.
2. Leaders have packets of toys and play scenario cards on remainder of skills available during meeting for skills practice.

### Agenda for leaders during Meeting 4

1. Leader conducts demos with children in program, and other leader gives brief *sotto voce* comments.
2. Discussion of parents' reactions to their children in the demos.
3. Coffee break.
4. Briefer discussion of leaders' CCPT skills shown in demos and answering of parents' questions regarding skills shown.
5. Formal teaching on skill of following children's lead: leaders' input, illustrative examples, and leaders' role-play of this skill.
6. Parents' role-play in pairs of following children's lead.
7. Group discussion of role-play.
8. Formal teaching on skill of structuring: leaders' input and modeling, followed by practice by parents.
9. Teaching steps of limit setting.
10. Parents verbally rehearse limit setting.
11. Leaders help parents think of limits for their play sessions.
12. Leaders role-play limit setting, followed by parents' role-playing this skill.
13. Discussion of the role-play exercise.
14. Brief preparation of parents for next meeting's mock sessions.
15. Ending the meeting.

### Post-meeting tasks

1. Debrief with co-leader, including demos, success of skills training, and parents' reactions to skills training.
2. Debrief with co-leader on preparation of parents for mock sessions.
3. Receive supervision, as needed.

## Meeting 5: Mock sessions and preparation for first practice play sessions

### Aims for Meeting 5

- Strengthen group support and cohesion.
- Help any parents with performance anxieties.
- Motivate parents to feel successful at skills learning.
- Train parents to put all the skills they are learning into practice.
- Foster parents' interest in conducting play sessions.
- Prepare parents for next meeting's first practice play sessions.

## Pre-meeting tasks for leaders

1. Leaders decide on which skills to practice with individual parents during mock role-plays.
2. Leaders decide on what type of “child” to play out and scenarios.
3. Leaders decide on how mock session role-plays are divided up between them.
4. Leaders decide on general schedule of families for group’s first practice play sessions, which begin the following week.

## Agenda for leaders during Meeting 5

1. Introduction of parents to mock sessions practice.
2. Leaders take turns conducting mock play sessions with every parent in the group.
3. Coffee break, including informal debriefing by parents with one another.
4. General group discussion of mock session practice, including parents’ ideas on what they want more practice on.
5. Leaders give more detailed feedback to each parent, following GFT guidelines on feedback for mock and practice play sessions.
6. Additional skills training for the group, as required.
7. Preparation of parents for next meeting’s first practice play sessions, including finalizing the selection of the first families, and working out a schedule for the following few weeks.
8. Providing additional training and rehearsal to families scheduled for next meeting’s play sessions, as required.
9. Helping parents prepare their children for practice play sessions.
10. Ending the meeting.

## Post-meeting tasks

1. Debrief with co-leader, including success of mock sessions and any needs for additional skills training.
2. Debrief with co-leader on preparation of parents for first practice play sessions.
3. Receive supervision, as needed.

## Meeting 6: Beginning practice play sessions

### Aims for Meeting 6

- Strengthen group support and cohesion.
- Help any parents with performance anxieties.
- Developing parents’ basic level of skills proficiency during practice play sessions.
- Increase the group’s skills competencies.
- Prepare parents who are conducting next meeting’s first practice play sessions.

## Pre-meeting tasks for leaders

1. Decide on how supervision of individual parents will be divided between two leaders during the next several meetings.
2. Discuss further skills training that may be needed.

## Agenda for leaders during Meeting 6

1. Selected parents conduct practice play sessions with their children in the program; a leader gives brief *sotto voce* comments to observing parents.
2. Coffee break and informal debriefing of first sessions by parents with one another.
3. Supervision of each parent's first play session by a leader in front of the group.
4. Processing other parents' reactions to observing first play sessions.
5. Further skills training.
6. Preparing parents who are starting their first practice play sessions the following week.

### Post-meeting tasks

1. Co-leaders decide on which skills parents need further practice in.
2. Debrief with co-leader on group's reactions to sessions observed.
3. Debrief with co-leader on progress and supervision of the parents who had their first practice sessions.
4. Receive supervision, as needed.

## Meeting 7: Continuing first practice play sessions

### Aims for Meeting 7

- Strengthen group support and cohesion.
- Help any parents with performance anxieties.
- Increase the group's skills competencies.
- Prepare parents who are conducting next meeting's first practice sessions.

### Pre-meeting tasks for leaders

1. Decide on how supervision of individual parents will be divided between two leaders during the next several meetings, if not yet agreed.
2. Discuss further skills training that may be needed.

## Agenda for leaders during Meeting 7

1. Selected parents conduct practice play sessions with their children in the program; a leader gives brief *sotto voce* comments to observing parents.
2. Coffee break and informal debriefing of first sessions by parents with one another.
3. Feedback on each parent's first play session by a leader in front of the group.
4. Processing other parents' reactions to observing first play sessions.
5. Further skills training.
6. Prepare parents who are starting their first practice sessions the following week.

### Post-meeting tasks

1. Debrief with co-leader on further skills training offered, and group's reactions to sessions observed.
2. Debrief with co-leader on progress and supervision of the parents who had their first practice sessions.
3. Receive supervision, as needed.



## **Meeting 8: Starting second practice play sessions**

### **Aims for Meeting 8**

- Strengthen group support.
- Help parents reflect on their children's play during their sessions.
- Develop parents' basic level of skills proficiency during play sessions further.
- Increase the group's skills competencies.
- Keep the group together overall on skills attainment.
- Motivate parents to conduct home play sessions.
- Prepare parents who are conducting next meeting's practice sessions, when required.

### **Pre-meeting tasks for leaders**

1. Review first and second practice play session schedule for the group to ensure all parents are moving on to their second ones.
2. Review any training needs of individuals and the group as a whole.
3. Copies needed of toys and materials handout for parents.

### **Agenda for leaders during Meeting 8**

1. Selected parents conduct practice play sessions with their children in the program; a leader gives brief *sotto voce* comments to observing parents.
2. Coffee break and informal debriefing of sessions by parents with one another.
3. Feedback on each parent's second play session by a leader in front of the group. (NB: This may include finishing supervising one or two parents' first practice play sessions.)
4. Discussion of other parents' reactions to observing these play sessions.
5. Brief discussion of parents' reflections on the meaning of children's play in sessions.
6. Further skills training, as required.
7. Preliminary discussion of toys and materials for home play sessions and video recording of home sessions; handout given to parents.
8. Prepare parents who are having practice play sessions the following week, as required.

### **Post-meeting tasks**

1. Debrief with co-leader on further skills training offered, and group's reactions to sessions observed.
2. Debrief with co-leader on progress and supervision of the parents who had their practice sessions.
3. Receive supervision, as needed.

## **Meeting 9: Continuing second practice play sessions**

### **Aims for Meeting 9**

- Maintain group support and foster more independence.
- Help parents reflect on their children's play during their sessions.
- Develop parents' basic level of skills proficiency during play sessions further.
- Increase the group's skills competencies.
- Keep the group together overall on skills attainment.

- Motivate parents to conduct home play sessions.
- Prepare parents who are conducting next meeting's practice sessions, when required.

### Pre-meeting tasks for leaders

Co-leaders review further skills training needed by individuals and the group.

### Agenda for leaders during Meeting 9

1. Selected parents conduct practice play sessions with their children in the program; a leader gives brief *sotto voce* comments to observing parents.
2. Coffee break and informal debriefing of sessions by parents with one another.
3. Feedback on each parent's second play session by a leader in front of the group.
4. Discussion of other parents' reactions to observing these play sessions.
5. Further skills training, as required.
6. Brief discussion of parents' reflections on the meaning of children's play in sessions.
7. Prepare parents who are conducting practice sessions the following week, as required.

### Post-meeting tasks

1. Debrief with co-leader on further skills training offered and group's reactions to sessions observed, including their understanding of children's play.
2. Debrief with co-leader on progress and supervision of the parents who had their practice sessions.
3. Receive supervision on parents' readiness to start home sessions and any other group issues, especially in complex cases.

## Meeting 10: Finishing second practice play sessions

### Aims for Meeting 10

- Maintain group support and foster more independence.
- Finish second practice play sessions.
- Help parents reflect on their children's play during their sessions.
- Develop parents' basic level of skills proficiency during play sessions further.
- Keep the group together overall on skills attainment.
- Motivate parents to conduct home play sessions.
- Continue to prepare parents for home sessions, returning to the discussion of toys and materials.
- Prepare parents for the next meeting's different agenda.

### Pre-meeting tasks for leaders

1. Leaders discuss further skills training that may be needed by individual parents and the group.
2. Leaders check their schedule to ensure that all parents are now finishing their second practice play sessions, or other provisions have been made.

### Agenda for leaders during Meeting 10

1. Selected parents conduct practice play sessions with their children in the program; a leader gives brief *sotto voce* comments to observing parents.

2. Coffee break and informal debriefing of sessions by parents with one another.
3. Feedback on each parent's second play session by a leader in front of the group.
4. Discussion of other parents' reactions to observing these play sessions.
5. Brief discussion of parents' reflections on the meaning of children's play in sessions.
6. Further skills training, as required.
7. Further discussion of toys and materials for home play sessions and video recording of home sessions.
8. Prepare parents for next meeting on preparing fully for home play sessions.

### Post-meeting tasks

1. Debrief with co-leader on further skills training offered, group's reactions to sessions observed, group's progress on skills attainment, and readiness for home sessions.
2. Debrief with co-leader on progress and supervision of the parents who had their practice sessions.
3. Plan catch-up sessions for parents, when required.
4. Receive supervision, as needed.

## Meeting 11: Transition to home sessions

### Aims for Meeting 11

- Increase the group's skills competencies.
- Motivate parents to conduct home play sessions.
- Maintain group support.
- Prepare parents psychologically for home play sessions.
- Prepare parents for practical home sessions issues.
- When home session videos will be used, verify compatibility of parents' video equipment with meeting equipment.

### Pre-meeting tasks for leaders

1. Discuss the readiness of each parent for home sessions.
2. Copies needed of handout, "Home play session notes."

### Agenda for leaders during Meeting 11

1. Consolidation of skills; psychological and practical preparations for home sessions.
2. Preparation of parents for next meeting's supervision of home sessions, including video recordings, when chosen, and write-ups of home sessions. Final check for compatibility of parents' home video equipment with meetings equipment.
3. Rehearse with parents any challenging issues anticipated in their home play sessions.
4. Review each family's practical arrangements for their home sessions.

### Post-meeting tasks

1. Discuss possible first home session issues for families.
2. Plan catch-up sessions for parents, when required.
3. Receive supervision, as needed.

## **Meeting 12: First home sessions**

### **Aims for Meeting 12**

- Help parents begin to conduct home play sessions effectively.
- Motivate parents to continue their home play sessions, troubleshooting any problems that have arisen.
- Maintain group support and cohesion.
- Consolidate skills development.
- Prepare parents for the next meetings.

### **Pre-meeting tasks for leaders**

1. Ensure parents' video recordings are compatible with electronic equipment at meeting, when video used.
2. Decide on each leader's responsibility for video equipment or verbal feedback with each parent.
3. Work out a possible flexible schedule for supervision (live or video) of families in focus from Meeting 13 onwards.

### **Agenda for leaders during Meeting 12**

1. Begin to supervise each parent's first home session from their written reports and videos, and troubleshooting any issues arising.
2. Coffee break, with leaders reviewing their possible families in focus schedule for subsequent meetings in light of parents' experiences.
3. Supervision of remaining parents' first home session from their written reports and videos, troubleshooting any issues arising.
4. Selection of families in focus for next meeting's detailed supervision of their home sessions, and live sessions during meetings (where video not used).
5. Working out a flexible timetable for families in focus for the next few meetings.
6. Rehearsal for any parents who will conduct their first home sessions during the following week, when required.
7. Preparation of parents for next meeting's and subsequent meetings' agendas.
8. Verifying compatibility of video equipment with that at meeting for any remaining parents.

### **Post-meeting tasks**

1. Debrief with co-leader on progress and reactions of parents to first home sessions.
2. Iron out any scheduling issues for home session and live supervisions during subsequent meetings.
3. Plan catch-up sessions for parents, when required.
4. Receive supervision, as needed.

## **Meeting 13: Early home sessions**

### **Aims for Meeting 13**

- Help parents continue to conduct home sessions effectively.
- Motivate parents to continue their home play sessions, troubleshooting any problems arising.
- Maintain group support and cohesion.
- Consolidate skills development.
- Review parents' reports of home sessions.

## Pre-meeting tasks for leaders

1. Decide each leader's responsibility for video or verbal feedback with each parent.
2. Revise flexible schedule for supervision of families in focus, either video or live supervision, as required.

## Agenda for leaders during Meeting 13

1. In-depth supervision of home sessions of families in focus, including their written reports and videos, with detailed feedback after each video. When no video is used, live supervised sessions during the meeting and detailed feedback after all the live sessions finish.
2. Coffee break.
3. Supervision of remaining home sessions of families, including their written reports and videos.
4. Addressing of skills issues arising from live or home sessions.
5. Developing more skills competence in parents.
6. Supervision of remaining parents' home play sessions.
7. Preparation of families in focus for next meeting's detailed supervision of their home sessions, and live sessions during meetings (when video not used).
8. Continue to work out a timetable for families in focus for subsequent meetings.
9. Rehearsal of any parents who will conduct their first home sessions during the following week, as needed.
10. Brief preparation of parents for next meeting.

## Post-meeting tasks

1. Debrief with co-leader on progress and reactions of parents to home sessions.
2. Iron out any scheduling issues for home session and live supervision during subsequent meetings.
3. Plan catch-up sessions for parents, when required.
4. Receive supervision, as needed.

## Meeting 14: Early home sessions

### Aims for Meeting 14

- Help parents continue to conduct home sessions effectively.
- Motivate parents to continue their home play sessions.
- Maintain group support and cohesion.
- Consolidate skills development.
- Prepare parents of toddlers and teens who are ready for short play sessions/special times.

## Pre-meeting tasks for leaders

1. Ensure parents' video recordings are compatible with electronic equipment at meeting, when video used.
2. Designate the leader responsible for video or verbal feedback with each parent.

## Agenda for leaders during Meeting 14

1. In-depth supervision of home sessions of families in focus, including their written reports and videos, with detailed feedback after each video. When no video is used, live supervised sessions during the meeting and detailed feedback after all the live sessions finish.
2. Coffee break.

3. Supervision of remaining home sessions of families, including their written reports and videos.
4. Addressing skills issues arising from live or home sessions.
5. Developing more skills competence in parents.
6. Preparing parents for short home play sessions/special times with toddlers and teens.
7. Supervision of remaining parents' home play sessions.
8. Preparation of families in focus for next meeting's detailed supervision of their home sessions or live sessions during meetings (when video not used).
9. Brief preparation of parents for next meeting.

### **Post-meeting tasks**

1. Debrief with co-leader on progress and reactions of parents to home sessions.
2. Iron out any scheduling issues for home session and live supervision during subsequent meetings.
3. Plan catch-up sessions for parents, when required.
4. Receive supervision, as needed.

## **Meeting 15: Continuing home sessions**

### **Aims for Meeting 15**

- Help parents continue to conduct home sessions effectively.
- Motivate parents to continue their home play sessions.
- Maintain group support and cohesion.
- Continue more advanced skills development.
- Begin to focus on play themes in more depth.

### **Pre-meeting tasks for leaders**

1. Discuss the group's level of skills attainment and intended focus on play themes.
2. Decide each leader's responsibility for video or verbal feedback with each parent.

### **Agenda for leaders during Meeting 15**

1. In-depth supervision of home sessions of families in focus, including their written reports and videos, with detailed feedback after each video. When no video is used, live supervised sessions during the meeting and detailed feedback after all the live sessions finish, including supervision of their home sessions.
2. Begin to use play themes to parents in feedback and discussion for in-depth understanding of their children's play.
3. Coffee break.
4. Address skills issues arising from live or home sessions and developing more advanced skills competence in parents.
5. Supervision of remaining parents' home play sessions, including supervision of parents who offered short home play sessions/special times with toddlers and teens.
6. Preparation of families in focus for next meeting's detailed supervision of their home sessions, and live sessions during meetings (when video not used).
7. Brief preparation of parents for next meeting.

## Post-meeting tasks

1. Debrief with co-leader on progress and reactions of parents to home sessions and to play themes.
2. Iron out any scheduling issues for home session and live supervision during subsequent meetings.
3. Receive supervision, as needed.

## Meeting 16: Later home sessions

### Aims for Meeting 16

- Help parents continue to conduct home sessions effectively.
- Motivate parents to continue their home play sessions.
- Maintain group support and cohesion.
- Continue more advanced skills development.
- Continue to focus on play themes.
- Introduction of generalization of skills to daily life.

### Pre-meeting tasks for leaders

1. Discuss the group's level of skills attainment, understanding of, and applications of play themes.
2. Discuss group's readiness for generalizing their skills to daily life.
3. Decide on each leader's responsibility for video or verbal feedback with each parent.

### Agenda for leaders during Meeting 16

1. In-depth supervision of home sessions of families in focus, including their written reports and videos, with detailed feedback after each video. When no video is used, live supervised sessions during the meeting and detailed feedback after all the live sessions finish, including supervision of their home sessions.
2. Continue to use play themes with parents in feedback and discussion for in-depth understanding of their children's play.
3. Coffee break.
4. Address skills issues arising from live or home sessions and developing more advanced skills competence in parents.
5. Introduction of generalizing skills to daily life: empathy and "I" statements in daily life, as relevant to group; developing an atmosphere of approval, and structuring.
6. Supervision of remaining parents' home play sessions, including supervision of parents who offered short home play sessions/special times with toddlers and teens.
7. Preparation of families of focus for next meeting's detailed supervision of their home sessions, and live sessions during meetings (when video not used).
8. Brief preparation of parents for next meeting.

### Post-meeting tasks

1. Debrief with co-leader on progress and reactions of parents to home sessions, play themes and introduction to generalization.
2. Iron out any scheduling issues for home session and live supervision during subsequent meetings.
3. Receive supervision, as needed.

## **Meeting 17: Later home sessions**

### **Aims for Meeting 17**

- Help parents continue to conduct home sessions effectively.
- Motivate parents to continue their home play sessions.
- Maintain group support and cohesion.
- Continue more advanced skills development and focus on play themes.
- Continue generalization of skills to daily life.
- Begin preparation of parents for ending the 20-week program.

### **Pre-meeting tasks for leaders**

1. Discuss the group's level of skills attainment, understanding of and applications of play themes, and generalizing their skills to daily life.
2. Discuss options available for ending from funders', leaders', and parents' viewpoints.
3. Decide on each leader's responsibility for video or verbal feedback with each parent.

### **Agenda for leaders during Meeting 17**

1. In-depth supervision of home sessions for families in focus, including their written reports and videos, with detailed feedback after each video. When no video is used, live supervised sessions during the meeting and detailed feedback after all the live sessions finish, including supervision of their home sessions.
2. Continue to use play themes with parents in feedback and discussion for in-depth understanding of their children's play.
3. Coffee break.
4. Address skills issues arising from live or home sessions; develop more advanced skills competence in parents, when required
5. Continue generalization of skills to daily life: review empathy, "I" statements, developing an atmosphere of approval, structuring, introduction of limit setting and consequences, and prioritizing family members' needs as appropriate for the group.
6. Supervision of remaining parents' home play sessions.
7. Preparation of families in focus for next meeting's detailed supervision of their home sessions, and live sessions during meetings (when video not used).
8. Brief preparation of parents for next meeting and for ending the 20-week program.

### **Post-meeting tasks**

1. Debrief with co-leader on progress and reactions of parents to home sessions, play themes, and generalization.
2. Iron out any scheduling issues for home session and live supervision during subsequent meetings.
3. Review parents' preferences for post-group meeting sessions.
4. Receive supervision, as needed.

## **Meeting 18: Later home sessions**

### **Aims for Meeting 18**

- Help parents continue to conduct home sessions effectively.
- Motivate parents to continue their home play sessions.



- Maintain group support and cohesion.
- Continue more advanced skills development, focus on play themes, and generalization of skills to daily life.
- Continue preparation of parents for ending the 20-week program.

### **Pre-meeting tasks for leaders**

Decide on each leader's responsibility for video or verbal feedback with each parent.

Discuss any outstanding issues regarding home play sessions, generalization, and ending the program.

### **Agenda for leaders during Meeting 18**

1. In-depth supervision of home sessions of families in focus, including their written reports and videos. When no video is used, continue with live sessions and supervision of home sessions.
2. Continue to use play themes with parents in feedback and discussion for in-depth understanding of their children's play.
3. Coffee break.
4. Address skills issues arising from live or home sessions, with the goal of developing more skills competence in parents.
5. Continue generalization of skills to daily life: review empathy, "I" statements, developing an atmosphere of approval, structuring, limit setting and consequences, and prioritizing family members' needs as appropriate for the group.
6. Supervision of remaining parents' home play sessions.
7. Preparation of families of focus for next meeting's detailed supervision of their home sessions, and live sessions during meetings (when video not used).
8. Brief preparation of parents for next meeting and for ending the 20-week program.

### **Post-meeting tasks**

1. Debrief with co-leader on progress and reactions of parents to home sessions, play themes, and generalization.
2. Iron out any scheduling issues for home session and live supervision during the next meeting.
3. Review ending options discussed.
4. Receive supervision, as needed.

## **Meeting 19: Later home sessions**

### **Aims for Meeting 19**

- Help parents continue to conduct home sessions effectively.
- Motivate parents to continue their home play sessions.
- Maintain group support and cohesion.
- Continue more advanced skills development, focus on play themes, and generalization of skills to daily life.
- Continue preparation of parents for ending the 20-week program.

### **Pre-meeting tasks for leaders**

1. Decide on each leader's responsibility for video or verbal feedback with each parent.
2. Discuss any outstanding issues regarding home play sessions, generalization and ending the program.

## Agenda for leaders during Meeting 19

1. In-depth supervision of home sessions of families in focus, including their written reports and videos, with detailed feedback after each video. When no video is used, live supervised sessions during the meeting and detailed feedback after all the live sessions finish, including supervision of their home sessions.
2. Continue to use play themes with parents in feedback and discussions for in-depth understanding of their children's play.
3. Coffee break.
4. Address skills issues arising from live or home sessions.
5. Continue generalization of skills to daily life: review empathy, "I" statements, developing an atmosphere of approval, structuring, limit setting and consequences, and prioritizing family members' needs as appropriate for the group.
6. Supervision of remaining parents' home play sessions.
7. Finalizing each family's arrangements for special activities/continued home play sessions after the program formally ends.
8. Preparation of parents for last meeting's agenda in the 20-week program.

## Post-meeting tasks

1. Debrief with co-leader on progress and reactions of parents to home sessions, play themes, and generalization.
2. Review the ending options discussed with each family.
3. Receive supervision, as needed.

## Meeting 20: Ending the program

### Aims for Meeting 20

- Help parents continue to conduct home sessions effectively.
- Motivate parents to continue their home play sessions and/or special times.
- Maintain group support and cohesion.
- Mark the ending of the 20-week program with parents.
- Help parents evaluate the GFT program.

## Pre-meeting tasks for leaders

1. Discuss any outstanding issues regarding home play sessions, generalization, and ending the program.
2. Prepare formal evaluation tools for distribution.
3. Prepare practical arrangements to mark the ending, if leaders have this task.

## Agenda for leaders during Meeting 20

1. General comments from leaders on the ending of the program.
2. Facilitate support and contact arrangements post-program.
3. Facilitate discussion of issues arising for the group on ending.
4. Supervision of families who introduced special activity times during the last week.
5. Supervision of families continuing to have home play sessions during the last week.
6. Evaluation of the program: any formal evaluations to be completed here.
7. Extended coffee break.

8. Evaluation of the program: informal evaluation.
9. Future contact arrangements reviewed and goodbyes facilitated.

### Post-meeting tasks

1. Debrief with co-leader on group progress and ending meeting.
2. Evaluate the 20-week program informally with one another and with supervisor.
3. Congratulate one another on completing the program together!

# Information for Parents on Preparing their Children for the X Program (Leaders to Insert their Own Name for the Program here)

The week before demonstration play sessions start with your children, we suggest that you go through the children's leaflet with them. This introduces us leaders and the program. This extra handout is for children who want more information.

## **What do I tell my children if they ask more about the demonstrations the leaders will be doing with them?**

We suggest the following:

*The leaders for our meetings are [first name] and [first name]. Here are their photos. One of the leaders will be taking you to a room with toys in it so that all the parents at the meeting can see how special playtimes are done. Children can do most things they want in there. And each child will have a turn all by themselves. We will be behind the mirror in the next room watching the leader play with you. We'll all be quiet so that we can hear and watch what's happening.*

If there is a camera in the room, then we suggest saying the following:

*There will be a camera in the room with you, so that we can film and then watch what happened later with the leaders.*

Add the following sentence, if required:

*The camera is there because it helps parents to learn more, before they start to do special playtimes with their own children.*

## **What do we tell our children if they ask more about practice play sessions we will be doing ourselves?**

It is useful to introduce the idea that parents will do the same things as the leader does during the demonstration session, and that this will be after parents have had more meetings and all the children have had a demonstration playtime with a leader. Therefore, we suggest that parents refer to the next step in the program very briefly, in a matter-of-fact way:

*When all the children have had a special playtime with a leader, then parents will start to do their own playtimes with their children. It will work the same way. The leaders and the other parents will watch from behind the mirror (and the camera will be there). The leaders and parents will talk about these special playtimes afterwards. Once everyone learns how to do these playtimes, then we will be doing them at home [as well as at the meetings, where this option is chosen].*

## **What if my child doesn't listen to any of this information?**

Children may have a variety of reasons for not listening to everything parents want to say about the special playtimes. Sometimes it is simply too much information to take in at one time. If that is the reason, and it is especially so for younger children or children with attentional or cognitive difficulties, then we suggest parents break it down into smaller bits of information, and repeat the information when it's needed. If children fail to absorb this information because they are anxious about what it may lead to for them, or for other reasons, then ideally parents would find the right moments to share very small pieces of information at times their children can absorb it.

## **Any further tips?**

This program teaches parents to help their children understand and plan for new situations. Too much information shared at the outset may not be useful for children. You will be able to judge as parents who know your own children well whether to give them information when each new phase of the program unfolds, or whether your children want to know the overall plan well ahead of time. You will be able to discuss this with your group leaders and other group members as you take part in the program.

It is important for parents to emphasize that it is the leader first of all and then the parents who are being watched and learning new ways of being with their children. This is because some children who have low self-esteem, who are very shy, or who believe others think they are exceptionally bad children, may become very anxious about adults watching them. These children sometimes may either be very reluctant to take part in these play sessions or may become very inhibited as they try to be on their very best behavior.

For the above reasons and for other reasons, we urge parents not to coach their children on how parents wish they would behave during play sessions with leaders and themselves. The more spontaneous children are during play sessions, the more leaders are able to offer helpful suggestions to parents on how to handle situations and children's reactions. In fact, these things may be the very reasons parents decided to attend this program! We are sure parents will be very interested to see what their children will do during these playtimes, even though parents sometimes are a little bit nervous about what they might see. Leaders are sure this program is going to help families get along better together. We leaders are eager to share this interesting and effective program with all of you and everyone in your families!

# Parents' Training Manual for Play Sessions

This manual serves as a guide and is useful to you for learning and for home play sessions. However it is not a stand-alone guide. We will provide ample opportunities during our meetings for everyone to raise questions and discuss all of the points in this manual.

## **Why play sessions?**

Play sessions are recommended for children 3–11 years old who have problems with their own feelings and/or difficulty in relationships with others. Children often misperceive parents' intentions and feel unhappy, insecure, or mistreated for very little apparent reason. Children may not be aware of their own needs and feelings, and thus parents cannot always help their children in their usual ways. Communication between parents and children about their deeper needs is, therefore, insufficient or incomplete.

One purpose of play sessions is to create a situation in which your children may become aware of feelings that they have not allowed themselves to recognize. In the presence of their parents, your children have an opportunity to communicate their feelings through play. It is essential that, as parents, you accept your children's feelings during special play sessions. This helps your children come to a better understanding of how to cope with their feelings, as they experience, or re-experience, difficulties during their play sessions.

Another purpose of play sessions is to build your children's feelings of trust and confidence in you as parents. If you respond to your children in the manner prescribed for play sessions, it increases their trust that they can communicate with you more fully and honestly about their experiences and feelings. This should eventually lead to more moderate and mature ways of expression, and less use of extreme and immature forms of emotional expression. Children will have less fear that, by being open with you, they will lose your respect or your affection.

A third purpose is to build your children's confidence in themselves. Just as we expect you will eventually feel that your children trust you more, your children also should experience your sense of trust in them. One goal is for children to feel more secure in making their own decisions, when that is appropriate. Often children need to learn to be less fearful of making mistakes. It is important for them to learn that they have choices, and are themselves responsible for much of what befalls them. This is very important for any children who have a problem to overcome. This means being free to make choices (including making mistakes) and experiencing the consequences, good or bad. By allowing your children freedom of choice in their play sessions, and by allowing them to experience the consequences of free choice, you build their sense of confidence. You also build their confidence by giving them your complete and exclusive attention in play sessions. This leads to your children seeing themselves as more worthwhile and likeable people, which are key ingredients, not only to self-confidence, but also good adjustment.

## **What parents do in play sessions**

You will be learning to have one-to-one play sessions with each of your children in the program. The skills you will be learning are discussed next.

### *1. Follow children's lead*

The role of parents in a play session is to establish an atmosphere of free play and acceptance of their children. This means that you have to take a very unusual attitude towards your child—very different from the way you usually relate to other people, especially children. You set the stage by limiting the duration of the play session, and establishing a few basic rules. But what children do with the toys, and what they say in the session are strictly up to them (some parents may want to set one or two personal limits, to be discussed later in the program). Children may use the toys to explore feelings they have not been able to express adequately before, or to convey things they often communicated in less appropriate ways.

Children who have more extreme behavior may want to use the time to be aggressive, or they may want to sit and stare at the wall—unwilling to involve themselves at all—or they may wish to leave after a few moments. However, most children are very eager to participate and spend time with their parents one to one.

Parents need an open mind and willingness to follow their children's lead. Therefore, it is important that parents avoid the following in order not to influence their children's play and responses:

- Criticism.
- Questions, leads, or invitations.
- Suggestions, advice, or persuasion.
- Interruptions or interference.
- Information giving—unless directly requested by your child.
- Teaching, preaching, or moralizing.
- Initiating an activity.
- Praise, approval, encouragement, or reassurance.

You will notice that several of these responses would be positive in real life with your children, but in play sessions they can influence their behavior, sometimes because children want to gain adult approval. In short, it is important for you to establish a setting in which your child, and your child alone, sets the agenda.

## 2. Parents set the stage

Children are helped by parents to know what play sessions are about and how long they last. Parents learn the following introductory and departing messages:

### INTRODUCTORY MESSAGE

*[Name of child], this is a very special room [time, place, depending on the space you are using]. You can do ALMOST anything you want.\* If you cannot do something, I will tell you.*

\* This statement may include the optional statement: "You may say anything you want in here." Personal limits will be discussed further during meetings on limit setting. A few additional personal limits requested by parents can be negotiated.

### DEPARTING MESSAGE

Give two time warnings as the session ends. One time warning is given five minutes before the end of the playtime, and the last warning is given one minute before the end. For example: *"Johnny, we have (five, then one) minute(s) more to play today."* At the end of the playtime, firmly, but pleasantly, say: *"Our time is up for today. It's time to leave now."*

### WHEN CHILDREN RESIST ENDING

If children are reluctant to leave the room, parents reflect their feelings and restate that the session is ending. You will be learning how to do this, using your body and voice to stress your message and conviction, and reflecting your child's feelings, before attempting to enforce leaving. You will learn to:

- Stand straight up from your position at your child's level.
- Place your hand on your child's shoulder and guide them in the direction of the door.
- Go directly to the door and open it.
- Change the tone of your voice from acceptance to a firm and clear intention.

## 3. Children receive parents' full attention

Equally important, you must be fully involved with your child, giving full attention to everything your child says, does, and feels. You will be attentive to your child's mood, and note very carefully all the feelings your child is willing to reveal. This gives children the go-ahead to begin to uncover more of their deeper feelings. If you are asked to participate in an activity, you should engage fully. But attention should be focused primarily on how your child wants you to participate, following your child's direction, and showing you understand

your child's feelings. Your child's play in the session need not be conventional. For example, a child may like to cheat at cards or make new rules. In these circumstances, you should reflect only your child's strong need to win, or your child's desire to have things go their way, or the means your child uses to have things go their way. These feelings are reflected in an uncritical, warm, and supporting tone. In the training you do, you will learn how to reflect feelings and show understanding in your play sessions.

#### 4. Parents focus on children's feelings and actions

You can best demonstrate to your children that you accept and understand their feelings by reflecting their expressed feelings and actions. This takes the form of noting aloud what your child seems to be feeling: for example, *"You're disappointed it didn't hit the target."* *"That makes you mad."* *"You're very upset when I don't answer your questions right away."* *"It feels good when it goes together the way you want it to."*

Your child's actions are also accepted by your manner and verbal comments: for example, *"You're really beating him up."* *"You're going to kick him around."* *"You're sitting on my lap."* *"You're aiming very slowly, so it will be sure to hit."*

These are all appropriate comments by parents in their play sessions. Complete silence on the one hand, or merely sociable conversation on the other, are discouraged. Children may fear disapproval when their parents are very silent, so it is important to comment, letting them know that your attitude is continuously accepting. With regard to social conversation, it leads most children to feel that they should answer questions, or talk about what their parents want to talk about, rather than take the initiative themselves.

More important than any technique, however, is the spirit under which this time with your children is undertaken. It is important that you try not to be mechanical, stilted, or artificial. You can avoid this best by bending all your efforts towards trying to put yourself in your children's place, and understanding the world as they see it, not as you see it, and not as you wish them to see it. You try to understand your children's feelings through what they are doing and saying. Also, you leave your own worries or reactions out of it as much as you can. Sometimes, it will be difficult. But you simply try to understand what your children are trying to express, and communicate to them that you understand—that you know what they are feeling, and that it's all right with you.

You may find that some of the things your child does are distasteful or worrisome. You need not permit such behavior during any other time outside of the play session. However, it is essential to be very giving and accepting of any and all behavior in the play session (except the limits mentioned later). Children quickly pick up the idea that what goes in the play session may or may not be allowed out of the play session. Outside the session in your daily life, you can continue to be very firm about prohibiting some of the activities that are permitted in the session. Tell your children in daily life that such things are not allowed; they are only allowed in the play session (e.g. use of bad words, berating their parent).

#### 5. Limits on children's behavior

There are a few restrictions on your child's activity in the play session; our term for these is "limits." A limit is a rule for children's behavior. Children need help from parents to be clear about boundaries to their behavior. They then feel safe, and are able to explore their environment and try out more mature behavior. In play sessions, rules or limits are clearly stated at the time of the first infraction. Rules are never given before an infraction. The consequence is imposed after children choose to break the limit again. Children learn that what happens to them is a direct consequence of their behavior. They can begin to take responsibility for their actions when parents learn to use limits and consequences in playtimes.

Some guidelines to consider before making a limit are:

- Is this limit necessary for the safety of my child?
- Is this limit necessary for the safety of others?
- Is this limit necessary for the protection of valuable property?
- Is this limit enforceable?

#### REASONS FOR SETTING AS FEW LIMITS AS POSSIBLE IN PLAY SESSIONS

Children cannot be expected to remember a great number of rules. If few boundaries are set, children know what these are; they can then explore the situation, and can lead the way within these boundaries.



Since consistency is vital—you want to be viewed as a person who does what they say—the fewer the limits imposed, the more likely it is that you will enforce the limits every time they are broken.

#### SPECIFIC LIMITS

Determine if a limit is necessary. Usual limits for play sessions are for child and parent safety, with children not being allowed to hit, kick, hurt, or endanger themselves or their parents in any way, safety and protection of property (e.g. nothing should be thrown at the mirrors, camera, windows, or other spots to be protected both during meetings and at home), and one or two personal limits needed by parents also may be negotiated. In addition, except under unusual circumstances, children do not leave the room during play sessions, except for one trip to the bathroom and one drink for the child.

#### COMMUNICATING AND ENFORCING LIMITS

You will learn that it is vital, whenever it is not an emergency, to empathize with your child's desire to break a limit, and then follow the steps now outlined.

*Step 1. Stating the limit:* Phrase the limit in a forceful but pleasant tone. Change your voice from an accepting tone to one of authority. Be brief and clear.

In the following order: catch your child's attention, reflect their desire to do the prohibited action, and state the limit. NB: no reason is provided initially. For example:

*Johnny, you want to shoot the darts at the mirror. Remember, I told you if there was something you couldn't do, I would tell you? One of the things you may not do is shoot the darts at the mirror.*

If children persist in asking why, reflect their wish to know why, and then reflect their annoyance or confusion about the rule. For example:

*You don't see why we have this rule." "You don't like it." (Or) "You don't like it, if you don't know why.*

Occasionally, there is a child who simply cannot let go of the "why" question without an answer. In such an instance, provide a simple reason—for example, "*Clay leaves marks.*" And be prepared to move onto additional challenges from an occasional child who says, "*You can get those marks off.*" In this instance, do not provide more reasons "from your side." Instead, address the underlying feeling. For example, "*You don't think that it's a good reason.*" Rarely does a child continue beyond this point, when feelings are followed and acknowledged acceptingly.

*Step 2. Warning:* If your children break a limit you have just set (i.e. it is the second time this occurs in a session), remind them of the rule and state what will happen if the limit is broken again. A warning is given so that your children know beforehand what will happen if the limit is broken, and then can decide whether to risk the consequence. For example:

*Johnny, you want to do that again. Remember I told you that you couldn't shoot the darts at the mirror? If you shoot the dart at the mirror again today, we will have to end the playtime today.*

*Step 3. Enforcement of the consequence:* If your children break the rule again, after the consequence has been given, restate the rule and follow through with the consequence you warned your children about. Use a firm but pleasant tone. Perhaps stand up immediately or guide your children to the door to help them clearly recognize your insistence on leaving now because of the broken limit. For example:

*Johnny, you still want to shoot the darts. Remember I told you if you shot the mirror again, you would have to leave the playroom for today? Since you shot the mirror, we have to leave right now, for today. We will play again next time.*

When rules are set and enforced this way, children begin to learn that they are responsible for what happens when they make a choice to break a limit—after having been warned previously and knowing what the result will be. For each subsequent session, when a rule has already been set in a previous play session, parents start at the warning step, and omit Step 1. They progress to Step 3, enforcement of the consequence, only if the rule is broken again. The only exceptions to this are:

- If your child is very young or learning impaired, the rule itself (Step 1) should be restated, if a week or more has gone by since stating it first. Follow the next two steps, if your child breaks the rule again in the same session.
- For children of any age, the rule is restated if it is broken after a long period (a month or more) has passed since the original rule was given.

## Setting up play sessions at home

Once your initial training and practice is complete, and both you and your leaders feel confident about transferring play sessions with your children to your home, leaders help every parent finalize play session arrangements that maximize their success. You and your leaders will discuss the following together:

1. *Setting aside a time* (approximately one half hour every week) for a home play session with your child. Hopefully, this will be at a time and place where you are completely isolated from the rest of the family, and can guarantee no interruptions. Your uninterrupted attention and your reliability in making sure the sessions happen weekly are some of the most important conditions for fruitful play sessions. If a change is absolutely necessary, it should be discussed in advance with your child, and an alternative arrangement offered. Once you begin play sessions, you should consider your availability to your child as a form of contract that you cannot break.
2. *Selecting a room for play* where there will be least concern if things get spoiled or broken. Water may be spilled, play dough smeared, or toys dropped and broken. Least preferred is your child's own playroom, where other toys might be distracting.
3. *The choice of toys* is important to the success of the play session. Primarily, the toys should be inexpensive and unbreakable, and lend themselves to expressive, interactive, and imaginative play. The toys are especially selected in order to help your child release feelings, such as nurturance and aggression, and to re-enact feelings in relation to family members, other children, etc. in a safe and accepted place. Other toys may be added depending on your child's preferences. For older children (9+), other items (e.g. interactive games for older children) probably would be needed. These toys are reserved for use by your child only in play sessions with a parent. Your child may not take or use the toys out of the session (drawings or paintings are an exception). A list of toys to collect that are suitable for home play sessions will be distributed prior to starting home play sessions.
4. *What to tell your children.* It is not necessary to go into a long explanation with your children about their home play sessions. You may simply say you want to spend more time with each of them. Older children may insist on further details. In this case, place the emphasis on your wanting to spend time alone with your children in a special play setting. Not that you want to help them, but that you want to be together, have fun, and improve your relationship. There is usually very little difficulty in getting your children to participate.

Children's reactions to home play sessions can be a very rewarding experience for both parents and their children. Some children move quickly in a direction opposite to the way they have been behaving earlier; some at first behave like themselves, but in an exaggerated or more forceful manner. Some children become very aggressive, some very quiet, some may revert to very baby-like behavior, some like to order the parent around—taking complete control of the situation. Other children are unable to express their feelings in the beginning. Some, at first, act as though they have only negative feelings. Others may want the parent to make decisions, and they may do things just to please their parents to make sure they continue to have parents spend this time alone with them.

You try to reflect any of these feelings your children express in play sessions as they occur, rather than giving explanations or making the choices for your children. You should learn a great deal about how your children feel at times towards their families and themselves. You probably will also learn more about your own feelings towards your children. Home play sessions, along with group meetings, will enable you to move towards more positive relationships in your family life, and, once home play sessions are well under way, leaders will help you apply these and other parenting skills to your daily lives more fully.

Revised from Guernsey, L., Stover, L. & Guernsey, B. *Training manual for play sessions*. (Unpublished document.) Pennsylvania State University, PA. Reprinted in C. E. Schaefer (Ed.). (2002). *The therapeutic use of child's play: Basic readings* (2nd ed.) (pp. 216–227). New York, NY: Jason Aronson.

# Form for Leaders' Direct Supervision Notes of Practice Sessions

This form is suggested for leaders' use during ongoing note taking and feedback for live or videoed play sessions that are supervised in detail during meetings.

| Order of activities   | Positive feedback  | Suggested improvements                                       |
|---|--|--|
| Two to three word description with order of events and child's responses. | What worked and when for parents—give brief examples to illustrate; note when to give feedback on skills (first or last?). | Where skills lacking or misapplied—select the most relevant. |

# Suggested Materials List for Home Sessions

## **Family-related materials**

Doll family (mother, father, brother, sister, baby, and any other relevant dolls).

Family of cloth puppets.

Dollhouse or house box and doll furniture.

Baby doll and doll's equipment (optional; e.g. small doll's blanket).

Real baby bottle.

Cups and saucers, toy pan, pretend food.

Soft, cuddly animal (e.g. teddy bear).

## **Dress-up materials**

Dress-up clothes (hats, pieces of fabric, purse, comb, doctor's bag, rings, etc.).

Gun with "bullets" to shoot (e.g. bullets made of non-harmful materials).

Two pretend cell phones.

Pretend money.

Flexible rubber knife.

## **Small toys**

Small plastic cars, trucks, rescue vehicles to push around.

Plastic soldiers, knights, dinosaurs.

A small amount of Lego® or a similar construction toy, blocks.

## **Interactive games**

Deck of cards.

Ring toss.

## **Other materials**

Inflated plastic bop bag (preferably 4ft high) or a pillow with hand-drawn face.

Non-hardening modeling material, rolling pin, shapes, and cookie tray.

Crayons, paints or paint sticks, drawing paper.

Pan or plastic bowl for water and cup, pitcher, scoop for water play.

Small tray with sand and small figures.

Mat for messy play.

Video camera and other equipment for home recordings.

# Home Play Session Notes

Name of parent .....

Name of child.....

Date of session ..... Time .....

Session ..... Duration of session .....

The main activities during this play session were: *(please give the activities in order)*

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

The parts of the play session that went well for me were:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

The parts of the play session that were challenging/harder for me were:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

The main issues in my child's play were *(for later home play sessions)*:

.....

.....

.....

.....

The main feelings my child expressed were:

.....

.....

.....

.....

My main feelings about the play session were:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Issues from this play session I want to discuss during the next meeting are:

.....

.....

.....

.....

# Leaders' Checklist for Home Play Session Arrangements

Name of family .....

Composition of family .....

Names of parent(s) planning to deliver home play sessions and/or special activities

.....

.....

Names of children starting play sessions .....

Names of teens and tots for later play sessions or special activity times with parent(s)

.....

.....

*Play material (circle as appropriate):*

Complete

Not complete

Comments

.....

.....

.....

*Storage of FT materials at home:*

Comments

.....

.....

.....

*Home space used and position of video camera (when used):*

Comments

.....

.....

.....

*Time of day and day of week:*

Comments

.....

.....

.....

*Childcare arrangements:*

Comments

.....

.....

.....

Type of recording (circle as appropriate):

Video and written

Written only

Type of video

.....

Comments

.....

.....

.....



# Home "Special Times" Notes

Name of parent .....

Name and age of child .....

What date and time of day did this special activity take place?

.....

How long did this interaction last? .....

Where did it take place? .....

What activity did you share? What took place in the session?

.....

.....

.....

.....

Make note of verbal exchanges. Were there any things said by your child that you think should be noted? If possible, quote some of your verbal responses. What play session skills were you able to use (e.g. empathy)?

.....

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.....

.....

How positive was the overall experience for you and your child? Please explain why.

.....

.....

.....

.....

What, if any, difficulties did you encounter?

.....

.....

.....

.....

How did this interaction compare to other day-to-day interactions with your child?

.....

.....

.....

.....

# Parents' Comments on the Filial Training Program

Name (optional) .....

Date .....

## Instructions: Part A

Please complete the sentences with a brief comment. Answer only what is appropriate.

1. I think this program helped me to:

.....  
.....

2. I think the activities used by the group leaders were:

.....  
.....

3. It would have been better if the leaders had:

.....  
.....

4. I would like to have had more:

.....  
.....

5. The part of the program I liked the best was:

.....  
.....

6. The main thing I would change in the program is:

.....  
.....

7. Since taking part in this program my relationship with my child has:

.....  
.....

8. The training materials used were:

.....  
.....

9. The thing I liked best about the leader was:

.....  
.....

## Instructions: Part B—Personal preference section

Each statement has three alternatives. Mark each alternative for each statement with a number 1, 2, or 3. Use number 1 for the alternative you feel is best. Use number 2 for the alternative that is moderately good. Use number 3 for the alternative you like the least:

EXAMPLE:

The time of the day that is best for me to attend classes is:

- ☐ morning
- ☐ afternoon
- ☐ evening

Additional comments:\*

.....

.....

.....

\*If you think none of the alternatives are appropriate or if you want to suggest alternatives that are more appropriate, please write such information in the "Additional comments" space below each item.

10. The most useful method used by the leader was:

- ☐ group discussion
- ☐ lecture
- ☐ videos

Additional comments:

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.....

.....

11. I feel the leaders were:

- ☐ very understanding and accepting
- ☐ somewhat understanding and accepting
- ☐ not understanding and accepting

Additional comments:

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.....

.....

12. The thing I learned the most from the program was:

- ☐ to communicate better with my children
- ☐ to be more aware of the special problems of my children
- ☐ to understand child development better

Additional comments:

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13. The play sessions I did at home were:

- ☐ easy to do
- ☐ a little hard
- ☐ much too hard

Additional comments:

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.....

.....

14. Doing the play sessions at home:

- ☐ improved the quality of my play sessions
- ☐ helped me in using the skills at home
- ☐ didn't make any difference

Additional comments:

.....

.....

.....

15. The leaders really seemed to know what they were talking about:

- ☐ most of the time
- ☐ some of the time
- ☐ hardly ever

Additional comments:

.....

.....

.....

16. I felt comfortable in my group:

- ☐ from the beginning
- ☐ after a few sessions
- ☐ never

Additional comments:

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17. My child really got a lot out of the play sessions:

- ☐ all of the time
- ☐ some of the time
- ☐ rarely

Additional comments:

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18. Please make any other comments below:

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