

Parent /Caregiver Agreement

Psychotherapy can be an important resource for children, adolescents, and parents / caregivers, experiencing separation, divorce, abuse or any major life crisis. Establishing a therapeutic alliance outside the home can:

- Facilitate open and appropriate expression of strong feelings, which often accompany family challenges. (Examples include, guilt, grief, sadness or anger)
- Provide an emotionally neutral place where children can explore thoughts and feelings. Help children understand the current situation or effects of the crisis. In case of separation or divorce, psychotherapy can help children understand and accept the new family structure.

Offer feedback and recommendations to a child's parent / caregiver based on an understanding of the child's specific emotional needs and developmental ability.

However, the usefulness of such therapy is extremely limited when the therapy itself becomes a matter of dispute between parents or between parents and children. With this in mind, and in an effort to best help your child(ren), I ask that each of the child's caregivers accept the following to participate in therapy:

1. The therapy will not yield considerations about custody. In general, I recommend that parties who are disputing custody consider participating in alternative forms of negotiation or conflict resolution, including mediation and custody evaluation rather than settling custody in court.
2. It is my primary responsibility, as your child's therapist, to respond to your child's emotional needs. This includes, but is not limited to, contact with your child and each of his or her caregivers and gather information needed to understand your child's circumstances as perceived by important others (pediatrician, teacher). In some cases, this may include a recommendation that you consult with a physician should matters of your child's physical health be relevant to the therapy.
3. I ask that all caregivers remain in frequent communication regarding your child's welfare and emotional Being. Open communication about his or her emotional state is critical. In this regard, I invite each of you to initiate frequent and open exchanges with me as your child's therapist.
4. I ask that all parties recognize and as necessary, reaffirm to the child, that I am the child's helper and not allied with any disputing party or familial side.

5. Please be advised regarding the limits of confidentiality as it applies to psychotherapy with a child in these circumstances.
- I keep records of all contacts relevant to your child's well being. These records are subject to court subpoena and may, under some circumstances, be solicited by parties (including attorneys) in divorce proceedings.
 - Any matter brought to my attention by either parent regarding the child, may be revealed to the other parent. Matters brought to my attention that are irrelevant to the child's welfare may be kept in confidence.
 - **I am legally obligated to bring any concerns regarding health and safety to the attention of relevant authorities. When possible, should this necessity arise, I will advise all parties regarding my concerns.**

Your understanding of these five points and agreement in advance of starting this therapy may resolve difficulties that would otherwise arise and will help make therapy more successful. Your signature below signifies that you have read and accept these point.

Caregiver Signature

Date

Caregiver Signature

Date

Child's Name

Date

Child's Name

Date

Therapist Signature

Date