

Agreement for Parents

Psychotherapy can be a very important resource for children of separation and divorce. Establishing a therapeutic alliance outside of the home can:

- Facilitate an open and appropriate expression of intense feelings, such as guilt, grief, sadness and anger, which routinely accompany family transitions.
- Provide an emotionally neutral setting where children can explore their feelings.
- Help children understand, adjust to and to accept the new family composition and the visitation arrangements with each family member.
- Offer feedback and recommendations to the child's caregivers based on knowledge of the child's specific emotional needs and developmental capacity.

However, in order for therapy to be the most effective, it is crucial that therapy does not become a place for parents to discuss their personal disputes, but instead, is a safe environment to work towards the common goal of improving the child's mental health and to address issues concerning the child's best interest. Thus, it is strongly recommended that each of the child's caregivers (e.g., parents, stepparents, daycare workers, guardian ad litem [GAL], etc.) mutually accept the following as requisites for the child's participation in therapy:

1. It is your child's therapist's responsibility to respond to your child's emotional needs. This includes, but is not limited to, having contact with your child and each of his or her caregivers to gaining a better understanding your child's welfare and circumstances as perceived by significant others (e.g., pediatrician, teachers, other psychologists, social workers, etc.). In some cases, this may include a recommendation, such as consulting with a physician or a psychiatrist.
2. Open communication about your child's emotional state and behavior is critical. Thus, your child's therapist may request that all caregivers maintain frequent and open communication with each other and your child's therapist regarding your child's welfare and emotional wellbeing.
3. Your child's therapist may request that all parties recognize and, as necessary, reaffirm to the child, that the therapist is the child's helper and not allied with any disputing party.
4. Your child's therapist may recommend that all caregivers involved choose to participate in psychoeducational groups in which separating and divorced parents learn strategies for conducting a divorce in the best interests of the child. Your child's therapist can provide a referral upon request.
5. Please be advised regarding the limits of confidentiality as it applies to psychotherapy with a child in these circumstances:
 - Records are kept on 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.
 - Any matter brought to the child's therapist's attention by either parent regarding the child may be revealed to the other parent. Matters which are brought to your child's therapist's attention that are irrelevant to the child's welfare may be kept in confidence. However, these matters may best be brought to the attention of others, such as attorneys, personal therapists or counselors.



Psychological Services of Chicago
1300 W. Belmont Avenue Suite 304 Chicago, IL 60657
www.psychotherapybypsc.com psychotherapybypsc@gmail.com
(312) 909-6766 Fax (773) 227-4773

* Your child's therapist is legally obligated to bring any concern regarding the child's health and safety to the attention of relevant authorities. In this case, when possible, your child's therapist will advise all parties regarding their concerns.

6. Your child's therapist will not yield recommendations about custody. It is recommended that parties, who are disputing custody, consider participating in alternative forms of negotiation and conflict resolution, such as mediation or a custody evaluation, rather than trying to settle a custody dispute in court. Your child's therapist can provide a referral for a custody evaluation upon request.

7. The agreed upon party is required to pay for the services in full at the time the services are rendered. Any outstanding balance accrued (for example, in conference with attorneys, the GAL, or teachers) must also be paid promptly and in full.

Your understanding and agreement, prior to starting therapy, may prevent challenges that could otherwise arise and could assist in providing the most effective treatment. Your signature, below, signifies that you have read, understand and agree to the aforementioned information.

Caregiver's name Date

Printed name

Caregiver's name Date

Printed name

Caregiver's name Date

Printed name

Child's name Date of birth Age

Mental health professional Date

Copy accepted by client Copy kept by therapist