

Professional Practice

The play therapists at Zig Zag adhere to the Ethical Principles and Code of Good Practice as set out by the British Association of Play Therapists (BAPT). All Play Therapists are in regular clinical supervision.

A register of qualified play therapists who abide by the BAPT Code of Ethics and Good Practice can be found on the BAPT website:

<http://www.bapt.info/register/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Telephone: 020 8539 5592

You can leave a message outside office hours on our answerphone

Fax: 020 8535 6952

ZIG ZAG Children's Service
Psychological Support Service
The Margaret Centre
Whipps Cross University Hospital
Barts Health NHS Trust
Whipps Cross Road
Leytonstone
London E11 1NR

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

If you need general information or advice about Trust services, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 020 3594 2040 or visit www.bartshealth.nhs.uk/pals. Alternatively please contact staff who are providing your care if you require clinical advice.

Large print and other languages

For this leaflet in large print, please speak to your clinical team.

For help interpreting this leaflet in other languages, please ring 020 8223 8934.

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Patient information

PLAY THERAPY INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/ CARERS

ZIG ZAG
children's service



What is play therapy?

Play Therapy provides an opportunity for children (usually 4-11 years old) to share their difficulties with someone who is outside their day-to-day life and has the time, skills and training to help. Children often find it difficult to put complex thoughts and feelings into words. Play therapy helps children understand muddled feelings and upsetting events that they have not had the chance to sort out properly. Rather than having to explain what is troubling them, as adult therapy usually expects, in play therapy, children use play to communicate their thoughts and feelings at their own level and at their own pace, in a safe and supportive environment.

How can play therapy help?

Play therapy can help children in a variety of ways. Children receive emotional support and can learn to understand more about their own feelings and thoughts. Sometimes they may re-enact or play out traumatic or difficult life experiences in order to make sense of their past and cope better with their future. Children may also learn to manage relationships and conflicts in more appropriate ways. The outcomes of play therapy may be general, e.g., a reduction in anxiety and raised self esteem, or more specific such as a change in behaviour and improved relations with family and friends.

Support at Zig Zag

Zig Zag Children's Service accepts referrals for children with difficulties related to life-limiting conditions and bereavement. These include:

- Children with family members who have life-limiting illness;
- Children who themselves have a life-limiting illness;
- Children who have been bereaved.

Individual Play Therapy: After an initial assessment period (3 sessions), children may be offered on-going play therapy. The usual arrangement is to contract for 6 to 8 sessions at a time, and then to review progress. The decision to continue a play therapy intervention or work towards ending the intervention is made in consultation with the child, parent/carer and any professionals closely involved in the care of the child, e.g., social workers. Play Therapy sessions take place in Zig Zag's dedicated playroom at the Margaret Centre. Parents/carers may wait in the waiting-area provided.

Parent/Carer Support:

Parents/carers concerned with how their child is coping and dealing with issues of loss may be offered support and guidance, including for children aged 3 and under. Parents can also make use of the Adult Counselling Service that is available

Confidential Service

Children's play therapy sessions are confidential. This is important in order to maintain your child's trust in, and feelings of safety with, the play therapist. However, your child's play therapist will meet with you at regular intervals in order to discuss your child's progress in therapy. The play therapist will not disclose specific details of your child's play with you but will discuss the main issues that your child is working through, and making sense of, in the play therapy sessions.

Play Therapy Contracts

Play therapy usually takes place once a week for 45 minutes (30 minutes for younger children). Sessions will normally be on the same day at the same time each week as this helps to develop a trusting relationship between the child and therapist. It is difficult to predict how long an intervention will be: it depends on the child and their experiences. A usual contract will be for fifteen sessions but some children may benefit from a longer intervention. The decision to continue or terminate will be taken in consultation with the child, parent/carer and therapist.