



Infant and child led 'in situ' family therapy sessions

- Step One:** Infant and Child Mental Health trained Family Therapist, has earned the confidence of the Refuge/Early Year's worker
- Step Two:** The Refuge/Early Years worker has already built substantial trust with the family
- Step Three:** Family is provided with pre-session 'user friendly information' (one written for the parent/s), (one written for the child, young person) and including consent forms.
- Step Four:** Session held at a location (family home) or location familiar to the family (ie., referring organisations office)
- Step Five:** Family in conjunction with their worker decides on requests for further sessions

Philosophy behind the approach

- Infants and children are the very reason early years workers are involved in the lives of families where there are concerns about risk. As such, infants and children have the right to be seen as equal participants in all matters which concern them and to have their voices heard.
- Infants and children are more likely to embody hope for the creation of a brighter future. Parents who have experienced trauma and neglect in their own childhood, like many parents in general, have a desire to experience some level of reparation through providing their infants and children with relational experiences they wished they could have had when they were themselves only little.
- Infants and children carry hope, seeing their parents through eyes that are more forgiving and inviting intimacy than many parents have experience from their own parents and others in their lives.
- Infants and children can carry a heavy burden on little shoulders. They can work very hard to negate their own needs to fulfill the needs of their parents/caregivers. Therapeutic work during this 'powerful' life stage offers a chance for parents to 'do over'. To become the sort of parents they wish their parents could have been and powerfully, to fast forward, and consider what they may need to do differently, and to do 'now', to become the sort of parent who will have adult children who want them to still be actively involved in their lives, and their grandchildren's lives.
- Furthermore, what might parents need to change now to become the sort of grandparent 'they may wish to be' for future grandchildren.
- Involving these amazing early years workers in these powerful 'reset' therapeutic sessions enables these workers to not only continue to support the therapeutic work of being 'infant and child led', but to bring this approach into their work with all the other families they support.

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