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Agreement for Parents

Psychotherapy can be a very important resource for children experiencing problems. Establishing a therapeutic alliance outside of the home can:

- Facilitate open and appropriate expression of the strong, including guilt, grief, sadness, and anger
- Provide an emotionally neutral setting in which children can explore these feelings.
- Offer feedback and recommendations to a child's caregivers based on knowledge of the child's specific emotional needs and developmental capacities

However, the usefulness of such therapy is extremely limited when the child is afraid that what is talked about in the therapy session will be passed on to parents or others. With this in mind, and in order to help your child best, I strongly recommend that each of the child's caregivers (e.g., parents, stepparents, day-care workers, *Guardian Ad Litem* [GAL]) mutually accept the following as requisites to participation in therapy.

1. As your child's psychotherapist, it is my primary responsibility 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 gathering information relevant to understanding your child's welfare and circumstances as perceived by important others (e.g., pediatrician, teachers). 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 this therapy.
2. I ask that all caregivers remain in frequent communication regarding this child's welfare and emotional well-being. Open communication about his or her emotional state and behavior is critical. In this regard, I invite each of you to initiate frequent and open exchange with me as your child's therapist.
3. I ask that all parties recognize and, as necessary, reaffirm to the child, that I am the child's helper and not allied with anyone else.
4. 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.
 - Any matter brought to my attention by either parent regarding the child may be revealed to the other parent. Matters that are brought to my attention that are irrelevant to the child's welfare may be kept in confidence.
 - **I am legally obligated to bring any concern 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 this therapy successful. Your signature, below, signifies that you have read and accept these points.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Printed name