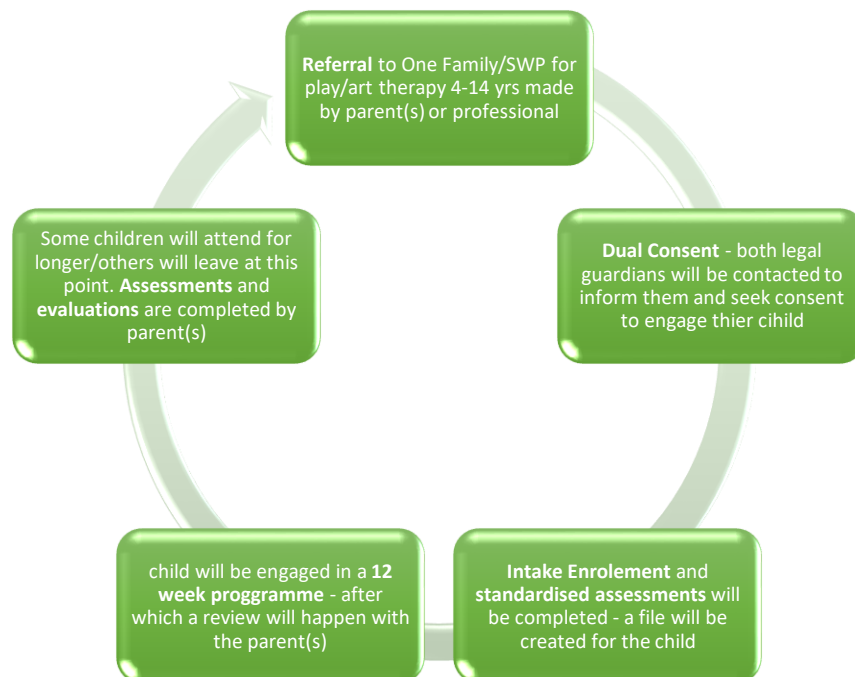


## The Child's Journey into and through Creative Therapy (Play/Art therapy) with One Family



### Questions Parents may ask:

#### What is Dual Consent?

Consent is the permission of parents or legal guardians for a child or minors to attend a client service. The National Consent Policy (HSE, 2022) states that children under 16 years generally require the consent of their parents to attend a service including mental health services.

#### Why is Dual Consent important?

Children who have the support of both of their legal guardians/parents while in the play/art therapy process will have better outcomes. Children who may have only one legal guardian but spend time with their other parent, also need their support during this process. Children in separated families may have two legal guardians and One Family will inform and seek to engage with both parents prior to offering the child a place in Play/Art therapy.

#### What is an Assessment?

One Family Creative Therapy use a standardised assessment tool called SDQ. The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief emotional and behavioural screening questionnaire for children and young people. It looks at four areas, conduct, hyperactivity, peer relationships and emotions. The tool can capture the perspective of children and young people, their parents and teachers.

## **What is an Intake Enrolment Form?**

This is a form, where the Creative Therapist talks 1-1 with the parent – usually the presenting parent to capture the child's history and presenting issues, which brings them to play/art therapy. It is important the therapist has a clear insight into what the child's lived experiences are.

## **What is the 12-week programme?**

Children are engaged in 12 weeks of 1-1 sessions with either the play or art therapist. This happens weekly over 3-4 months and will allow for school holiday periods when routines may change for families or when children get sick. There is no plan followed, the sessions are led by the child and supported by the practitioner. It is important children are allowed to lead the sessions and not have parents guide them in how they should use this time with the therapist.

## **What is a review?**

Children will feed into the review process prior to the therapist meeting with the parent(s). The parent's views will be considered and changes for the child over the 12-week period. Some children may be offered an extended block of time. This varies for every child.

## **What should I expect from my child during their engagement in Play/Art Therapy?**

The therapeutic process can be very challenging for a child/young person. Although they are playing and/or being creative, they are processing their feelings and coming to understand how and why they feel as they do. Consequently, a child/young person's behaviour may appear to get worse before they show signs of improvement. This is not unusual and may be a necessary step for the young person in addressing the difficulties they are experiencing. Please talk with the Play/Art Therapist if you feel you need some guidance during this period.

## **How do I support my child during their engagement in Play/Art Therapy?**

It is important that before you refer your child to play/art therapy you talk with them about what you see happening for them – and then talk with them about the value of sometimes accessing professional support to help children and adults navigate difficult issues and BIG feelings.

Try to ensure you use language your child understands - play/art therapy will most likely mean nothing to them. Help them to understand what therapy is – it is space for you (the child) to talk through your feelings and resolve problems you might have or find the voice to put words on your feelings so you can talk more openly with your parents/others that you need to.

If you feel a bit unsure of how to explain play/art therapy to your child – please discuss this with the therapist and they will guide you.

## **Confidentiality within the Play/Art Therapy Process**

**It is confidential** – this means that what happens in the room is between the child and the therapist. Therapists are Garda Vetted and One Family follow the Children First Child Protection Guidance. Avoid asking your child what they do? If they do wish to talk with you about the session, then listen to what they have to say with interest but avoid asking them questions.

## **What is the guidance around attendance?**

**Come to every session** – consistency is key to a successful engagement in the process for your child. It creates safety and routine in their lives which in turn supports them building a trusting relationship with the play/art therapist. We know children will get sick or holiday periods will come, this is okay, once you can commit to attending on your regular session.

If you know a date is clashing with something else the child has on, plan ahead with the play/art therapist. If your child is sick, please call reception as soon as you can to notify the therapist.

If your child's attendance is sporadic the therapist will contact the parent/care giver to ascertain if there is an issue that is impacting on the young person's attendance and discuss possible ways to work with the parent/care giver on this.

If the client misses 3 consecutive sessions, the therapist may decide to end/pause the process. The therapist will make contact with the parent/caregiver first before making a decision in hope of establishing a reason behind the missed sessions and coming to a solution around the same.