

How To Get the Most Out of Therapy

TO LOOK FOR

Consider private therapy in addition to school.

Find the right therapist and the right place.

Establish a bond with the therapist—you and your child.

Find a therapist who has a philosophy and approach to therapy that you believe in and support.

Feel comfortable in the environment.

***Don't give up on a place or therapist right away, but don't stay if you're not comfortable. Bonding takes time—very few kids come in relaxed and happy. Hopping from location to location or frequent changes in therapy can slow down progress because your child now has to adjust to a new environment, bond with a new person, and learn the way they do therapy and their expectations.**

TO DO

Once you've found the right place—there are things you can do to maximize your child's success in therapy.

1. Try to get all of your therapists and teachers on the same page. There are several ways to do this:

** If your child has an IEP-share this with the private therapist.

**If possible try to have the different therapists talk, email, or even observe.

**Ask private therapist to provide ideas for IEP goals.

** Share what other private therapies/interventions are doing.

2. If your child is in multiple therapies, try to find therapists that have co-treated and/or are comfortable with the other disciplines.
3. Have a consult time with your private therapists.
4. ASK questions if you don't understand how to carryover a skill or to cue your child correctly. Don't guess!
5. If something seems crazy, ASK your therapist why she/he is doing something—we can explain the reason behind a task.
6. Include others who care for your child—let them know your targets—they can help with practice and carryover.
7. Make practice fun-not drill (try not to call therapy work)!
8. Give as specific feedback as possible—praise the effort but let them know their error. A child won't fix a skill they think is correct.
9. Be honest with your child – children especially with special needs are not very self-aware so they may not see or hear their mistakes.
10. DON'T pretend to understand or say you saw something when you didn't.
11. Try to be as consistent as possible with attending therapy.

TO KEEP IN MIND

*Don't get discouraged—try to step back and look at overall growth.

*Recognize building blocks.

*You need a backbone—don't let your child manipulate you.

*Consult time with therapist is crucial.

*Patience and persistence—Don't give up!

*Bonding with a therapist is important for you and your child.

*Understand school limitations and the differences between private therapy and school therapy—you can't expect the same from both.

*There is no magic timeline.

*Therapists want your child to progress—we are pulling for them and want them to succeed and rejoice when they make progress!

*Your with your child much more than the therapist—you are an important piece of the therapy model

TOOLS

1. School to therapy notebook—with tabs for teacher, school therapists, private therapists
2. Parent notebook

BUT HOW DO I MAKE IT FIT INTO EVERYDAY LIFE

Incorporating therapy goals into your everyday activities can be a very daunting task, but it is also very important. This impacts progress tremendously because it shows kids that what they are working on is truly important in their everyday real life.

Smaller and more frequent practice is often better than one 20-30 min practice during the week.

Sometimes practice requires slowing down and letting your child help.

Think outside box and incorporate your child's therapy into your everyday activities (as it fits)

Do it in the car—look outside your window and talk about what you see.

Pick a topic and talk about it on the way to different stops around town.

In stores/on errands-have your child write the list for the stops you need to make or the groceries you need to get.

Practice while waiting at restaurants – you can have kids order their own food.

If your child is working on steps then forgo the elevator and take the stairs—even just one floor—then catch the elevator.

At home play with crafts, foam shapes, stickers—they can ask for what they need, use scissors and markers, glue, etc.

If cutting-have kids cut out all the coupons you get in the mail.

Let children help you wrap presents—talk about the steps and the materials you need.

READ and as you read, talk about the books.

Buy lace-up shoes—it can be frustrating, but it will also present you with an opportunity to practice tying on a daily basis.

Bake with your child.

Let your child help with chores—sweeping floors, setting the table, putting toys away.

Sometimes incorporating therapy makes a task longer. Try when you can but don't beat yourself up when you just need to get something done quickly.

It's ok if you don't practice every day, but include it as much as you can!

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