

Hoffmann ψ Burchett Psychological Services, LLC
205 N. Williamsburg Drive, Suite F, Bloomington, IL 61704

Child Therapy Agreement

Prior to beginning treatment, it is important for you to understand our approach to child therapy and agree to some rules about your child's confidentiality during the course of his/her treatment. The information herein is in addition to the information contained in the Guidelines for Psychotherapy. Under HIPAA and the APA Ethics Code, we are legally and ethical responsible to provide you with informed consent. As we go forward, we will try to remind you of important issues as they arise.

One risk of child therapy involves disagreement among parents and/or disagreement between parents and therapist regarding the best interests of the child. If such disagreements occur, we will strive to listen carefully so that we can understand your perspectives and fully explain our perspective. We can resolve such disagreements or we can agree to disagree, so long as this enables your child's therapeutic progress. Ultimately, you will decide whether therapy will continue. If either of you decides that therapy should end, we will honor that decision, however we ask that you allow us the option of having a closing session to appropriately end the treatment relationship.

Therapy is most effective when a trusting relationship exists between the psychologist and the client. Privacy is especially important in securing and maintaining that trust. One goal of treatment is to promote a stronger and better relationship between children and their parents. However, it is often necessary for children to develop a "zone of privacy" whereby they feel free to discuss personal matters with greater freedom. This is particularly true for adolescents who are naturally developing a greater sense of independence and autonomy. *By signing this agreement, you will be waiving your right of access to your child's treatment records.*

It is our policy to provide you with general information about treatment status. We will not share with you what your child has disclosed to the therapist without your child's consent. We will tell you if your child does not attend sessions.

If your child is an adolescent, it is possible that he/she will reveal sensitive information regarding sexual contact, alcohol and drug use, or other potentially problematic behaviors. Sometimes these behaviors are within the range of normal adolescent experimentation, but at other times they may require parental intervention. It is suggested that we directly discuss your feelings and opinions regarding acceptable behavior. If we ever believe that your child is at serious risk of harming him/herself or another, we will inform you.

Although our responsibility to your child may require us to become involved in conflicts between the two of you, we need your agreement that therapist involvement will be strictly limited to that which will benefit your child. This means, among other things, that you will treat anything that is said in session with the therapist as confidential. Neither of you will attempt to gain advantage in any legal proceeding between the two of you from therapist involvement with your children. *In particular, we need your agreement that in any such proceedings, neither of you will ask the therapist to testify in court, whether in person, or by affidavit. You agree to instruct your attorneys not to subpoena the therapist or to refer in any court filing to anything the therapist has said.*

Note that such agreement may not prevent a judge from requiring psychologist testimony, even though we will work to prevent such an event. If therapist is required to testify, she is ethically bound not to give opinion about either parent's custody or visitation suitability (allocation of time). If the court appoints a custody evaluator, guardian ad litem, or parenting coordinator, psychologist will provide information as needed (if appropriate releases are signed or a court order is provided), but the psychologist will not make any recommendation about the final decision. Furthermore, if the psychologist is required to appear as a witness, the party responsible for psychologist participation agrees to reimburse at the rate of \$360 per hour for time spent traveling, preparing reports, testifying, being in attendance, and any other case-related costs.
