

# Introduce Yourself and Explain Therapy

## CHAPTER OVERVIEW

When you first meet children to start therapy, you have to convey by your words and actions that collaboration is desired. In this chapter, there are strategies you may use when you introduce yourself, explain therapy, and start conversations. Also described are considerations for matching your approach to children's desired level of emotional involvement, and creating a common language that is understood by all.

## CHILDREN'S DESCRIPTIONS OF WHAT THEY THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW

Dr. Clare: "When therapists first meet children, how can they make them feel comfortable?"

Noah (age 8): "Introduce yourself."

Raquel (age 10): "Try to be friendly."

Sam (age 10): "They can make me feel comfortable by saying nice things."

Debbie (age 11): "Ask the kids, 'What is your day like at school?'"

Joe (age 11): "Find out as much as you can about the children. Find out if they know Spanish or English."

Dr. Clare: "If you had fun the first time you are with a therapist, what would you think about coming back?"

Nicole (age 12): "I would want to come back because I would know that I was going to have fun instead of just listening to that person talk."

Elena (age 11): "I would feel really excited because it meant I was going to have fun and not be bored the whole time."

## BEGINNINGS

The first time you meet children, they will try to determine what kind of person you are and if they want to be in therapy. They will wonder if you are going to be nice or mean. They will question the purpose and nature of therapy, and especially wonder whether they will like it. First impressions count. Use your words and actions to convey a "come join me" message and encourage them to symbolically make the first step into the world of occupational therapy, a place of new possibilities.

### *Introduce Yourself and Describe Therapy*

In the beginning, warmly welcome children and start to discover their uniqueness and positive attributes. Show them that you are a nice and caring person, and that therapy will be challenging and fun. Pique their interest.