

How to have an Effective Child Therapy Session

For Abigail or any other child client, with or without down syndrome, it is important to always implement SMART goals. Each individual client should have goals that are created specifically for them and their needs. Goals should also be measurable, and the target should be clear so that it's easy to identify when the goal is reached. It is also important that each goal be attainable because it would not be beneficial to the client to have goals that they have no potential to achieve or that would be too difficult for them. Goals should be realistic, meaning they should be designed to improve any disfluencies or problems the client may have. Lastly, goals should be expected to be achieved within a certain time frame whether it be over a long or short period of time.

It is important to facilitate antecedents and consequences in therapy. Antecedents that may work best for Abigail or any other child may include verbal and visual cues. It is important to use minimal cues and to decrease cuing in following sessions to help the client improve their speech and/or language skills. Abigail may also benefit from modeling. Modeling provides an accurate model for the client to follow which can help them improve. Almost all children love receiving verbal praise, so it would be great to use as positive reinforcement. Consequences are based on the behavior that follows the antecedent, whether the behavior is to be repeated or eliminated.

When working with children it is important to have a healthy client/clinician relationship and to ensure that the client feels comfortable working with you. Some children may be shy or reserved during the first few sessions, but it is important to build a relationship with them so that they are able to progress through therapy sessions successfully. As a clinician I will always try different activities that the client enjoys and is able to learn and benefit from to improve their speech and/or language skills.

For Abigail, a great behavior modification or technique would be redirection. A child with down syndrome or any other child might require a significant amount of redirection. They may begin to get tired, bored, or even frustrated during therapy, so it is important to help them regain focus to have an effective therapy session. This will require a tremendous amount of patience, but it is important not to grow agitated with the client and to always keep professionalism.

In conclusion, it is important to have individualized SMART goals for each client. Each session should help each client progress and learn to improve their speech and/or language skills. It is important to be patient and professional with all clients, but especially with children so that they respect you as their clinician, but also feel comfortable working with you. Lastly, having a good rapport with clients keeps them engaged and makes them look forward to having a great therapy session.