



Tender Hearts Child Therapy Center

Parent Newsletter

April 2012

Using Puppets to Interact with Your Children

Puppets are a great way to interact with your children. Puppets can be used in a variety of ways in order to get your children to communicate with you or to learn or practice a new skill. Listed below are some ways to use puppets creatively while interacting with your children.

Use puppets to express feelings.

This is a great way to help your child learn and practice both feelings identification and how to use "I statements" to verbally express his or her feelings. Both parent and child should each have his or her own puppet. Parents should begin by modeling the statement "I feel happy when we play outside together." Then have your child express a feeling. If the child struggles at first, you can start the "I statement" by stating "I feel happy when..." and let him or her finish the sentence. Parents of younger children should focus on a few basic feelings such as happy, sad, angry, and scared. Parents of older children can add other feelings such as surprised, anxious, lonely, proud, etc.

Use puppets with younger children in order to get them to talk about something they are not comfortable talking about.

You can do this in one of two ways. First, you can give your child a puppet and ask him to have the puppet tell you what is bothering "the puppet." This often is a way to identify what is bothering the child. You can also use the puppet and ask your child to tell the puppet what is bothering him or her. By talking to a puppet versus mom or dad regarding a sensitive topic, the child may be more comfortable and better able to explain the situation in more detail.

Use puppets to help your child practice new skills.

Let your child use the puppet to practice spelling words or multiplication tables. Or use role plays to model and practice new skills such as how to make a friend, ways to calm down when angry, what to do if he or she is being bullied, etc. The possibilities here are limitless. Remember to be creative and, most of all, spend some quality time and have fun interacting with your child as often as possible!