

Process Note for Model Case

M=mother
T=Therapist
N=Client

T greets M and N. N reciprocates eagerly and M welcomes T.

T: Here's the cookie game N. Do you want to show Mom how good you are at this one?

N: Yeah.

(set up game – like a memory game but with molded plastic cookies with shapes to match)

M: No, N don't turn it over. Your turn is done.

T: Mom's trying to teach you the right way to play the game. Remember we only turn over two.

(N continues to impulsively turn over more than two).

M: Stop that! Play the right way.

T: I think he's trying to find a match and I think I made a mistake by putting out too many cookies. It makes it too hard for him so he's turning over more. It's frustrating.

M: Yeah, he needs to play by the rules.

N looks at mom and seems to be sensing her disapproval.

T: Your mom is frustrated because she wants you to follow the rules and only turn over two. She knows you can do it. Show her, only two.

I count dramatically as he turns over two and then clap and say "good you turn over only two" before he could turn over more. The game wraps up...

I provided N several toy choices next and he picks the animal figurines (a favorite of his).

M: which one is Mommy?

N ignores and lines the animals up

T: the animals are lining. Like you do at school.

M: takes an animal and has it call to the other animals to come inside for a story.

N takes a big tiger and whacks the little tiger with the big one.

T: Oh ouch! I don't like that. That hurts. You hit me big tiger.

M: why'd you hit the tiger? Why'd you do that? That's not nice.

N no response.

M: Why'd you do that?

N: tiger.

T: I think sometimes N tries to show us big grown up hurting little ones because he remembers when he was hurt and got so many owies.

M: yeah.

T: But the grown ups are not allowed to hit the babies like that. (I took the big tiger and brought it up to my face) to the big tiger- you can't hit that baby like that. You are not following the rules. You are going to go to jail. (and I put the big tiger behind my bag).

N smiled and looked pleased

M: The big one is gone so no one can hurt the baby. Who's gonna take care of the baby? (she held up two animals) this one or this one?

N pointed to the polar bear.

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M: the bear is going to protect the baby and no one can get the baby now. (she took the polar bear and several other animals and surrounded the baby tiger). No one can get the baby. The baby is safe and no one is going to hit the baby.

N laughed and clasped his hands in lap and looked expectantly at mom to see what she would do next.

T: that's right. Momma's telling you that no one can hit the baby and she's right this baby is safe. And the big tiger can't come back.

M took the polar bear and pretended to yell in the direction of the tiger "you can't get my baby. You can't get my baby. You can't hit him anymore."

N smiled with approval.

M: see, all of them are watching the baby (and she positioned each animal so it was facing the baby). So no one can come and get the baby.

N started squirming and looking around and appeared to be done with this play. (pause)

T: You just did such a nice job. You have such a natural understanding of what he's trying to show us in his play. I could just see in his body and in his face how he relaxed hearing about how the baby was safe and that there are people protecting him just like you are protecting him now. It's so wonderful that you are able to tell that kind of story with him. To N- your momma was telling you a really good story with the animals about how the baby used to get hurt and now the baby doesn't get hurt because the good big ones protect him.

N smiled

(pause) N drinking juice

T: I sometimes ask him why questions too and he's not really able to answer me so I'm not surprised that he didn't answer your question "why'd the big tiger hit the baby?" Gosh, I wish we did know right?

M: Yeah (shakes head)

T: but sometimes he can't quiet answer those questions.

M: I notice that.

T: yeah, even if you ask him why'd you knock the crackers on the floor? (laughing) He probably will say "crackers" back.

M: yeah that's right (chuckling)

T: I know. He just cant explain reasons yet but he can show us a lot in his play.

M: Yeah, that's true.

T: It really helps kids heal from the hard things that happen when they can play with their mom about the things that happened. You do such a nice job doing that.

M: thank you.

(I offered N a book or puzzle as a down regulation, wrap up activity. He picked a puzzle which he is very good at and assembled it quickly. Mother praised him and exclaimed "look how smart my baby it". We wrap up and say goodbyes and I check in with Mom

T: So is it okay if I come to your house again next week?

M: sure.

T: okay, I think it helps him so much to tell these stories with you so I really appreciate you being willing to do this with him.

M: anything to help my baby.

T: You are such a wonderful mother. You'd do anything to help your baby.

M: I would.