

# ATTACHMENT CENTERED DIRECTIVES

Directives largely depend on the clients ability to comprehend attachment.

In littles; you may have to the change the wording or in child centered approach (which I use heavily) allows the child to do as they please and you begin to map out the pattern. At any age, we want to stay in the metaphors to create healing in the right side of the brain.

In many cases you can start out with any directive and your prompting questions or I wonder statements will lead you to uncovering the attachment pattern and attachment needs of a client.

Also in identifying attachment it is not just about noticing what is going on in the tray but what is going on with your client physically and behaviorally. Allowing your client to move in and out of the sand is important for their healing process but it can be indicators of what type of attachment you are looking at.

## Directives

Can you build a sand world where you or your character feels safe?

Can you build a sand world where you or your character feels unsafe?

Create a sandtray about you and your friends?

*\*Prompt the client with an I wonder statement on what happens when you have conflict, feel rejected or abandoned by your friends?*

Create a sandtray about you and your family?

*\*Prompt the client with an I wonder statement on what happens when you have conflict, feel rejected or abandoned by your family?*

Miracle question about ideal family.

What does your mornings and evenings look like?  
Bedtime?

*\*This tray can show what the client sees as important and what they need since these times are often important for parental connection.*

## Family directives

**\*Caution\***

*Family sand tray should not be used when the child does not have a consistent attachment figure such as in foster care.*

Start with IAST (International Association of Sandtray Therapy) suggested family sandtray directives and evolve into mapping out the interaction patterns with the family with prompting.

*For example; Let's say we are working with a mother, father, and pre-teen client. The client displays clingy behaviors to the mother, which includes "pestering, annoying and disruptive behaviors, defiance."*

What happens when the mother is busy and cannot meet the child's needs, can you show me that in tray?

*What's happening with you dad, while this is going on?*

So I notice when mom is busy, you seem to go after her trying to get her attention? Can you all show me what you want the family to look like?

*\*Remember creating sand worlds about these difficult topics you can activate attachment needs, trauma, and dysregulation and younger children are protected under the umbrella of play (refer to the Sandtray Suite module). We want to acknowledge the observed or reported activation. Allow your clients to regulate outside of the tray if needed. This is an experience that we want to regulate and we can utilize this as a correct of experience for them rather than avoiding this experience or fearing it.*