

ENJOYING SESSIONS WITH A CHILD:
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Del is the author of the GREAT ESCAPES volumes of therapeutic hypnosis scripts and the "New Beginnings" recordings. Her books, now being translated into Spanish, French, Chinese and Danish, are being used in over 38 countries. Del's curriculum for working with children is used in doctoral programs in the US and Canada; and her course on Hypnosis with Children is being taught in China by a former student. Adapted from a larger essay, copyrighted © 2002, by Del Hunter Morrill (253) 383-5757, <http://www.hypnocenter.com>]

Use of Imaginative Scripts: A child doesn't always have to have traditional inductions used in order to be hypnotized. Besides the traditional positive suggestion approach, there is a wide variety of possibilities for effectively inducing a child and providing a proper "prescription" for healing or changing habits. Most children are in a sort of trance-like state already, or, at the very least, fuzzy about the line between the real and unreal. This makes it possible to create a trance-like state in some very simple ways. Some of these can include telling stories or creating a metaphors, using the child's favorite television program to spin a tale, creating an adventure a child can go on that leads to a solution to their problem, looking at a gyroscope or into a kaleidoscope, focusing on a dot on the guide's finger, coloring an optical illusion while the therapist talks to them, making use of a pendulum, hypnotizing a puppet in order to show a child how very simple it is, going on an amazing trip such as a rocket to Mars, or locating a magical kingdom where wonderful things can happen that change your life.

The Star/Tree/Garden script, in my GREAT ESCAPES, volume I for therapists who work with children and pre-teens, IS a good example of placing the child in a visual and safe setting. Blowing up balloons, receiving gifts from the sea, burning a ship of problems, changing labels and others provide settings that allow the child to be active in their changing. Another value of such methods is that they can be used for just about any age group, including adults. Being animals, meeting a magician who helps you change, greeting people on the other side of the rainbow, or going into a tough area with your favorite hero are fun for a child, or "adult child", and make use of their wonderful imagination.

Locating the Source: When a child is brought in for any serious issue, it should be assumed that there may be some deeper problem, for which this is just a symptom. In such cases, the problem-solution finding process script, in GREAT ESCAPES, Volumes I and IV (which has adapted for younger ages), can be very helpful, especially for younger ages, or less articulate children. Regression is possible in a later session, if such a script or process hasn't been fully affective.

Value of Homework: Homework can be a helpful addition in supporting the work done in the office. It can serve as reinforcement for the child, and gives the parent some way to participate. Homework for the child also can serve as a sort of posthypnotic suggestion, thus strengthening the session. Homework for a parent could range from creating a log or chart for a child's improvement, to using particular affirmations with the child, before bedtime.

[TIPS: Keep a basket of stuffed animals, puppets and soft dolls in the room or hang them on a hat rack. My bookshelves include such things as a magician's hat and wand, a deerstalker hat (like Sherlock Holmes'), a kaleidoscope, spin~ing circle, different types of pendulums, and other interesting items.]

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