

GENTLE FIRST CONTACT

A tactfully designed *patient journey* and *therapeutic environment* to make children feel at ease for improved psychosocial therapy sessions

Visiting a psychosocial therapy session for the first time can be a stressful experience for children which builds up prior to the actual appointment. Several elements in the patient journey are designed to make the child feel at ease during his first therapy session and to create an overall more gradual journey towards the appointment. In addition, the therapeutic environment (*playroom*) is redesigned to further improve the experience of the child, but also to support the psychologists in their range of activities. A seahorse is used as the connecting element throughout the journey and in the therapeutic environment. The seahorse supports, guides and distracts the child at moments he needs this.



A special letter for the child

The letter shows the child in a visual way what he can expect and triggers his curiosity by introducing the seahorse and a hidden element on the letter.



Seahorse search in the waiting room

With a magic UV flashlight, the child can discover the seahorses that are hidden behind the seaweed strings placed on the wall in the waiting room.



Playful transition to the playroom

A playful transition to the playroom creates a smoother experience when entering the unfamiliar environment. Seahorses are placed on the door as part of the storyline and are a trigger for interaction between the psychologist and the child.



Seahorse search as ice breaking activity

A last seahorse is hidden in the playroom. This marks the end of the story line and forms a starting point for the therapy session.

Scenario

- The parent informs the child about the appointment with help of the letter.
- The parent takes the letter to the appointment.
- The parent and child are guided by the seahorses towards the department.
- The child receives a magic UV flashlight at the reception.
- The parent and child discover the hidden element on the letter and are curious to find out more.
- Together they search for the seahorses hidden in the waiting room.
- Time for the appointment! The psychologist invites the child to search for the last seahorse in the playroom.
- The psychologist and child search together for the hidden seahorse.
- Now the session can start. The child feels at ease which is enhanced by the environment.
- The child leaves with a positive feeling.

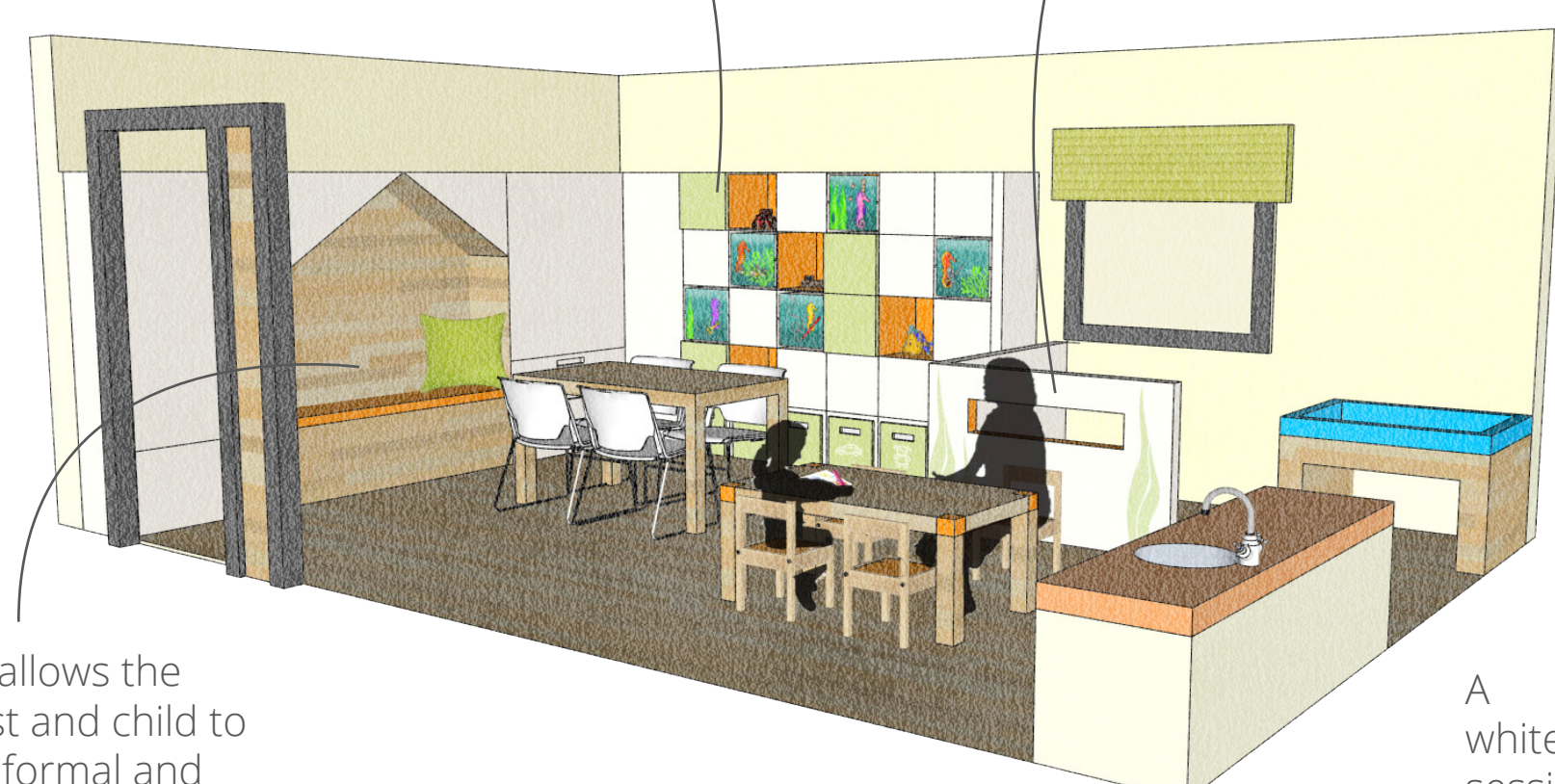
A new design for the therapeutic environment

The therapy sessions take place in the newly designed therapeutic environment. A flexible environment is created that can be easily adapted to the different sessions that are performed and the characteristics of the child. By turning and sliding panels in the closet, the psychologist can easily and quickly change the atmosphere in the room.

Panels in the closet can be turned or slid open to switch between a playful environment and a more calm environment.

The partition allows the child to withdraw. In addition, it can be used to hide play material and as a playful element during sessions (e.g. a puppet theatre).

The bench allows the psychologist and child to talk in an informal and relaxed setting.



A multifunctional moveable whiteboard supports therapeutic sessions and allows the psychologist to create a sheltered space.

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20 September 2018
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