
FILIAL THERAPY

Woodridge Primary School

Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio

Woodridge Primary School (WPS) offers programs designed for parents. One program focuses on parenting children with social, emotional, and behavioral problems. In collaboration with the University of Akron Counseling Department, WPS offered an innovative program called Filial Therapy.

Featured in the program were Dr. Cynthia Reynolds, a University of Akron professor in the Counselor Education Program, Carol Stanley, Woodridge Primary School counselor, and the WPS Even-Start SELF Program. Dr. Cynthia Reynolds learned the method directly from its co-developers, Bernard and Louise Guerney. This program ran for ten weekly 90-minute sessions. Filial Therapy is recognized as an effective approach to strengthening parent, child, and family relationships.

Filial Therapy focuses on several principles:

- Play is very important in child development.
- Parents are the most significant adults in children's lives.
- Education and skill development are effective in resolving conflicts.

A Filial therapist trains parents to conduct these specialized play sessions, supervises parents during the sessions, and help them to integrate these skills at home. The goal is to develop positive interactions between parents and their children and to increase communication, coping and problem-solving skills. In this way families are better able to successfully manage future problems independently. Research on Filial Therapy has shown it to be effective in reducing child problems and in increasing parental acceptance.

Parents participating in Filial Therapy sessions reported:

- "I liked seeing 'in action' what we were going to do when Dr. Reynolds did Filial Therapy with my child."
- "I felt really nervous at first. Now that I look back, my first taped session was pretty good. It built my confidence."

- “Kids really love it.”
- “I don’t feel as stressed about parenting.”
- “Filial Therapy has opened my eyes to how independent my child is becoming.”
- “I hold back more when my child is struggling, and trust that he’ll find a way to problem solve.”

Detailed information about each session is available on the web site:

www.MySchoolOnLine.comWPS. Find it under Woodridge Primary School, Programs for Parents, Filial Therapy.

Carol Stanley, Action Team Chairperson
(330) 928-1223