LAUREL HELPING HANDS

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

Before we start therapy, we will like to go over some of the principles that guide our work here at Laurel Helping Hands.

We operate on the model that *no one individual in a family "has a problem" or "is the problem".* Problem behaviors develop out of interactions between an individual and other members of the family. Even when there is clear indication of an external cause for a problem e.g. brain injury, outcomes still depend on the whole family and on how family members interact. Therefore, *therapy is a team effort* requiring the engagement of all family members for success.

We know that *parents are the primary agents of change in their children's lives,* and so our goal in therapy will be to equip you with skills so that you, in turn, can teach your child how to act differently. It has been our experience that when parents come to therapy thinking that a child "has a problem" or "is the problem", the parents are unwilling to change their own behavior and so there is no improvement in the child's behavior. In order to see behavior change in your child, you will first have to make some changes to yourself.

 Lastly, *problem behaviors tend to get worse in therapy before they get better* and so change seldom happens quickly or suddenly. We measure change in the frequency, duration and intensity of the problem behavior. If there is improvement in any of these areas, change is occurring even if the child's behavior is still very challenging. You can do a lot to make change happen faster by how quickly you make changes in yourself and how consistently and frequently you use the skills you will learn.

So welcome aboard and we look forward to working with your family. We are confident that together, we will achieve your family's goals.

Sincerely,

Laurel Helping Hands Counselors

Strengthening families, Helping youth thrive