

# The Goal of Child Psychotherapy

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The goal of parenting and child psychotherapy is not merely to achieve an obedient child;  
The goal is to achieve an emotionally, socially, and psychologically healthy child;  
A child who ultimately becomes an emotionally mature and responsible adult.

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## **What is an Emotionally, Socially, and Psychologically Healthy Child?**

### The child is cooperative

- Cooperation is more than mere obedience. Cooperation is actively accepting and participating in the goal of the directive with a pleasant and agreeable attitude. Emotionally, socially, and psychologically healthy children are cooperative with parents, with teachers, with peers, and with authority generally.
- Cooperative children can also want to know why they have to do something. It's okay for children to be curious about the reason for a directive. Knowing reasons helps us become cooperative and helps children learn about choices in life. Children are supposed to be curious and it's natural to want to know reasons.

### The child is pleasant to be around

- The child's mood is relaxed and pleasant. The child smiles and socializes with parents, teachers, and other adults, talking about the day's events or areas of interest. The child plays nicely with other children, sharing toys and taking turns. The child may sometimes become angry, but when he or she is angry, the child doesn't hit or tantrum, but instead talks about being angry and is cooperative in reaching a solution.

### The child is flexible

- While the child will have particular likes, dislikes, and preferences, the child is also flexible in accepting changes in activities and in adjusting to limitations placed on his or her desires.

### The child is appropriately assertive

- The child is able to appropriately express his or her wants, needs, and desires, and is able to flexibly negotiate his or her needs in socially appropriate ways.

### The child is responsible

- The child takes care of personal responsibilities, such as brushing teeth and bathing, homework, healthy eating, safe and appropriate play, completing chores and duties, etc. on his or her own initiative, with minimal reminders and prompting from parents.

### The child follows rules

- The child is able to restrain his or her impulses in order to consider and apply the limitations of the social context.

### The child has a moral-ethical center

- The child's activities and choices are influenced by concepts of right-and-wrong, empathy and compassion for others, and appropriate moral and ethical values.

### And... most importantly... the child is happy

- The child enjoys life, enjoys social relationships, enjoys learning, enjoys parents, enjoys friends, and enjoys play. The healthy child laughs often and loves easily.