

March 28, 2024

Dear PlayWorks Therapy Families,

We are excited to share with you an important update regarding our ongoing commitment to safety and the well-being of our clients at PlayWorks Therapy. Our endeavor to grow alongside the Neurodiversity Movement has led to our exploration of new modalities and approaches to ensure we are supporting our clients with a trauma-informed lens. With this in mind, we are introducing **Ukeru**, a restraint-free crisis management system, to our practice.

With our commitment to building therapeutic relationships that inherently value comfort over control, we are utilizing our new Ukeru training to support our clients' autonomy and eliminate the need for any restraint-based support.

Conceptual training for **Ukeru** included:

- Enriching our understanding of the neuroscience of relationship building and cultivating a sense of safety
- Broadening our neurobehavioral observations skills to better understand and respond to behavior
- Building an environment focused on comfort versus control, fostering a more understanding and supportive space
- Deepening our knowledge and understanding of trauma-informed care and the lived experience of individuals who receive services for developmental, regulatory, and mental health needs
- Learning strategies for de-escalating conflict by effectively converting or diverting aggressive behavior towards more positive outcomes

Physical training for **Ukeru** included:

- Strategies and techniques for using soft pads to protect a child from self-injury and prevent/shield others around them from harm
- Techniques for helping to reduce injury from a child hitting or biting themselves or others, kicking others, pulling hair, and other actions that could pose harm to themselves or others (e.g. blocks from hitting or kicking, bite releases, hair pull releases, arm grab releases, clothing releases, choke releases)
- Supporting safety for children who attempt to elope

Ukeru has already been adopted by more than 400 organizations throughout the United States, providing support for a diverse range of adult and childhood disabilities. We are excited to make this shift as we further our knowledge and understanding of neurodiversity-affirming care. In the coming weeks, we will introduce the blue pads into our clinic, integrating them into daily activities to foster familiarity and comfort if they need to be used. The pads will be placed around the clinic, enabling children to discover and learn about their role in supporting everyone's safety. We encourage children to interact with and explore the pads, allowing them to become comfortable and familiar with the pads' presence.

As our history has shown, we are a practice that consistently evolves in response to the needs of the children we serve, their families, and their communities. We eagerly look forward to expanding our knowledge base as we continue to find the best ways to achieve our goal of helping children meet their own goals for independence while supporting self-determination.

For further information regarding Ukeru, visit www.ukerusystems.com or contact our office for more information.

Please let us know if you have any questions or concerns.

Best,



Amy Wechsler, LCSW
Clinical Director and Founder
PlayWorks Therapy, Inc.
Certified Ukeru Trainer



Caroline Stevens, MS, OTR/L
Co-Director of PlayWorks Prep Therapeutic Preschool Program
PlayWorks Therapy, Inc.
Certified Ukeru Trainer