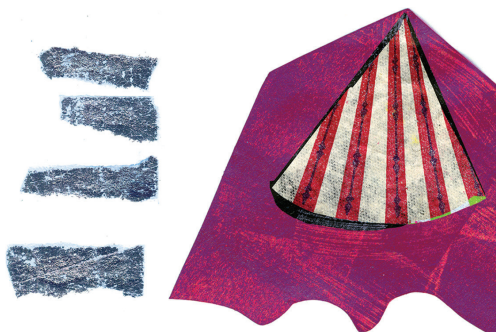


safe place



Safe Place



Materials

- Paper/thick drawing paper, size A3 or larger
- Paints—tempera or watercolor, or dry pastels
- Brushes of different thickness
- Colorful tissue paper (for collage), glue, or any additional scraps
- Any available materials that the child would like to use for building on the idea

Prompt

Ask the child to create a drawing or a painting of their safe space. They can also include elements of a collage, using the color tissue paper or any other available materials.

- *“Imagine where a ‘safe place’ is and what it looks like for you. This is your ‘sanctuary,’ a protected place which can be anywhere you wish—on an island, in the sky, in a magical country, in your bed at home.”* Remember that “safe place” does not mean only a building. For some children, a “safe place” can mean nature—a cavern, a tree, a nutshell.
- *“Try to paint it with as many details as possible.”* Some elements will emerge while the child paints. The painting can be non-figurative, illustrating a feeling of safety and peace.
- *“If you wish, add collage elements using the scraps, making it as nice as you want it to be, so that you really feel the safe place is yours.”*
- Ask some questions: *“Are you on your own in this place or can other people enter?” “Who would you invite in your safe place?” “Are there any pets, toys or other favorite things?” “What are the scents there?” “Is it warm?” “Is it dark or light?” “What does it feel like?” “What colors does it have?” “Is it transparent or impenetrable?” “How big is it?” “How do you feel in your safe place?”*

Ask for permission to “enter” with the child there or, if they do not wish to let you in, ask them to enter by themselves and show you the place from the inside. Play with your imagination in and around the safe place!

Aim

This prompt gives the child an opportunity to feel in a safe and secure place, where everything is “available,” they feel in peace and harmony, and they are “untouchable.”

It is appropriate for children who:

- experience anxiety and worry
- might be afraid of the dark or are having nightmares
- are victims of violence or abuse.

It can also be used as a resource in everyday life.

We all need our own “sanctuary” where we can get away from everything and everyone, relax and refresh, and be unafraid.

It is important to know that this place can be anywhere we wish it to be. It can contain everything we need, we can be by ourselves or we can invite loving people/ friends—people who are in our lives or have supported us in the past; pets; even superheroes or any other sources of strength.

Painting a “safe place” gives an opportunity for the child to feel peace and safety in their own body and to know that such a place exists any time they want it or need it.

Observations

The painting can show you what and who is important for the child and can be considered “a resource.” What gives the child the feeling of safety? What does the child need? What are their boundaries?

It is important not to interfere by using directions such as “Won’t you draw your favorite toy in there?” or “Draw an entrance,” because the child would uncover, feel and paint exactly what they need. It is not important for the painting to be realistic, but to be connected with the child’s inner experience.

Ask the child what they would like to share about their painting. It is important that your questions are open and directed only towards more exploration, especially through the senses, and not specifically limited to asking “why.”

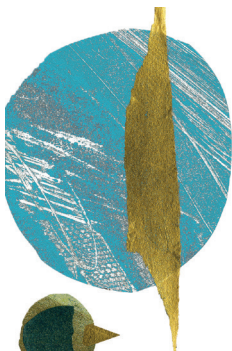
You can recommend to the child that they place their painting next to their bed or somewhere in their room so that it reminds them of their safe place and of the feeling of peace and love in it.



a nest and a bird with clay



A Nest and a Bird with Clay



Materials

- Clay or play-dough (250g)
- Clay mat
- If available, you can use instruments for clay modeling

Prompt

The prompt for this project is very simple: “*Create a nest and a bird with clay.*” Do not be tempted to answer questions the child may have. Simply tell the child that everything they do is right. Although the prompt is about

a single figure (one bird), in most cases the children make more than one figure and add other objects as well.

Aim

This prompt is best used to make an assessment of the child's attachment security level. The project can demonstrate the relationships in the family, the experience of the "family nest," the level of safety and trust the child experiences at home and, more specifically, the relationship with the mother.

Observations

You need to pay attention to the following:

- How is the nest built—is it secure, stable, big enough, cozy, etc.?
- Who and what is in the nest—are there other birds inside or outside the nest that the child has not made but exist in their imagination? Ask the child to tell you the story.
- Are there any eggs?
- Is there a parent who takes care of the bird/s? Who has the responsibility of being the "provider?"

Often the topics that come up revolve around home, family, food (care), abandonment and the potential for a new life (the eggs). If there are eggs in the nest, they can

be viewed as resources for life energy, creativity, future projects (or future siblings). In some cases, the eggs can indicate abortions or miscarriages of the mother, which the child unconsciously feels. It is not necessary to discuss them, unless the family openly expresses and discusses them as meaningful. It is best to ask the child what the egg represents for them.

Another important aspect of this project is the story the child tells about what is happening in the nest. Is the bird lonely? Is the nest safe—is it located on an electrical pole or on top of a tree; is it solid or falling apart? You can form a clear idea about the child's experiences regarding the safety and the protection they feel, as well as their projections about the parents' roles in the family (for example, the father-bird can be outside, but it can come back with food).

At the end, you can suggest ways they can make their nest cozier and ask the child: *"What does the little bird need?"* Keep the discussion in the third person (for example, *"How does the mother take care of her baby bird?"*), because if the child has attachment problems or trauma, first-person statements can trigger anxiety.