While we know the brain is a bit more complicated, we're going to generalize a little here so stay with us ....

You might agree that play therapy is more of a right-brain experience ... When a child is playing, their right brain is actively engaged, and the sensations and emotions stored in their implicit and explicit memory circuitry arise into conscious awareness – this is the magic of play therapy!❤️ It allows children to explore their internal world without having to access words.

While this is indeed beautiful, it can leave us scratching our heads 🤔 and wondering how to communicate to the child’s caregivers, teachers and other adults involved in the child’s life, what just happened?!

This is where the left-brain process comes in! ... to help us organize, make sense of, and communicate what is happening.

Here are a some tips to not get lost in a right brain process and communicate effectively so that the child’s caregivers can clearly see the progress and transformation that is occurring.

1. Set clear age-appropriate goals that clearly outline what you and the caregiver are looking for to know that change is occurring. Ex. Stephen (age 5) will increase his ability to use his words when he gets frustrated. Demonstrated by Stephen asking for help when he gets frustrated, instead of hitting.

2. Identify the challenges for the child early in the process AND exactly what you're looking for to indicate progress ("starting points" and "ending points") to help you recognize empowerment and transformation. Ex. If a child client’s play is filled with feelings and play demonstrating a perception of lack of safety and a need to stay hyper vigilant, then you will most likely be looking for play that involves safety and predictability to let you know transformation has occurred.

3. Help caregivers understand how the play is working towards the outlined goals in each and every conversation - go back to what you’re working on in your sessions and link them to the goals.

4. Use visual handouts to explain the process. For example, in Synergetic Play Therapy we show caregivers a diagram of what the play therapy process looks like during intake. This is a great way to make a right-brain experience feel more concrete (...and create a deeper level of understanding and buy-in from the caregiver).