



Reiki Sessions with Children

BY MARIE-EVE SENECHAL

RIGHT AT THE BEGINNING of starting my Reiki practice, I had decided to offer Reiki sessions for children. I knew deep inside that I would help children even though adults have always been much of my clientele. At that time, I set half-hour sessions for my young clients for no other reason than it was half the amount of time I spent on an adult one. I knew from experience that a child couldn't remain still for that long. I knew that I would need a calming moment with the child and maybe talk with the parents before I could carry out the session.¹ Even though I felt that I had thought everything through, I was still concerned about how I would handle my first contact with an unknown child.

The Reiki energy handled it perfectly for me. Soon enough I was surprised to see some of my regular clients coming back with their children. Even new clients booked their children! So far, I have seen toddlers, young children and even teenagers and they all came for very different reasons—cold, flu, anxiety, sleep issues, allergies. At first, the parents were bringing their children to me as a last resort. Then I found out that some of them were coming back before even going to the doctor. So far, these young clients of mine have been my best teachers ever. Not only because they are present in the “here and now”—as reflected in the Original Reiki Ideals—but because of their connection to their imagination. They continue to help me to reconnect with my inner child and my imagination.

Every time I carry out a Reiki session for a child it amazes me how absolute my surrender into the energy must be. The younger they are, the purer their connection is. The younger they are, the more I must let go and truly listen to my inner guidance. Every session is so unique because, unlike with adults, I do not know at all how the Reiki session will turn out. I can't even rely on a predetermined set of hands positions. It is a pure *Chiryō* experience—the kind of session Usui Sensei taught that relies on one's inner guidance rather than on a predetermined set of hand positions.² Every single time, Reiki adjusts so beautifully to the child's energy, sometimes using a method other than my hands to conduct the healing. Unlike teenagers, whose sessions are carried out as an adult session, children usually require a different approach. I use my hands for a powerful method of channeling Reiki from

across the room called “beaming.”ⁱⁱⁱ If I am busy playing with the child, I trade my hands for my eyes or even my heart and I send Reiki through those channels. If I have any power, it is in welcoming the moment presented to me as being perfect.

Acquiring permission is different for younger clients than for adults. I don't think we should worry very much about asking the permission of a young child to receive Reiki. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”⁴ If Jesus Himself gave the Reiki Holy Fire energy, shouldn't we think that the Reiki Holy Fire will open the door to healing at a higher level of consciousness? For young ones, I draw happy faces on the palms of my hands. I tell them that they are my assistants Rei and Ki and after I change my voice, I ask them if they want to play with them. I get a “yes” 100% of the time! However, I am more specific about the session with older ones. As for teenagers, they understand what giving their consent means. I always explain to the parents how Reiki respects free will, thereby allowing them to understand the importance of their children agreeing with the Reiki session, too.

Now that I have more experience working with children, I prepare myself a little differently and my room set-up changes. Before the child and parent arrives at my studio, I usually say a special prayer, “Reiki help me in reconnecting with my inner child so that I can be of help to this child whom you are sending to me today.” I push my massage table aside, get a set of colored massage balls out along with teddy bears and dolls and trade my Reiki music for kid's music. *Voilà!* Reiki can do its magic! It always makes me smile to see the parent's surprised looks when they see the different setting. I explain that their children can play in the room during the session and that they may join them.

Changing the room arrangement for children is good in another equally significant way—it allows a calming moment with my clients, for the young as much as for the older ones. I can talk to the younger ones on their level. I bend to reach their height, and in this way, they are less afraid of me. I usually show a genuine interest in what they brought to spend the session with me. It often does not take long for them to be completely comfortable in the room. When it is a second visit

or more, the process is even faster. From the entrance, the young children run into the room and ask me to play.

When older ones arrive, I speak more frankly and to their level. I make this conversation an integral part of the session because arrival is the proper time to ask if they consent to receive Reiki. The minute they agree I can continue speaking with them and start the session. It makes the time together fly by faster and it starts the session more naturally, without breakdowns. I believe that my clients and their parents are grateful for that honest bond that I create with them. Sometimes I wonder if some parents genuinely assume this is part of the session.

I always ask the parents to bring the child's favorite toy and a few snacks with them to keep her busy during the session. I also offer some of my own children's toys. I was fortunate enough to have had a son and a daughter and so I have plenty of toys from which to choose. Is there anything more interesting to children than new toys? Years before, I had discovered with my daughter that children seem surprisingly more opened to the Reiki energy when they are busy playing. The attraction of the new toys keeps them focused almost the whole time. While I give Reiki, I play with them. I just let the energy flow in the room and let it take control. If the session starts with the child on the parent's lap, it keeps going with me playing with the toys, telling the numbers, colors and asking about their favorite one. I dance to music with them and they enjoy it! My session always finishes in a round of applause because they did so well.

Feedback comes naturally. Children are so frank that they will tell you if they don't feel anything. Even older ones will tell you. Nowadays, we know how children can be open to the energy surrounding them. I think that they truly understand it better than we do. They seem to be pure receptive channels, without the filter of their mind. During Reiki sessions, some demonstrated an intuitive ability to feel that energy. One two-year-old girl got closer to me and touched my hands during a session. She stayed there for a while looking at me very intensely. A teenager confided to me that the flow of the energy was so intense that she thought she would pass out! Trust your clients young or old; they know when they have had enough. Don't be surprised if the session is over after only 15 minutes. Younger ones will want to leave and older ones will tell you that they are bored or that it has become unbearable. This situation is very usual. Remember that no matter the amount of Reiki they receive, it is good enough. It is more a matter of intention of healing than respecting an exact predetermined timeframe and set of hand positions.

Some specific indicators show me that I have been successful. With the little ones, when it is time to go home, if they ask *me* to put their coat or boots on instead of mom or dad, that's a great

sign. When the older ones realize how good it feels and they smile at me or if they come on a more regular basis or when they start sharing with me what their plans are for the summer or holidays, then I know I've succeeded.

As a last note, most parents do not realize that the healing energy is beneficial to them as well. One mother confided to me that an issue that she had been dealing with for some time was completely gone. I sometimes wonder who needs the healing more, the child or the parent and if it is a strategy of Reiki to bring an adult to me who wouldn't have come otherwise?

Things to Remember

- Always have a parent complete a consent form before the session.
- It is imperative that you mention the importance of always seeking the advice of a medical professional for an official diagnosis.
- Have one of the parents continuously present in the room with you. The younger child will more easily consent to a Reiki session if the parent is present and you'll save a considerable amount of time by not having to calm the child. For the older ones, keep your door open if you are by yourself in a studio, or ask the parent and the teenager what they prefer.
- For the babies, you can take them in your arms and ask the energy to flow. As another option, beam the energy towards the baby if the parent prefers to hold her baby.
- The real challenge is with the toddlers and older kids because you must keep them busy for the entire session. Recommend that the parent bring the child's favorite toy and something on which to snack. Introduce some of your toys and music for a diversion. It works perfectly. You can use soft balls, dolls to dress, puzzles, books, kid's music or create something fun yourself. Use your imagination!
- Younger children must be allowed to move wherever they want in the room. Keep your room safe for everybody.
- Older children, such as teenagers, can be asked if they agree to have a Reiki session. They have probably already consented to come but usually it has been initiated by the parent first. It is good to double-check to be certain Reiki is wanted.
- You must be comfortable with the fact that some teenagers won't close their eyes and relax. Let them listen to their music, especially if they have their iPod or cell and it comes with a headset. The practitioner and the client can each listen to their music without being either disturbed or bored.

So, as you can see, Reiki sessions with children can bring a whole new level of amazement and joy to your practice. You will find that surrendering and being open to how the Reiki energy will support you with young clients will not only surprise you; it will also reward you with a unique feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment! ❁❁



Marie-Eve Senechal is an Usui/Holy Fire II Reiki Master Teacher who lives in Saskatchewan, Canada. She has practiced Reiki for 25 years and started her professional practice four years ago. She is an Affiliate Member of the Reiki Membership Association and a Registered Member of the Canadian Reiki Association. She also has a Master's Degree in Philosophy.

She can be contacted by email at reikisask@sasktel.net, through her website at www.wascanareiki.com and by phone at (306) 789-9243.

Endnotes

- ¹ Marie-Eve Senechal, "Coping with My Daughter's Diagnosis of Cancer" *Reiki News Magazine*, Summer 2017, 48-51.
- ² William Lee Rand, *Reiki, The Healing Touch First and Second Degree Manual* (Southfield, MI: Vision Publications, February 2016), 55.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 88.
- ⁴ Mark 10:14.