

## **What is EMDR (for children):**

When horrible or scary things happen to a child, the brain can have a tough time understanding what to do about these scary things. Sometimes these worries build up inside us... imagine it is much like filling up a toy box until it starts to spill over because it is too full...or blowing up a balloon until it bursts because there is too much air in it. Our brains can get too full too!! This can be a scary thing and can sometimes make us feel sad or mad and feel very frightened or alone. This does not leave much room for nicer, happier thoughts and feelings in our brains and bodies. EMDR helps us to spring clean all the nasty stuff from our brains and bodies and make them feel less 'full'- but also less scary.



When children do EMDR, one of the things they do is move their eyes (and sometimes their hands/feet) over and back from side to side, while they think about the bad thing that happened to them. It is a special kind of 'eye movement therapy' that is done with a therapist to help your brain make more room up there for 'new' stuff - like learning how to feel less worried or afraid. Another EMDR therapist we know (credit

[www.AnaGomez.org](http://www.AnaGomez.org)) gave EMDR a simple meaning –“Eyes Move to Digest and Recover!”

Your therapist and your parent or guardian can help you do this. Sometimes your therapist might use other ways to help your brain and body to deal with these nasty feelings and memories- like tapping on your shoulders or hands as you play (from left to right, just like we talked about before!) or using drumming or a special 'magic' wand for your eyes to follow while EMDR works its magic!



Once your brain can swallow up all of these nasty thoughts or feelings, you can start to feel better and less afraid again.