



## **A story from Andrew Aikman about the therapeutic approach at Kitezh**

I was going to Sasha's house and a little girl went in just before me. She's seven and new to Kitezh.

"Mama, can I watch a film now?"

"OK, but take off your coat and hang it up first, and finish making your bed."

"I want to watch the film, you said I could!"

"Yes, and I told you that you must hang your coat up and you must make your bed.

You remember I explained that's how we do things here?"

"I want to watch the film!"

"Ira, I explained to you that you must hang up your coat and first, and finish making your bed."

Stamping the foot, "I want to watch the film! You said I could!"

Mama turned to the table and continued to check some books. Ira threw herself on the floor and began to scream. Sasha looked in and saw me, "Ah yes, you want the tools. They're here." Their twelve year old son and an older girl came in, and stepped over the screaming child and went to their rooms.

As I left, Mama came back in, carrying her pile of books. "Ira's still finding it very difficult to give up the orphanage ways. Maybe she learned it at home before; maybe it was the only way to get attention. We had a little conference this afternoon with the older children. Now the older girls understand how difficult it is for her and they decided not to tease her but to talk to her and help her to understand there are better ways to get what she needs. Just sometimes she has a lovely smile but she's still afraid to ask for a hug. It's early days."

Enlisting the children is part of the all-embracing therapeutic care of Kitezh. They're in the vanguard of rehabilitation; it's their word the new child will trust first.

Andrew