

The Wizzards of Avalon™

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Preface

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The system documented in this text has been conceptualized by the members of Avalon Activities, under the cooperation and scientific collaboration of Mag. Patrick Akrivos, whose professional contributions have supported the design, structure and ongoing evaluation of the program. Together, Avalon Activities and Mag. Akrivos are the authors of the conceptual, structural and textual content presented in this documentation.

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This document is a work in progress and forms part of an evolving body of practice- and research-based knowledge about the Wizzards of Avalon Program™. The system and its documentation are still being developed, refined and further elaborated as ongoing research, clinical experience and educational feedback inform future versions of the program materials.

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Part A – Brand and System Description

Chapter 1 – Prologue: What the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ Is

Avalon Activities offers a structured developmental program under the brand name **Wizzards of Avalon Program™** (the **Wizzards System**). The Wizzards System is an educational, tabletop role-playing-based framework designed to provide a safe and structured environment for the personal and social development of children, adolescents and teens (collectively, **Children**). It is delivered by trained professionals in education, psychology and parenting, who apply a standardised set of roles, meetings and game-based procedures under the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ name.

This document is an **internal professional manual** for authorised **Wizzards Teams**. It is intended for Supervisors, Game Masters (GMs) and Game Assistants (GAs) who have completed formal training in the Wizzards System and the Gordon Effectiveness System. It is **not** a stand-alone self-help resource or a generic tabletop role-playing game product, and it does not authorise independent implementation without training and oversight.

The Wizzards of Avalon Program™ is an educational and training service in the field of socio-emotional skills and interpersonal development for Children and their Families. All use of the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ brand occurs within this context of structured, facilitated learning experiences offered by authorised Wizzards Teams.

For clarity and consistency, the following terms are used throughout this manual: **Supervisor, Game Master (GM), Game Assistant (GA), Wizzards Team, Adventuring Party (Party), Session, Campaign, Initial Meetings, Family Meeting, Family Workshop, Assessment and Roadmap**. These terms refer to specific roles and procedures within the Wizzards System and are capitalised accordingly.

Chapter 2 – Wizzards Teams

The Wizzards System is implemented exclusively by authorised Wizzards Teams, ensuring consistent educational and clinical quality across all uses of the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ brand.

A Wizzards Team consists of:

- One Supervisor; and
- One Game Team, which includes a Game Master (GM) and at least one Game Assistant (GA).

All Wizzards Team members are trained in the Wizzards System and in supportive communication methodologies, including the Gordon Effectiveness System, to ensure that the educational goals are delivered safely, ethically and consistently.

2.1 The Supervisor

The Supervisor is a therapist or psychologist with experience in families, parenting and/or children and adolescents, and certification in the Gordon Effectiveness System.

From an educational perspective, the Supervisor safeguards the overall developmental direction of the Wizzards System for each Child and Family. From a clinical perspective, the Supervisor monitors risk, suitability, and any necessary referrals or adjustments when difficulties arise.

Key responsibilities of the Supervisor include:

- Leading or co-leading the Initial Meetings with Families and Children.
- Reviewing and co-authoring the Assessment and Roadmap for each Child and Family.
- Providing guidance to the Game Team regarding goals, boundaries, group composition and in-Session focus.
- Chairing or co-chairing the Wizzards Team Meetings.
- Participating in Family Meetings and Family Workshops, focusing on family communication and parenting strategies.
- Ensuring that the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ is applied in accordance with professional ethical standards.

2.2 The Game Team

A Game Team consists of one Game Master (GM) and one or more Game Assistants (GA), all trained in the Wizzards System and the Gordon Effectiveness System.

The Game Master (GM) is an experienced educator and trained game facilitator, as well as an accomplished tabletop role-playing Game Master. The GM is responsible for planning and running Wizzards Sessions for each Party, aligning the narrative and challenges with the developmental goals of the Children.

The Game Assistant (GA) is an experienced game facilitator who supports the GM during Sessions and in meetings, combining in-game participation with observation and documentation.

Game Teams are responsible for the day-to-day educational delivery of the Wizzards of Avalon Program™.

Chapter 3 – Roles within the Wizzards System

3.1 The Game Master (GM)

The GM's primary role is to design, plan and run the weekly Wizzards Session for each Adventuring Party ("Party") during the designated timeframe, usually an academic year.

The complete sequence of weekly Sessions experienced by a Party within this timeframe is called a Campaign. The GM ensures that each Session's story, tasks and social challenges are developmentally appropriate and aligned with the individualized Roadmap for each Child.

Core responsibilities of the GM include:

- Preparing Session content (plots, encounters, activities) that reflect the goals and themes set in the Child's and Party's Roadmaps.
- Facilitating gameplay in a way that encourages participation, cooperation, reflection and skill practice.
- Monitoring the group process in real time, adjusting pacing, level of challenge and focus as needed.
- Collaborating with the GA and Supervisor to evaluate progress and refine goals.

3.2 The Game Assistant (GA)

The GA has a dual role, acting both as a member of the Game Team and as an in-game member of the Party. This position is central to the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ because it bridges the educational design and the lived experience of the Children in the game.

Within the Party (in-Session role):

- The GA is a full member of the Party from the Children's perspective.
- The GA is a player and assumes a clearly defined in-game character role.
- During Sessions, the GA participates like every other Child: they take turns, make decisions, face challenges and engage in the story.
- The GA builds natural interpersonal relationships with the Children within the Wizzards setting, modelling prosocial behaviour, communication and emotional expression.

Within the Game Team (out-of-Session role):

- The GA assists the GM in implementing the goals set in each Child's Roadmap during Sessions.
- The GA observes and documents interactions during Sessions, focusing on social dynamics, emotional responses and behavioural patterns.
- The GA contributes structured observations to Game Team Meetings and Wizzards Team Meetings, supporting more accurate assessment and planning.
- The GA uses their in-game character to gently prompt, scaffold and reinforce targeted behaviours (for example: asking for help, setting boundaries, cooperating, managing frustration).

3.3 The Supervisor

The Supervisor provides overarching developmental and clinical oversight of the Wizzards System for all Children and Families served by a Wizzards Team.

In educational terms, the Supervisor ensures that the program's aims—such as social skills, self-regulation and collaboration—are pursued in a structured, intentional manner for each Child.

In clinical terms, the Supervisor monitors suitability, risk and any signs that additional or alternative support outside the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ may be needed. The Supervisor also considers whether the Child's current needs can be safely and effectively addressed within a group-based, game-mediated format, or whether alternative or additional services are required.

Core responsibilities of the Supervisor include:

- Conducting or co-conducting Initial Meetings to gather developmental and family history.
- Approving or adjusting the Child's and Family's Roadmap.
- Providing guidance to the GM and GA regarding group composition and specific sensitivities (for example: trauma, anxiety, attention difficulties).

- Monitoring documentation from Sessions and meetings and making recommendations for change when necessary.
- Leading psychoeducational components in Family Meetings and Family Workshops.
- Supporting the decision to continue, pause or terminate a Child's participation in the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ based on ongoing assessment.

Once every four weeks, the Supervisor participates in one Weekly Wizzards Session of each Game Team as a player from the Children's perspective. In these Sessions, the Supervisor assumes the role of a recurring in-game character who does not hold a central place in the main story, often appearing as a knowledgeable traveller who brings news from the wider world of Avalon to the Party. By joining the Session in this way, the Supervisor can directly observe the status and progress of each Child in a naturalistic setting within their Party. This periodic in-Session participation allows the Supervisor to monitor the implementation of the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ and to provide informed guidance and advice to the GM and GA(s) based on first-hand observations.

Chapter 4 – Initial Meetings

The Wizzards of Avalon Program™ begins with a structured series of Initial Meetings between the Wizzards Team and the Child and their parents or caregivers (the "Family"). These meetings serve educational assessment and clinical screening purposes. Information from the Initial Meetings is treated as confidential and is shared within the Wizzards Team only on a need-to-know basis, solely for the purposes of assessment, planning and the safe implementation of the Wizzards of Avalon Program™.

4.1 First Meeting – Supervisor and Family

A first meeting takes place between the Supervisor and the Family. Its aims include:

- Gathering relevant developmental, educational and family history.
- Clarifying concerns, expectations and current challenges.
- Presenting the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ and answering questions about its structure and approach.
- Assessing compatibility between the Family's needs and the Wizzards System.

4.2 Second Meeting – Game Team and Family

A second meeting is held between the Game Team and the Family. This meeting focuses on:

- Exploring the Child's strengths, interests and difficulties, particularly in social and school contexts.
- Translating concerns into concrete, observable goals that can be addressed in Wizzards Sessions.
- Explaining how the GM and GA will work with the Child within the Party and how the Family will be involved through regular meetings.
- Establishing practical aspects such as schedules, communication channels and expectations for attendance.

4.3 Third Meeting – Supervisor and Child

A third meeting is held between the Supervisor and the Child. This meeting aims to:

- Assess the Child's readiness and suitability for participation in a Wizzards Party.
- Build initial rapport with the Child, using language and examples they can understand.
- Introduce the idea of role-playing, the fantasy setting of Avalon and the basic structure of Sessions.
- Identify any immediate factors that may require special attention (for example: sensory sensitivities, anxiety triggers).

4.4 Assessment and Roadmap

Following the Initial Meetings, the Wizzards Team formulates:

- An Assessment of:
 - o The Child's developmental status and socio-emotional profile.
 - o The Child's current needs and challenges.
 - o The Child's environment (Family, School and other relevant systems).
 - o The needs of the Child and Family as a unit.
- A Roadmap that outlines:
 - o Immediate goals to be addressed in the first phase of the Campaign.
 - o Medium- and long-term goals for the Child and Family.
 - o Initial ideas on how these goals will be supported during Wizzards Sessions and Family-oriented interventions.

The Assessment and Roadmap are working documents that guide the educational and clinical work within the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ and are regularly revisited. The Assessment and Roadmap are documented in writing with clear language about goals and next steps.

Chapter 5 – Weekly Wizzards Sessions

The Weekly Wizzards Sessions are the core educational activity of the Wizzards of Avalon Program™.

Each Game Team organizes, runs and supports a group of 2–5 enrolled Children, called an Adventuring Party (the “Party”).

Key structural features:

- Frequency and duration: Wizzards Sessions are held weekly, typically 28–32 times within an academic year, with each Session lasting approximately 120–150 minutes.
- Setting: Sessions take place in a safe, child-appropriate physical environment designed for group work and table-top play.
- Composition: Parties are formed with attention to age, developmental level and compatibility, based on the Assessment.

Within each weekly Session:

- The GM coordinates a Wizzards tabletop role-playing game using the Wizzards Rules System (see Chapter 8).
- The Children and the GA(s) form the Party and assume in-game roles in the fantasy setting of Avalon.
- Narrative challenges, cooperative tasks and decision-making situations are used as structured opportunities to practice targeted skills from the Roadmap.
- Time is reserved for beginning-of-Session check-ins and end-of-Session reflections, adjusted to the age group, to help Children connect in-game experiences to real-life situations.

After each Session, the Game Team documents significant events, behaviours and interactions and uses these notes in the weekly Game Team Meeting.

Chapter 6 – Scheduled Meetings

The Wizzards System includes a set of Scheduled Meetings that support continuity, reflection and collaboration between professionals and Families. Information from all Scheduled Meetings is treated as confidential and is shared within the Wizzards Team only on a need-to-know basis, solely for the purposes of assessment, planning and the safe implementation of the Wizzards of Avalon Program™.

6.1 Game Team Meeting (Weekly)

The Game Team Meeting is held weekly and includes the GM and GA(s) responsible for a specific Party. Its functions are educational planning and monitoring.

Minimum tasks include:

- Documenting the most recent Wizzards Session (key events, emotional peaks, social interactions).
- Evaluating each Child's current state in relation to their Roadmap goals.
- Re-evaluating and adjusting Roadmaps based on observations and emerging needs.
- Planning the next Session's narrative and activities to support specific goals.
- Identifying information or questions to bring to the Wizzards Team Meeting or Family Meeting.

6.2 Wizzards Team Meeting (Every 4 Weeks)

A Wizzards Team consists of the Game Team and the Supervisor. The Wizzards Team Meeting takes place approximately once every four weeks.

The purposes of this meeting include:

- Reviewing each Child's progress across Sessions, Family interactions and school reports when available.
- Discussing group dynamics within each Party and any necessary changes (for example: seating arrangements, pairing, type of challenges).
- Integrating educational observations with clinical understanding.
- Deciding on thematic emphases for the next period (for example: boundaries, assertiveness, collaboration, dealing with frustration).
- Coordinating messages to be communicated to the Family, ensuring clarity and consistency.

The Wizzards Team Meeting is the main forum where educational and clinical perspectives are integrated into a coherent plan for the Wizzards of Avalon Program™.

6.3 Family Meeting (Every 8 Weeks)

The Family Meeting takes place approximately once every eight weeks between all members of the Child's Game Team and at least one of the Child's caregivers.

Its aims are to:

- Listen carefully to the Family's news since the previous contact, including important milestones, changes or events in the Child's life, and to understand how these may relate to the ongoing work.
- Focus on how the Child has progressed outside of Wizzards Sessions, as part of the intended "bleed-out" of skills and insights into everyday contexts such as home, school and peer relationships.
- Share the Child's progress, strengths and challenges as observed in the Wizzards Sessions.
- Discuss how Session themes connect to behaviours at home and at school.
- Review and update the Child's and Family's Roadmap, including re-evaluating goals considering new information and experiences.
- Identify and redetermine any aspects that may need to be adjusted, paused or readdressed with the Supervisor at the next Wizzards Team Meeting.
- Offer practical parenting strategies and communication tools consistent with the principles of the Wizzards System and the Gordon Effectiveness System.
- Provide a space for questions, concerns and collaborative problem-solving.

The Family Meeting positions the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ as a partnership between professionals and Families in supporting the Child's development.

6.4 Family Workshop (Every 12 Weeks)

The Family Workshop takes place approximately once every twelve weeks and is attended by the Caregivers of a Party of Children participating in the Wizzards of Avalon Program™.

Each Family Workshop begins with a structured, approximately 60-minute talk delivered by the Supervisor to the Caregivers. This talk focuses on practical tools, tactics and strategies that these Families can use with their Children, drawing on themes and challenges that have emerged in the Party's Wizzards Sessions.

Following the talk, there is an extended discussion phase during which Caregivers can ask questions and receive personalized, specialized advice from the Supervisor. In offering this guidance, the Supervisor draws on their knowledge of each Child as conveyed by the Game Team, their own experience of the Children from the Wizzards Sessions they have attended, and their professional expertise in psychology, parenting and family therapy.

Chapter 7 – Goals of the Wizzards of Avalon Program™

The Wizzards of Avalon Program™ pursues clearly defined educational goals for Children and Families, informed by psychological, pedagogical and parenting perspectives.

7.1 Goals for Children

For Children, the Wizzards System aims to:

- Support the development of core social skills such as listening, turn-taking, cooperation and conflict resolution.
- Enhance emotional awareness and expression, including recognizing feelings in self and others.
- Provide safe, structured opportunities to practice setting and respecting boundaries.
- Strengthen problem-solving, planning and decision-making in a group context.
- Build self-confidence and a sense of competence through in-game achievements and constructive feedback.

These goals are pursued through repeated practice in the fictional world of Avalon, with the explicit intention of generalization to everyday life.

7.2 Goals for Families

For Families, the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ aims to:

- Improve communication patterns between Children and caregivers.
- Increase parental understanding of the Child's needs, strengths and difficulties.
- Offer shared metaphors and language, drawn from the Wizzards setting, to talk about complex topics in an accessible way.

- Provide structured guidance and tools for parenting consistent with the program's values, such as respect, collaboration and clear limits.

7.3 Process-Level Goals

At the level of process and environment, the Wizzards System aims to:

- Provide a predictable and safe group structure where Children can experiment with new behaviours.
- Integrate knowledge from psychology, pedagogy and parenting into a single coherent framework.
- Create a recognizable, high-quality educational service under the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ brand.

These goals provide the reference point for all Assessments, Roadmaps, Session plans and Family-oriented interventions within the Wizzards System.

Chapter 8 – The Wizzards Rules System

The Wizzards Rules System is the proprietary tabletop role-playing ruleset used exclusively within the Wizzards of Avalon Program™. It is designed to support educational goals while remaining engaging and age-appropriate.

8.1 Setting: Avalon

The Wizzards Rules System is set in the fictional world of Avalon, a place of magic, mystery and community. Children create characters who are novice “Wizzards” or related archetypes, each belonging to a particular role or group that comes with its own values and challenges.

The setting is intentionally constructed to evoke themes relevant to development:

- Belonging to a group.
- Balancing personal desires with group needs.
- Facing challenges that require courage, collaboration and reflection.

8.2 Characters and Roles

Children design characters using structured options that reflect:

- Basic attributes such as physical, mental and social dimensions.
- Signature strengths or abilities that can be expressed in cooperative tasks.

- Personal goals or dilemmas that parallel real-life developmental themes, such as trust, independence or responsibility.

The GA and GM support the Child in creating a character that is both engaging and suitable for their current developmental profile.

8.3 Core Mechanics

The Wizzards Rules System uses simple, transparent mechanics so that focus remains on interaction and reflection rather than complex rule management.

Core elements may include:

- A simple resolution system using dice combined with character strengths.
- Structured turns and phases in each Session to support predictability.
- Clear consequences that emphasize learning, collaboration and accountability.

The Rules System includes procedures for:

- Cooperative tasks where success depends on multiple characters contributing.
- Social challenges where communication, negotiation or boundary-setting are central.
- Reflection prompts where characters and players are invited to comment on what was learned.

8.4 Linking Rules to Development

The Wizzards Rules System is explicitly aligned with the goals of the Wizzards of Avalon Program™:

- Certain mechanics are used to practice specific skills, such as actions that encourage helping behaviours.
- In-game rewards are tied not only to success but also to prosocial actions, persistence and reflective contributions.
- The GM and GA use rules flexibly to maintain safety and focus on learning, rather than on strict simulation.

The full Wizzards Rules System is documented in separate internal manuals and materials that are distributed only for use within the Wizzards of Avalon Program™.

Part B – Professional Perspectives on the Wizzards System

Part B provides professional analyses of the Wizzards of Avalon Program™ from psychological, pedagogical and parenting viewpoints. It is intended for educators, mental health professionals and other stakeholders who wish to understand the theoretical foundations of the program.

Chapter 9 – The Wizzards System from Three Professional Viewpoints

Chapter 9.1 – Psychological viewpoint

Key mechanisms (psychological)

- Stable, recurring **Party** structure that supports attachment, trust and corrective relational experiences.
- Use of **role-play and narrative** to explore identity, affect and interpersonal patterns at a safe psychological distance.
- **Graded exposure** to social challenges within a controlled, fictional context.
- Structured **reflection and debriefing** to build self-awareness, metacognition and self-regulation.
- Clinical use of **bleed-in** and deliberate support for **bleed-out** of skills into everyday life.
- Integration of **Family involvement** through regular Family Meetings and Family Workshops.

From a psychological perspective, the Wizzards System can be understood as a group-based, experiential intervention that leverages role-play, narrative and stable peer relationships to promote socio-emotional development in Children and to support their Families. Its design incorporates central principles from group psychotherapy, group play therapy, and exposure-based and reflective approaches, adapted to a fantasy tabletop role-playing format.

A stable, recurring Party format supports the development of attachment, trust and consistent feedback processes. A predictable group composition and regular meeting schedule create conditions for corrective relational experiences, especially

for Children who have encountered instability or inconsistency in their social environments. Within a Party, each Child repeatedly encounters the same peers and adults, which enables the gradual building of trust, the testing of new behaviours and the receipt of ongoing, coherent feedback about the impact of those behaviours. Over time, this stable matrix functions as a holding environment where Children can experience themselves as seen, valued and capable of change.

The Wizzards System employs role-play and narrative as structured tools for exploring identity, affect and interpersonal patterns. Assuming a character allows Children to externalise aspects of self, experiment with different roles and rehearse new ways of relating in a symbolically mediated form. Through the fictional world of Avalon, they project elements of their internal world onto their characters and storylines, making it possible to approach themes such as vulnerability, aggression or loyalty at a safe psychological distance. This narrative frame provides a clinically useful context for observing recurring interpersonal scripts and for gently introducing alternative, more adaptive patterns.

The Wizzards System provides graded exposure to social challenges within a safe, fictional context, approximating principles of exposure-based and experiential therapies for social and emotional difficulties. Social tasks—such as negotiating with non-player characters, resolving intra-party conflicts or making decisions under peer observation—are carefully titrated in intensity by the Game Team. Children thus encounter anxiety-provoking situations (for example speaking up, disagreeing, apologising) in a controlled setting, with immediate support and debriefing. Repeated exposure under these conditions can reduce avoidance, increase tolerance of social discomfort and support the development of more flexible coping strategies.

The Wizzards System explicitly encourages reflection on thoughts, feelings and behaviours, promoting self-awareness and self-regulation, which are central targets in many evidence-based child therapies. Through in-Session pauses, post-game debriefs and structured questioning by the Game Team, Children are invited to notice their emotional states, articulate intentions and evaluate the consequences of their choices. This repeated reflective practice strengthens metacognitive capacities: Children learn to name their experiences, recognise triggers and consider alternative responses before acting. Over time, such reflective functioning supports improved impulse control, emotional modulation and more deliberate decision-making within and beyond the game.

The Wizzards System offers a safe environment into which Children can “bleed in” concerns that are difficult to address directly, by manifesting them through their in-game characters. In the role-playing literature, “bleed-in” describes the phenomenon where players import real-world emotions, conflicts and preoccupations

into their character's narrative. Within the Wizzards framework, this is understood and utilised as clinically valuable data: the way a Child designs and plays their character—fears, alliances, risks taken or avoided—often mirrors unspoken themes in everyday life. Because these issues are expressed in symbolic, fictional form, they can be explored less defensively and with greater flexibility, providing the Game Team and Supervisor with a rich, indirect window into the Child's internal experience.

The Wizzards System also nurtures camaraderie among players as they face shared challenges and process both failure and success together, aligning with findings from group play therapy that peer-mediated learning can strengthen social competence. Cooperative tasks in the Wizzards narrative require mutual reliance, negotiation of roles and joint problem-solving, which fosters a sense of collective identity and mutual support. When failures occur (for example a plan does not work, a roll is poor), they are framed as opportunities for collective learning rather than individual deficiency, while successes are experienced as shared achievements. This group-based processing of outcomes helps Children internalise more resilient narratives about effort, error and recovery, and counters isolation and shame.

The Wizzards System is designed to facilitate positive change in Children's lives through "bleed-out", that is, the generalisation of skills, values and self-perceptions acquired in the game to everyday contexts. Evidence from group interventions and therapeutic gaming suggests that when Children repeatedly rehearse prosocial behaviours and effective coping strategies in a meaningful, emotionally engaging environment, these patterns are more likely to be enacted spontaneously outside the original setting. In Wizzards, this generalisation process is supported deliberately: Family Meetings track out-of-game changes, Sessions are debriefed with explicit links to real life, and caregivers receive guidance on reinforcing newly emerging skills at home. In this way, the Wizzards System does not confine growth to the game table but aims for durable shifts in functioning.

The Wizzards System provides a psychologically safe ground for experimentation with values, needs and boundaries. The fictional frame of Avalon, combined with clear facilitation and group agreements, allows Children to try out different stances—more assertive, more cooperative, more independent—without the full interpersonal risk that such moves might entail in everyday relationships. Characters can voice preferences, decline requests, set limits or change course; when missteps occur, they can be explored and repaired in-game with support from the Game Team. This structured experimentation helps Children clarify what feels authentic to them, recognise when their boundaries are crossed and practise communicating needs in ways that are both self-respectful and relationship-preserving.

The Wizzards System systematically targets the development of social skills, life skills, imagination, problem-solving capacities, courage, self-esteem, self-awareness and strength of character. Group play and activity-based therapies have been shown to enhance a wide range of socio-emotional competencies by embedding skill practice in intrinsically motivating tasks. In Wizzards, Children must collaborate to solve complex narrative problems, tolerate uncertainty, generate creative solutions and persist in the face of setbacks, all within a context that celebrates imaginative engagement. As they accumulate experiences of coping effectively, contributing to the group and overcoming challenges, they receive consistent feedback from peers and adults that reinforces a more competent and resilient self-image.

Finally, the Wizzards System nurtures real-life relationships among players that extend beyond the formal framework of the Sessions, which is a key benefit of group-based interventions. The shared narrative and repeated cooperative experiences create a common history that can serve as a foundation for friendships, mutual recognition and belonging. For Children who struggle with isolation or social anxiety, the emergence of peer connections is not merely a side effect but a central therapeutic gain: feeling accepted and valued by a group of peers is strongly associated with improved self-esteem and emotional well-being.

Taken together, these elements indicate that the Wizzards System is not only an engaging educational framework but also a robust, psychologically grounded approach to personal development. Its combination of stable group structure, symbolic play, graded exposure, reflective practice and family involvement aligns closely with established therapeutic mechanisms of change, supporting its use as a solid tool for clinicians and psychoeducational practitioners working with Children and their Families.

Chapter 9.2 – Pedagogical viewpoint

Key mechanisms (pedagogical)

- **Experiential learning cycle** of doing, reflecting and applying within a coherent Campaign narrative.
- Structured **role-play** to develop communication, perspective-taking and social problem-solving.
- Embedded **cooperative learning**, with shared goals and interdependence within each Party.
- **Scaffolding** and calibration of challenges within each Child's and Party's zone of proximal development.

- Explicit focus on recognised **social and emotional learning (SEL)** competencies.
- Creation of a prosocial **micro-community of learners** that supports engagement and persistence.

From a pedagogical perspective, the Wizzards System functions as a structured, experiential learning environment that integrates social and emotional learning (SEL), cooperative learning and scaffolded problem-solving into a coherent narrative framework. It is designed not only to support therapeutic change but also to cultivate transferable competencies that are central to contemporary educational practice.

The Wizzards System is grounded in experiential learning principles: Children learn by doing, reflecting and applying, rather than by passively receiving information. Each Session invites them to engage in concrete tasks—investigating situations, making decisions, coordinating actions—within the fictional world of Avalon. These experiences are then processed through guided discussion and reflection, allowing learners to abstract general principles (for example about cooperation, planning or emotional regulation) and consider how these principles might inform future actions. This cyclical movement between experience, reflection and application is consistent with well-established models of effective pedagogy in both cognitive and social-emotional domains.

The Wizzards System makes systematic use of role-play as a pedagogical tool for developing communication, perspective-taking and social problem-solving skills. In assuming characters and enacting scenarios, Children practise articulating ideas, negotiating with others and responding to differing viewpoints in a context that is both structured and engaging. Research on role-play in education indicates that such active simulations can enhance understanding of complex social situations and improve the ability to transfer skills to real-world interactions, when they are well-facilitated and embedded in a broader learning sequence. In Wizzards, these conditions are met by the careful design of scenarios and the presence of trained facilitators who provide feedback and modelling.

Cooperative learning is embedded in the core structure of the Wizzards System: players rarely succeed alone, and most significant challenges require joint planning and execution. This emphasis on shared goals and interdependence mirrors educational approaches that seek to reduce competitive dynamics and foster collaborative problem-solving, which have been associated with improved social relations and academic engagement. Within a Party, Children must coordinate roles, allocate resources and support one another to progress in the narrative. These collaborative demands provide repeated opportunities to practise constructive

communication, conflict management and mutual support in ways that are intrinsically meaningful to learners.

The Wizzards System also lends itself naturally to pedagogical scaffolding, in line with Vygotskian notions of the zone of proximal development. Challenges in the game are calibrated to be just beyond the current independent capabilities of the group or individual Children but achievable with guidance from the Game Team and peers. More competent players or characters can model strategies and support others, while the GM and GA(s) offer prompts, structuring and feedback that gradually fade as competence increases. This design allows Children to internalise new strategies and concepts over time, moving from supported performance within the game to more autonomous application of skills in everyday contexts.

Narrative coherence is another key pedagogical strength of the Wizzards System. The ongoing Campaign provides an overarching story arc within which discrete learning experiences are situated, like project-based or story-based learning approaches. This continuity helps learners make sense of individual Sessions as part of a meaningful whole, supports long-term goal orientation and facilitates the revisiting and deepening of themes over time. The narrative context also allows educators to align in-game events with curricular or developmental goals (for example designing quests that highlight cooperation, ethical decision-making or problem-solving), thus integrating socio-emotional learning with broader educational aims.

The Wizzards System explicitly targets social and emotional competencies that are recognised in the educational literature as foundational for academic success and long-term wellbeing. Through structured interactions, Children practise skills such as listening, turn-taking, emotion recognition, empathy and assertive communication. The format provides repeated, varied opportunities to apply these skills in context and receive immediate, situation-specific feedback from peers and adults. Meta-analyses of SEL programs indicate that such focused, active and sequenced approaches can produce reliable gains in both social-emotional and academic outcomes when implemented consistently. Wizzards aligns with these characteristics by offering a clearly defined curriculum of competencies embedded in an engaging delivery method.

In addition, the Wizzards System supports the development of higher-order cognitive skills such as planning, hypothesis testing, flexible thinking and strategic decision-making. Complex narrative problems require learners to gather information, weigh alternatives, anticipate consequences and adapt plans in response to new data. Because the stakes are meaningful within the story world but not punitive in real-life terms, Children can take intellectual risks and learn from mistakes without

excessive fear of failure. This combination of cognitive challenge and psychological safety is consistent with best practices in fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills in educational settings.

Creativity and imagination are also central to the pedagogical value of the Wizzards System. The demand to generate characters, backstories, solutions and narrative directions invites divergent thinking and the exploration of multiple possibilities. Such creative engagement is not treated as an optional embellishment but as an integral component of how learning tasks are framed and solved. Educational research suggests that environments that legitimise imaginative play and creative ideation can enhance motivation, deepen engagement and support the flexible application of knowledge across domains. In Wizzards, creativity is thus a vehicle for both enjoyment and deeper learning.

Finally, the Wizzards System creates a micro-community of learners in which norms of respect, collaboration and shared responsibility are actively cultivated, extending its impact beyond discrete skill acquisition. Over time, Parties develop their own culture, expectations and traditions, which can be guided by facilitators toward inclusive and prosocial patterns. This communal aspect has important pedagogical implications: a positive peer climate is known to underpin engagement, persistence and willingness to participate in challenging tasks. By intentionally shaping group processes and involving Families through meetings and Workshops, the Wizzards System situates learning within a broader ecosystem of relationships rather than treating it as an individual, isolated endeavour.

Taken together, these features indicate that the Wizzards System is not merely compatible with contemporary pedagogical theory but exemplifies many of its core recommendations. It combines experiential, cooperative, scaffolded and narrative-rich learning with a focused emphasis on social and emotional competencies, thereby offering educators a robust, evidence-aligned framework for fostering holistic development in Children who participate in the Wizzards of Avalon Program™.

Chapter 9.3 – Parenting and family-systems viewpoint

Key mechanisms (parenting and family-systems)

- Regular, structured **contact with caregivers** through Initial Meetings, Family Meetings and Family Workshops.

- Explicit teaching and modelling of **Gordon-style communication skills** (active listening, I-messages, respectful limit-setting).
- A **partnership stance** that positions Families as central agents in the Child's development.
- Use of shared **Wizzards metaphors and language** to talk about complex topics in an accessible way.
- Alignment between in-Session relational norms and **home communication patterns**.
- Continuous **feedback loops** between observations in Sessions and changes noticed in family and school contexts.

From a parenting and family-systems perspective, the Wizzards System is designed not only as an intervention for Children but as a structured support framework for their Families. It combines regular, planned contact with caregivers, explicit communication-skills training and a collaborative stance that positions Families as central agents in the Child's development.

The Wizzards System involves Families regularly through structured meetings and group events, rather than treating caregiver contact as occasional or incidental. Initial Meetings, recurring Family Meetings and periodic Family Workshops provide multiple, predictable points of connection between the Game Team and caregivers. These encounters are used to exchange information, align goals and co-construct strategies, ensuring that what happens at the Wizzards table is meaningfully linked to the home context. This rhythm of contact supports continuity, reduces misunderstanding and fosters a sense that the Family is actively "in the loop" and involved in the process.

A central aim of the Wizzards System is to support parents in adopting communication patterns that mirror those modelled within the Wizzards of Avalon Program™, including active listening, clear I-messages and respectful limit-setting as articulated in the Gordon model. Through psychoeducational input and concrete examples drawn from the Child's participation, caregivers are invited to practise skills such as hearing the Child's perspective without immediate judgement, expressing their own needs transparently and engaging in collaborative problem-solving. Evidence from parent-training programs indicates that these communication skills can reduce conflict, increase mutual understanding and improve family climate when consistently applied. By explicitly linking in-Session communication norms with the tools offered to caregivers, the Wizzards System promotes coherence between what Children experience in the group and what they encounter at home.

The Wizzards System recognises the Family as an active partner in the Child's development and seeks to empower caregivers rather than replace them. Caregivers are treated as experts on their own Child and context; their observations and priorities are solicited and integrated into Roadmaps and Session planning. This stance contrasts with models in which professionals are implicitly positioned as the sole agents of change and Families as passive recipients. By emphasising collaboration, the Wizzards System aims to strengthen caregivers' sense of competence and agency, which is associated in the literature with more effective parenting and better outcomes for Children across domains.

Family Meetings within the Wizzards framework are structured to strengthen unity and mutual understanding between Children and caregivers, using information from Sessions as a shared reference point. The focus is not only on reporting progress but on listening to the Family's experiences, including recent events, concerns and successes at home and school. This two-way flow of information allows the Game Team to track "bleed-out" of newly acquired skills into daily life and to help caregivers recognise and reinforce these changes. It also provides a context in which difficult topics can be discussed with the support of professionals, using metaphors and narratives from the Wizzards setting to reduce defensiveness and facilitate more open dialogue.

Family Workshops provide an additional layer of support by offering caregivers targeted input on tools, tactics and strategies that are directly relevant to the specific group of Children they are raising. Supervisor-led talks introduce or deepen key parenting concepts (for example emotion coaching, problem-ownership, or non-punitive limit-setting), while the ensuing discussions allow for individualised application based on the Supervisor's knowledge of each Child and Family. This blend of general psychoeducation and case-specific guidance reflects best practices in caregiver interventions, which highlight the importance of both evidence-based content and attention to each Family's unique circumstances.

By aligning the skills practised in Sessions with the strategies taught to caregivers, the Wizzards System aims to create a consistent developmental environment across settings. Children are more likely to consolidate new patterns of behaviour when similar expectations and communication styles are encountered at the game table, at home and in other relational contexts. Families, in turn, benefit from having a coherent framework and shared language for understanding the Child's growth, addressing challenges and celebrating progress. In this way, the Wizzards System functions not only as a program for individual Children but as a structured, relationship-centred resource for the whole family system, supporting unity, resilience and more satisfying patterns of interaction over time.

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