

What is Play Therapy?

Play Therapy is a set of attitudes in and through which children may feel free enough to express themselves fully, in their own way, so that eventually they may achieve feelings of security.

How Does Play Therapy Work?

Play Therapy allows licensed therapists to assess and understand children's play and to use it in assisting the child coping with difficult emotions and in finding solutions to their problems.

Four Categories of Play Activity

1. Real Life Toys - Doll house, plastic food, doctor's kit
2. Acting Out Toys (Release Aggression) – Puppets, action figures
3. Creative Activities – Drawing, painting, clay, story telling, musical instruments
4. Sand Tray & Miniatures – The Child creates a world in the sand

Why Play?

Play is a natural part of people's lives. Play is fun, creative and critical to healthy development. During play children learn about their physical surroundings, their own capabilities and limitations, social rules, and the difference between fantasy and reality. Children can often communicate their difficulties more effectively through play than they can through language.

What Can Play Therapy do to Help my Child?

1. Learn to take responsibility for their behavior and replace inappropriate behavior with more successful behavior.
 2. Develop new and creative solutions to their problems.
 3. Develop respect and acceptance of themselves and others.
 4. Learn to experience and express emotions.
 5. Learn new social skills.
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PARENT GUIDELINES

1. When you bring the child to the therapist let the child know...
"You will be playing with someone today" and/or "If you want to talk to the therapist about your problems you can, but you don't have to until you are ready."
2. When picking your child up, do not ask questions about what happened in Play Therapy. Confidentiality is very important to the child.

DO SAY

Hi!

It's time to go home.

You have been busy.

DON'T SAY

Did you talk to the therapist?

What did you do?

Why did you do that?

3. Practice the "*Special Language of Encouragement*" with your child and other family members.

Phrases that Demonstrate Acceptance:

I like the way you handled that.

Everyone makes mistakes. They help you learn.

Phrases that Recognize Effort & Improvement:

That's quite an improvement. I'm proud of you.

It looks as if you really worked hard on that.

Phrases that Focus on Contributions, and Appreciation:

It was thoughtful of you to _____

I need your help on _____

Phrases that Show Confidence:

It's a rough one, but I'm sure you'll work it out.

Knowing you, I'm sure you will do fine.