

Play Therapy

What is Play?

Play is the singular central activity of childhood, occurring at all times and in all places. Children do not need to be taught how to play, nor must they be made to play. Play is spontaneous, enjoyable, voluntary and non-goal directed. It is done for its own sake.

What is Play Therapy?

Play Therapy is based on the fact that play is a child's natural medium of communication and expression. In the Play Therapy room, children can "play out" their experiences and feelings in a safe environment. Children can use toys to say what they can't say with words. There are very few limits imposed on the child in the play room. They are allowed to do as they please, with the exception of hurting themselves or the therapist.

Why is Play Therapy beneficial to children?

- 1. Play Therapy provides a way for children to work through defenses and handle anxiety.**
- 2. It helps children verbalize feelings.**
- 3. It helps children act out unconscious material and relieves tension.**
- 4. Children can release feelings in a safe environment.**

What is the role of the Play Therapist?

The therapist's responsibility is to go to the child's level and communicate with them in a way they are comfortable with. The therapist follows the child's lead, and does not suggest play activities or themes (unless they are using a directed play activity with a therapeutic goal in mind). All of the child's feelings and thoughts are accepted without judgment.

What is the goal of Play Therapy?

Each child is unique and will take something different from the play therapy experience. Children can learn the following things in play therapy:

- self-control and responsible freedom of expression**
- to respect themselves**

- that their feelings are acceptable
- to be responsible for self
- to be creative in confronting and problem solving
- self-acceptance and self-direction
- to make choices and be responsible for their choices

What is the parent's/guardians' role in Play Therapy?

The time in the play room is a special time for children. They should not feel that they have to give a report to anyone, even parents. Play sessions with children are confidential, just like counseling sessions with adults. Therapists usually share with parents general impressions and offer suggestions but don't share specifics about what was said by the child. Some children request that parents come into the play room for part of the sessions or the therapist may request that you accompany your child into the play room. This allows you and your child to work together in this therapeutic process. Please remember that this is a process and not a product. Always feel free to address any questions or concerns with your therapist. Your input is very important. You know your child best!