

Play Therapy FAQ:

Why We Play: The Purpose and Benefits of Play Therapy

By:
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- **What is Play Therapy?***

Play Therapy is a mode of therapy that matches a child's way of communication: through "acting out" and play. Because children developmentally lack the language to express their thoughts and feelings, *play becomes their language*. Play Therapy includes art, role-play, the use of toys, etc. It helps children heal through their natural way of communicating and learning.

- **What can Play Therapy help my child do?**

Play Therapy helps children learn to build healthy relationships, develop problem-solving skills, express thoughts and feelings in a safe environment, change behavior, and foster self-esteem. Play Therapy can be used to help children deal with grief and loss, family adjustments (separation, divorce, family blending), anxiety, illnesses, traumatic experiences, etc.

- **How is Play Therapy different from what my child already does at home?**

The purpose of play therapy is to help children resolve problems in their lives with the guidance of a trained therapist who can help understand the *themes and issues* that arise from their play. As problems are uncovered through play, the therapist can help confront them and guide the child to building solutions and healthy self-expression. Though children may often choose how to play and what to play with in sessions, the time and play are used *intentionally to cope and heal*.

- **What is the role of the family in Play Therapy?**

Families play a very important role in the healing of their children. Sometimes, the symptoms of a child's need for therapy might indicate that *something needs to change in the family*. I often do family play therapy and engage parents and sibling in the process. Sometimes, I might meet with parents and help give tips for doing play therapy at home or modifying behaviors to help support the child.

Additional Resources for Play Therapy:

- www.a4pt.org
- www.playtherapy.org

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I use a variety of play therapy techniques with children, "twens," and teens to help them through life transitions, anxiety, social skills, etc. If you have questions about play therapy, therapy with children, or think it could be a good fit for your child, feel free to call or e-mail me.

