



Who Benefits from Play Therapy?

Play therapy is especially appropriate for children **ages 3 through 12 years old.**

How Does It Benefit Children?

Play therapy helps children:

- Become more responsible for behaviors and develop more successful strategies.
- Develop new and creative solutions to problems.
- Develop respect and acceptance of self and others.
- Learn to experience and express emotion.
- Cultivate empathy and respect for thoughts and feelings of others.
- Learn new social skills and relational skills with family.
- Develop self-efficacy and thus a better assuredness about their abilities.

What Is It Effective in Treating?

Children experiencing:

- Anger management difficulties
- Grief and loss
- Divorce and family stress
- Crisis and trauma
- Anxiety and depression
- ADHD and Autism Spectrum

(Carmichael, 2006; Gil, 1991; Landreth; 2002)

Is It Appropriate for Every Child?

Actually, it's not. Children experiencing moderate to severe aggression or oppositional/defiant behaviors as a primary concern would likely benefit more from other approaches such as Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT).

About the Counselor

Ashley Wroton is a Licensed Professional Counselor and trained in Play Therapy. She received her Masters of Science in Education and Educational Specialist degrees from Old Dominion University, and currently holds both a teaching and school counseling license in the state of Virginia. Ms. Wroton is experienced in psychological testing and utilizes Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Attachment Theory, Child-Centered Therapy, and Biblical-based approaches. She is experienced in working with children, families, and women who have anxiety, depression, ADHD, high functioning ASD, trauma histories, grief and loss, mood dysregulation, anger and impulse control difficulties, learning difficulties, adoption and attachment related concerns, and divorce or family separation struggles.

To Schedule an Appointment:

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For More Information About Us:

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Questions?

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Play Therapy Information Obtained:

<http://www.a4pt.org/>



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PLAY THERAPY

"Free, imaginative play is crucial for normal social, emotional and cognitive development. It makes us better adjusted, smarter and less stressed."

- Wenner, 2009



Why Play?

In recent years a growing number of noted mental health professionals have observed that play is as important to human happiness and well-being as love and work (Schaefer, 1993).

Play is a fun, enjoyable activity that elevates our spirits and brightens our outlook on life. It expands self-expression and self-knowledge. Play relieves feelings of stress and boredom, connects us to people in a positive way, stimulates creative thinking and exploration, and regulates our emotions (Landreth, 2002). In addition, play allows us to practice skills and roles needed for survival. Learning and development are best fostered through play (Russ, 2004). From a Biblical perspective of God having created us for relationship, play allows children to explore His world and learn about others, while gaining practice in exhibiting Christ's love and grace through playful interactions.



Why Play in Therapy?

Play therapy is a structured, theoretically based approach to therapy that builds on the normal communicative and learning processes of children (Carmichael, 2006; Landreth, 2002; O'Connor & Schaefer, 1983).

*Play is the child's language,
and toys are the child's words.*

In God's common grace, play within therapy is a means to engage a child's God-given imagination and desire to explore the world He created within a safe environment. Therapists strategically utilize play therapy to help children express what is troubling them when they do not have the verbal language to express their thoughts and feelings (Gil, 1991). In play therapy, toys are like the child's words and play is the child's language (Landreth, 2002). Through play, Biblical-based therapists demonstrate Christ's love for children and help children learn more adaptive behaviors when there are emotional or social skills deficits (Pedro-Carroll & Reddy, 2005). The positive relationship that develops between therapist and child during play therapy sessions provides a corrective emotional experience necessary for healing (Moustakas, 1997) as well as opportunities for modeling and nurturing Christ-centered principles of thought and behavior. As a result, play therapy may also be used to promote cognitive development and provide insight about and resolution of inner conflicts or dysfunctional thinking in the child (O'Connor & Schaefer, 1983; Reddy, Files-Hall & Schaefer, 2005).



What Is Play Therapy?

Initially developed in the turn of the 20th century, today play therapy refers to a large number of treatment methods, all applying the therapeutic benefits of play. Play therapy differs from regular play in that the therapist helps children to address and resolve their own problems. Play therapy builds on the natural way that children learn about themselves and their relationships in the world around them (Axline, 1947; Carmichael, 2006; Landreth, 2002). Through play therapy, children learn to communicate with others, express feelings, modify behavior, develop problem-solving skills, and learn a variety of ways of relating to others. Play provides a safe psychological distance from their problems and allows expression of thoughts and feelings appropriate to their development.

