



What is **PLAY** Therapy?

“Toys are used like words by children, and play is their language”

~Gary Landreth

Play Therapy is an evidence-based approach to heal, develop, or prevent emotional, social and behavioral difficulties in childhood. A trained play therapist uses the therapeutic powers of play, a safe and secure environment and a trusting therapeutic relationship to support the child’s healing, learning, or self-discovery process (Nash & Schaefer, 2011). Play is the vehicle and change agent that supports children to work through and communicate their inner thoughts and feelings (Cochran, Nordling & Cochran, 2010).

Play therapy can provide children the opportunity to share and communicate to adults their thoughts, feelings, needs and experiences when they don’t have the words. Children have the opportunity to communicate and make sense of their worries and thoughts through play. Play Therapy for children, is like counseling for adults. (APPTA, 2014)

A Play Therapist completes intensive postgraduate training to provide safe, developmentally appropriate, and ethical therapy for children.

What is the value of Play?

- Play is **voluntary** and helps children to **explore, investigate, create, and imagine**.
- Play can be **fun, satisfying, challenging** and **empowering** to a child.
- During **play** children learn through their own experience, at their own pace and at their own time. They are learning new skills and working through difficulties in a way that is meaningful to them (Brown & Vaughan, 2009).
- Children naturally express themselves through play that help communicate their thoughts, feelings and past experiences (West, 1996).

Please see the below links to find out more about Play Therapy.

Therapeutic Powers of Play:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuu59E97igU>

Australasia Pacific Play Therapy Association

<https://appta.org.au/>

Who will benefit from Play Therapy?

Children may be referred to Play Therapy if they are currently experiencing or have experienced:

- Anxiety/Depression
- Physical, sexual or emotional abuse
- Domestic violence
- Autism
- ADHD
- Aggression
- Self-harm
- Sleeping, eating or toileting problems
- Severe illness or accident
- Attachment difficulties
- Emotional regulation difficulties
- Difficulties with relationships
- Low self esteem
- Social or behavioral challenges
- Overcoming a bereavement
- A sibling of a child with additional needs or chronic illness

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Play Therapy