

Information for Parents about Play Therapy

What is play therapy?

Play therapy is to children what counseling is to adults. Play therapy utilizes play, children's natural medium of expression, to help them express their feelings more easily through toys instead of words.

Does my child need play therapy?

Throughout their lives, most children go through difficult times, such as the divorce of their parents, trouble making friends, or adjusting to changes at school or home. Some children need more help than others to get through these times. If you or other adults in your child's life are concerned about your child's behavior, play therapy can help. It is the most appropriate treatment for helping your child work through difficult times and helping you gain a better understanding of what your child is going through.

What toys are in a play room and why?

Toys are carefully selected for the play therapy room to facilitate creative and emotional expression from children. The types of toys used can be played with in many ways and they allow for decision-making in children. They are also very durable and sturdy to allow for repeated use and rough play.

Why play therapy?

Play therapy is the most appropriate method of treatment for children who are having difficulty coping with life situations. Though children lack the cognitive skills to express themselves in words, they are fluent in the language of play. Play therapy allows them to express themselves the way in which they are most comfortable.

How long does a child receive play therapy?

The length of time a child is seen in play therapy varies from child to child. It depends upon the severity of the problem, the child's personality, and how the child perceived the problem. This can be discussed with your child's play therapist during consultation times.

What's the difference between play therapy and playing with my child at home?

Play therapists are specifically trained to provide an environment of acceptance, empathy, and understanding in the play therapy room. Play therapy is not the same thing as playing. Play therapy uses the child's natural tendency to "play out" their reactions to life situations, in the presence of trained play therapist, to help the child feel accepted and understood and gain a sense of control or understanding of difficult situations.

Can I watch my child in the play therapy session?

Just as a counselor who works with adults keeps the information shared confidential, the play therapist will keep the information from the play therapy session confidential (some exceptions apply). However, he or she will meet with you periodically to discuss your child's play in general themes, hear your concerns, and talk about any questions you may have related to your child's progress in play therapy.