

# IT'S EFFECTIVE...

Play therapy has been shown to be effective for addressing and improving a variety of concerns:

- Emotional regulation & coping skills
- Social skills
- Depression and Anxiety
- Trauma & grief
- Regulatory disorders including ADHD and Autism Spectrum Disorder



# ... FOR MANY!

Play therapy has been shown to help people of many different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. Some of these populations include:

- Victims of a sexual abuse
- Marginalized groups
- Hospitalized children
- Youths in foster care
- Refugee families
- LGBTQ+
- Children, Adolescents, and Adults



# HOW IT WORKS

## • PROVIDES AN ATMOSPHERE FOR GROWTH

Play therapy provides a warm, caring environment where children feel safe to explore and express themselves. Being in a setting with unconditional acceptance yet realistic limits helps the child to develop their self-worth and better understand boundaries.

## • EMPOWERS CHILDREN

Child-Centered Play therapy allows the child to lead and progress as they feel ready. This specific form of play therapy trusts in the child's ability to grow, learn, and regulate.

## • ENCOURAGES SELF-UNDERSTANDING

The therapist's role in play therapy is to reflect a child's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors back to them. This helps children to better understand and accept themselves.



# PLAY THERAPY

PLAY is the LANGUAGE of kids

Play is the language of kids. It is their most natural form of communication. Rather than relying on traditional talk-therapy, play therapy meets children's developmental needs and abilities!



Created by M.S. Counseling students in the course, Play and Art in Therapy with Children, at California State University, Sacramento.

# RESOURCES

## LEARN MORE

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- Check out the Association for Play Therapy at [a4pt.org](http://a4pt.org)
- Visit the University of North Texas Center for Play Therapy [cpt.unt.edu](http://cpt.unt.edu)

## READ MORE

- *Play Therapy Activities: 101 Play-Based Exercises to Improve Behavior and Strengthen the Parent-Child Connection* by Melissa LaVigne
- *A Parent's Handbook of Filial Therapy: Building Strong Families with Play* by Rise VanFleet

## CONNECT WITH LOCAL PROVIDERS

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**Kid Counseling Sacramento**  
Sacramento, CA  
916-448-1812  
[kidcounselingsacramento.com](http://kidcounselingsacramento.com)

**Kid Power Counseling**  
Auburn, CA  
916-905-5875  
[kidpowercounseling.com](http://kidpowercounseling.com)

## RESEARCH

Use this QR code to see the research behind this brochure!



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# TECHNIQUES

- **Non-Directive Play** - child leads the play session
- **Directive Play** - therapist guides play toward a goal
- **Dramatic Play** - role-playing or acting out scenarios with variety of toys
- **Sandtray Therapy** - use of miniatures in sand to create scenes as expressions of feelings or experiences
- **Art Therapy** - use of art materials to communicate thoughts or emotions
- **Animal Assisted Play Therapy** - incorporation of animals such as dogs into play therapy

# TOYS

Non-complex, non-mechanical toys facilitate relationship between therapist and child.

Toys should send the message, "be yourself" and encourage emotional expression.

Toys fall into four therapeutic categories:

- **Creative** - sandbox, water, playdough, easel & paints
- **Nurturing** - baby dolls, baby bottles, medical kit
- **Real-life** - figurines, cars, cash register
- **Aggressive release** - foam swords, toy soldiers, items that can be destroyed such as egg cartons



# FILIAL THERAPY



Filial therapy, also known as **child-parent relationship therapy (CPRT)**, is a research-based method of training parents to be therapeutic agents with their own children.

CPRT focuses on **enhancing and strengthening the relationship** between parent and child.

Parents are **instructed and supported** by a registered play therapist over 10 sessions.

Parents **learn and use play therapy principles & techniques** including:

- Reflective listening
- Recognizing and responding to their child's feelings
- Limit setting in a therapeutically beneficial way
- Building their child's self-esteem
- Conducting structured play sessions using special toys

