



INTRODUCTION TO CHILD CENTERED PLAY THERAPY

Adapted from Dr. Lorri Yasenik

What is Play Therapy?

Play therapy is a therapeutic approach where children use play to express their inner concerns and work through problems with a licensed therapist skilled in interpreting their play for growth and change.

How does it work?

Critical Phases to Child Therapy

Engagement:

The child explores the environment and tests limits.

Working Through:

The child and therapist build trust, allowing the child to express and work through underlying issues during play. Regression in functioning may accompany this phase.

Therapeutic Growth:

At this stage, the child is empowered and has addressed their previous concerns.

Therapeutic Termination:

In this crucial phase, the therapist and child summarize their time together and prepare to end the relationship.

Why Play Therapy?

Traditional talk therapy may not be developmentally appropriate for children as they may not have the abstract reasoning and/or verbal processing skills to effectively engage in talk therapy. By incorporating play into therapy, the child is able to engage in the therapy process in ways they are able to understand.

How is it different from the play my child does on their own?

- Play is crucial for child development to understand the world.
- Play therapy aims to restore functioning, boost self-esteem, and enhance coping skills.
- In therapy, children use play to express thoughts and feelings, aiding in processing emotions.
- The playroom is a safe space for children to explore and express themselves creatively.
- Uses natural aspects of play that help children learn about themselves and relationships

What's the Role of the Parent/Family?

You may be involved in one or more of the following ways:

Observer:

You are important for sharing updates between sessions.

Advocate:

You may be asked to introduce different ideas to other people involved in the child's life (other family members, school, daycare etc.).

Play Partner:

You may join sessions or asked to follow "play time" routines at home for specific reasons.

Provider of Limits:

You may be asked to experiment with new ideas as family routines, rules and limits are explored during therapy.

Consultant:

Therapy is a two way process, and parents know their child best. Parents may be asked for their ideas and opinions. Effective therapy is a team effort, and parents are vital members of that team.

Does it Work for Every Child?

The approach is effective for children aged 2-12 years, with potential benefits for older children if developmentally appropriate.

How Can I Prepare my Child?

- Let your child know you are taking them to meet a counselor and describe their job as someone who works and plays with kids.
- Tell them that you are going with them to an office where the therapist will have toys and games.
- how to express your feelings, calm your body, make and keep friends, solve problems and keep yourself safe

How Long Does it Last?

Children progress uniquely in play therapy, with the duration varying based on the issue and family support level. Sessions typically last 30-60 minutes and happen weekly.

Confidentiality

A child's therapy should be seen as their time. It's normal to want to ask questions after sessions. It's the therapist's job to help you understand what is going on during sessions with your child. It's important to refrain from asking your child too many questions after their sessions.

Our staff at Iowa Family Counseling have been trained in play therapy, but are not registered play therapists which requires specific credentials.