

What is so important about Play?

Play is the most important thing a child can do. When children play, they are functioning at their optimal level of development. Increasing the complexity of their play skills facilitates all areas of their development. Play is not only the essence of a happy childhood, it is the way children learn about themselves, their bodies, their environment, and the people and objects around them. For a child, play is serious business, through play, a child develops self-confidence, a positive self-image and learns to express feelings, make decisions and cope with real-life situations.

What is Play Therapy?

Play Therapy uses the power of play to help children achieve optimal growth and development and prevent or resolve a range of developmental and/or emotional difficulties. It promotes resiliency and assists children to develop holistically and increase emotional intelligence.

Every child is unique and special but sometimes they experience problems with feelings or behaviours that cause disruption to their lives and the lives of those around them.

Play therapy provides a child with an opportunity to 'play out' their thoughts, feelings and problems just as, in certain types of adult therapy, an individual 'talks out' their difficulties. Play Therapy is an effective therapy that helps children modify their behaviours, clarify their self-concept and build healthy relationships.

In Play Therapy, children enter into a dynamic relationship with the therapist that enables them to express, explore and make sense of their difficult and painful experiences.

Play Therapy helps children find healthier ways of communicating, develop fulfilling relationships, increase resiliency and facilitate emotional literacy.

Children use play as a form of communication. So often children referred to Play Therapy do not have the words to describe their thoughts, feelings and perceptions of their internal and external world.

Who is Play Therapy for?

Any child can benefit from play therapy.

It promotes self-confidence, imagination, creativity, concentration, communication, problem-solving skills, self-esteem and most importantly happiness in the child.

Play Therapy is suitable for children as young as two to three years and there is no upper age limit. Play therapists can use creative and play based approaches with adolescent clients also.

Play therapy is a useful intervention for all children as it facilitates them in making sense of the world, reaching their potential and developing resilience and emotional intelligence.

Possible referral issues include

- · Behavioural issues
- · Communication difficulties
- · Delayed development
- · Educational delays
- · Relationship difficulties
- · Parental separation
- · Family disruptions
- · Trauma
- · Bereavement or loss
- · Abuse or neglect

- · Anxiety
- · Bullying
- · Low self-esteem
- · Poor play skills

How Play Therapy works

Play Therapy generally follows a

standard procedure.

This includes:

- · Referral;
- · Referral discussion and liaison;
- · Consultation with parent/carer;
- · Assessment of child;
- · Play Therapy;
- · Regular review sessions with child;
- · Regular review sessions with parent/carer;
- · Regular review sessions with teaching staff;
- · Endings
- · Discussion and liaison with teaching staff & parent/carer.

