



# Mental Health Professionals Applying the Therapeutic Power of Play!

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## Why Play Therapy?

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APT defines play therapy as "the systematic use of a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein trained play therapists use the therapeutic powers of play to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development."

More simply put, child play therapy is a way of being with the child that honors their unique developmental level and looks for ways of helping in the "language" of the child – play. Licensed mental health professionals therapeutically use play to help their clients, most often children ages three to 12 years, to better express themselves and resolve their problems.

Play therapy works best when a safe relationship is created between the therapist and client, one in which the latter may freely and naturally express both what pleases and bothers them.

Mental health agencies, schools, hospitals, and private practitioners have utilized play therapy as a primary intervention or as supportive therapy for:

- Behavioral problems, such as anger management, grief and loss, divorce and abandonment, and crisis and trauma.
- Behavioral disorders, such as anxiety, depression, attention deficit hyperactivity (ADHD), autism or pervasive developmental, academic and social developmental, physical and learning disabilities, and conduct disorders.

Research suggests play therapy is an effective mental health approach, regardless of age, gender, or the nature of the problem, and works best when a parent, family member, or caretaker is actively involved in the treatment process. For more information on play therapy including research citations we invite you to view **Play Therapy Makes a Difference!** (<https://www.a4pt.org/page/PTMakesADifference>)

## Why? Who? Does it Work? Where do I find training?

Answers to common questions by Nick Cornett, Ph.D., LPC, LMFT, Registered Play Therapist (John Brown University).

## Overview of Play Therapy



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## Mission

Promote the value of play, play therapy, and credentialed play therapists and advance the psychosocial development and mental health of all people through play and play therapy by supporting those programs, services, and related activities that promote organizational growth, public awareness, research, and diversity in the field of play therapy.

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