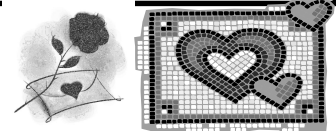




PLAY THERAPY NEWS

Suzette Turner-Clark, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Registered Play Therapist
Anchorage Crossings Building 11405 Park Road, LL40 Anchorage, KY 40223 (502) 744-2070

GOALS OF PLAY THERAPY



February 2005
Volume I, Issue III

The main goal of play therapy is to help a child with the anxiety, emotional conflicts and symptoms that precipitate the initial referral to the play therapist. A secondary aim is to work with a child and family to remove barriers that interfere with the child's optimal development.

Most children come to the attention of a play therapist due to a noticeable problem where assistance is considered crucial by parents, the school or the child themselves. In the instance of an 8-year old child struggling with enuresis, he may also carry along with his problem low self-esteem

and the reluctance to join in school sponsored weekend camping trips or a sleep-over with peers. It is important to address the bladder control issue, but it is also vital to take the opportunity to help the child become more independent in general. Practicing self-reliance in a play therapy setting and at home positively impacts the child's sense of self-worth. This new feeling of confidence boosts his ability and desire to socialize creating new prospects for learning.

Symptom removal clearly represents only part of the benefits of a play therapy intervention.

The additional positive effects may, in the end, prove even more noteworthy than the initially intended removal of symptoms. Here the child is more completely treated and positioned for enhanced future success.



'Play is the child's main business in life; through play he learns the skills to survive and finds some pattern in the confusing world into which he was born.'

—Lee (1977)

From the Therapist

Please allow me to briefly introduce myself. My name is Suzette Turner-Clark, and I am a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Registered Play Therapist in Kentucky and Indiana. I have several years' experience working with various populations of children and families possessing a wide variety of problems through their assessment, diagnosis and treatment. My skills span from working with typical adjustment problems, such as a child struggling through a family divorce to working with children who have endured severe physical, mental and sexual abuse.

My background began in community mental health agencies as an outpatient therapist at Seven Counties Services and LifeSpring Mental Health specializing in work with severely emotionally disturbed children.

Research supports the great effectiveness of play therapy's success in helping children, and I would like to offer my support to you.

Why Play Matters

Today's play landscape offers more choices than ever before. Activities range from classic to high-tech interactive toys, internet and cable television that encourage channel surfing as a playtime pursuit. Unfortunately, some toys and media expose children to violent themes and content, as well as encouraging children to spend time indoors, often playing by themselves. Limited outdoor play affects children's physical well being and experts believe children don't get enough exercise leading to the rise of obesity. School dollars focus on traditional academics, so subsequently, recess, physical education, music and art classes are disappearing from

(Continued on page 2)



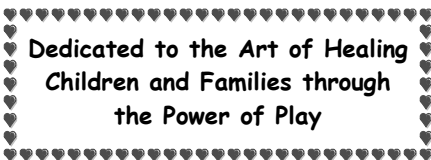
Suzette Turner-Clark, LCSW, RPT

Anchorage Crossings Building
11405 Park Road, Suite LL40
P. O. Box 23526
Anchorage, KY 40223

Phone: (502) 744-2070

Fax: (502) 254-2372

E-mail: sturner@ivytech.edu



Why Play Matters

(Continued from page 1)

school schedules on a nationwide basis.

Electronic games, computers and television have also taken the place of good old-fashioned play. On the average, children watch 26 hours of TV a week, not including the time they spend playing video games.

"Children aren't playing as much as they used to," a Nickelodeon official stated. Even this children's network wished everyone to know that **PLAY IS IMPORTANT** by promoting a "Let's Just Play" day where they tuned out an audience of 1.5 millions kids. At a time when "ChalkZone," "Hey Arnold!" or "Ginger," were usually shown, kids saw a sign on the TV screen stating, "It's Time to Go Outside and Play!" Hats off the Nickelodeon for at least reminding us there are other things in life besides watching TV. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 14 percent of US children and adolescents are overweight. To combat inactivity and obesity, the Office of Child Advocacy at Kosair Children's Hospital encourage children to, "just play."

Constructive play of this type is characterized as creative, imaginative, physical and non-violent. After schoolwork and chores are completed, children can be free to explore the world outdoors with friends. An imaginary mountain climbing expedition or serving pretend cookies and tea to favorite dolls and stuffed animals expand children's intelligence—their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Play is a testing ground for language and reasoning skills. Constructive play stimulates the imagination encouraging creative problem-solving and providing chances for accomplishments that help children develop confidence, awareness, a sense of their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as a positive attitude toward learning

Play therapy refers to a large number of treatment methods that make use of the natural healing benefits of this very kind of creative play.

