



# 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

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

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

and reluctance to join in school-sponsored weekend camping trips or a sleep-over with peers. It is important to help the child with bladder control, as well as to seize the opportunity to help the child become more independent about his personal care. Practicing self-reliance impacts the child's confidence and self-esteem in a positive manner boosting his ability and desire to socialize, which creates new prospects for learning.

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

*Play permits the child to resolve, in symbolic form, unsolved problems of the past and to cope directly with their present concerns. It is also the most significant tool for preparing the self for the future and its tasks. - Bruno Bettelheim, Child Psychologist*



*It is becoming increasingly clear through research on the brain, that childhood needs play. Play acts as a forward feed mechanism into courageous, creative and rigorous thinking in adulthood. - Tina Bruce, Professor, London*



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## Resource Corner

To hear an informative, interesting discussion on Play Therapy, go to [www.wfpl.org](http://www.wfpl.org), click on [Listen Live](#), go to [State of Affairs](#) at top of screen, then [State of Affairs Audio Archives](#) and locate the August 24, 2004 program - [Play Therapy](#) to listen to a helpful interview of Play Therapists, Marybeth Orton and Shelli Dry by the Host Julie Credence.

### Recommended Books:

Axline, V. M. (1969). [Play therapy](#). New York: Ballantine Books.

Gil, E. (1991). [The healing power of play](#). New York: Guilford Press.

Landreth, G. (2002). [Play therapy: The art of the relationship](#). New York: Brunner-Routledge.

## What is Play and Why is it Therapeutic?

### Therapeutic Forces of Play Therapy

- 1) Child's Resistance to therapy is overcome
- 2) Communication enhanced. Child's natural expression of communication is through play, as they enact unconscious thoughts, feelings
- 3) Competence - Mastery of skills and tasks
- 4) Creative Thinking
- 5) Catharsis

### Beneficial Outcomes

- Prompt working alliance
- Increased understanding of child
- Increased self-esteem
- Problem-solving skills
- Emotional release

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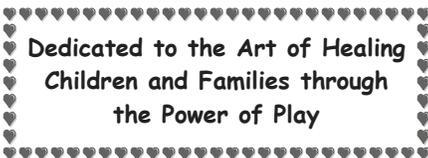
# Suzette Turner-Clark, LCSW, RPT

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

Phone: (502) 216-5687

Fax: (502) 254-2372

E-mail: sturner@ivytech.edu



## What is Play and Why is it Therapeutic?

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### Therapeutic Forces of Play Therapy

- 6) Abreaction – Reliving past stressful or traumatic events
- 7) Role Play - Opportunity to experience optional behaviors through stepping outside the "self"
- 8) Fantasy/Visualization
- 9) Metaphoric Teaching
- 10) Attachment Formation
- 11) Relationship Enhancement - Therapist/Child or Parent/Child rapport via pleasure of play
- 12) Master Developmental Fears - Desensitization through the joy of play
- 13) Game Play - Socializes and generalizes to rules of daily life

### Beneficial Outcomes

- Adjustment to stressors or trauma
- Increased empathy
- Compensates for child's challenges by building feelings of control/mastery of environment
- Stories give children unconscious positive messages to increase their insights and provide coping skills
- Replicates missed parent/infant play to facilitate in weak human attachments
- Self-acceptance in warm environment
- Cognitive and emotional growth and development
- Ego strength; social, cognitive and emotional development