

## PLAY THERAPY: A CONCEPTUAL ASSESSMENT OF METHODS AND TOOLS

Muedin Kahveci, Ayshenur Dursun, page 83-91

### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Play therapy; Helps to understand the emotions and what is going on in the spiritual world before educating the child and allows the child to be treated in this way. The aim of this study is to evaluate the play therapy, methods, types and tools in a conceptual framework. Thus, the advantages and disadvantages of these methods will be determined by revealing different play therapy methods and types.

**Method:** In the play therapy, the toy played by the child is different from that at home, and each of them is subjectively chosen in the game room, creating a therapeutic effect. Descriptive method was also used in this study. Thus, play therapy will be evaluated conceptually, its methods, types and tools. The effects in the applications are expressed symbolically. Play therapy is provided to develop directly with the nature of the play that can perceive the inner world of its children. Play therapy, which aims to find ways to improve and improve the problems that children experience until today, has developed different methods and techniques against all these problems. These methods are taken as directed play therapy and non-directed play therapy as the main title.

**Findings:** Play therapy against the unsolvable problems of children; Since it is solution oriented, it has a healing power. As a result of play therapy, it is necessary to eliminate the behavioral, emotional and psychological problems that the child feels emotionally good and affects the normal development of the child, and the growth of such problems should be prevented.

**Conclusion:** Play therapy is a type of therapy in which children can express themselves by using games and toys. Play therapy is an appropriate range for children between the ages of 2 and 13. Play therapy sessions last from 30 to 50 minutes. In addition to the fact that the play is very useful for the child, it is also important that the child plays the game for his physical and mental health. The play therapist can talk to an adult and adolescent and do the therapy. Because the adult is aware of the problem and he can express this to the therapist without difficulty. The child can speak to an adult individually; but it can be observed that the mental capacity of the child to express himself has not been improved or is not yet as the mature's or adult's. In addition, play therapy helps the child to cope with difficulties, find solutions and develop problem solving skills and abilities.

**Keywords:** Play therapy, Play therapy types, Play therapy tools



**Assist.Prof. Dr.Sc**  
**Muedin Kahveci**

*International Vision*  
*University, Gostivar,*  
*N.Macedonia*

**e-mail:** muhittin.kahveci  
@vizyon.edu.mk

**Research Assistant**  
**Ayshenur Dursun**

*International Vision*  
*University, Gostivar,*  
*N.Macedonia*

**e-mail:** aysenur.dursun  
@vizyon.edu.mk

**UDK:** 615.851:37.091.33-  
053.2

**Date of received:**  
18.01.2022

**Date of acceptance:**  
23.02.2022

**Declaration of interest:**  
The authors reported no  
conflict of interest related  
to this article.

## **Introduction**

Play therapy is a method of meeting and responding to children's mental health needs and is widely accepted by experts as an effective and appropriate intervention in tackling children's brain development. It is typically used in children ages 3 to 11 and provides a way for them to express their experiences and emotions through a natural, self-directed, self-healing process. As children's experiences and knowledge are often transferred through play, self-knowledge and acceptance becomes an important tool

According to Jean Piaget, "play provides the child with a lively, dynamic, individual language indispensable for the expression of his subjective feelings, for which only collective language is insufficient." It helps a child develop a sense of worth and ability and mastery over their innate abilities. During play, children are guided to explore their environment and meet their specialization needs. Play also contributes to the advancement of creative thinking. It also allows children to relax to release strong emotions. During plays, children play by breaking down unwanted life experiences into smaller pieces, emptying the emotional states or frames of mind that come with each piece, integrating each experience back into their own understanding, and gaining a higher level and greater degree.

Within the scope of this study, it helps the children to make sense of their emotional states and what is going on in their spiritual world, more than their education, and allows children to be treated in this way. The main importance in his research is the evaluation of the concept of play therapy, its methods, types and tools in a conceptual framework.

## **Conceptual Framework An Overview to Play Therapy**

Play therapy is a type of counseling or psychotherapy used to communicate and help people, especially children, to prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties through play. This is thought to aid in better social integration, growth and development, reduced aggression,<sup>3</sup> emotional modulation, social skill development,<sup>4</sup> empathy,<sup>5</sup> and trauma resolution. Play therapy also develops positive effects on self-efficacy<sup>6</sup> and coping skills<sup>7</sup>.

Play therapy can also be used as a diagnostic tool. A play therapist's willingness to interact with the therapist with toys (playhouses, pets, dolls, etc.) play objects and patterns to identify the cause of the irritating behavior can be used to understand the rationale underlying the behavior inside and outside the therapy session. However, caution should be exercised when using play therapy for evaluation and/or diagnostic purposes<sup>8</sup>.

According to the psychodynamic view, people (especially children) will engage in play behavior to work with their inner turmoil and anxieties. From this particular perspective, play therapy can be used as a self-help mechanism as long as children are given time for "free play" or "unstructured play." However, some types of therapy take away from the directionality of the fantasy play and give varying amounts of direction during the therapy session.

To cite a more directive approach to play therapy, though, it may require the use of some form of desensitization or relearning therapy to change irritating behaviors in a systematic or less structured approach. The hope is that, through the language of symbolic play, such depersonalization will likely occur as a natural part of the therapeutic experience and lead to positive treatment outcomes.

## **History and Literature Review**

The play has been considered important since the time of Plato (429-347 BC), "in an hour of conversation you can discover more than a person in a year of conversation". In the eighteenth century, Rousseau (1712-1778) wrote in his book *Emile*: It is important to observe play as a tool for learning and understanding children. Friedrich Fröbel emphasized the importance of symbolism in play in his book *The Education of Man* (1903). "Play is the highest development in childhood, because it alone is the free expression of what is in the soul of the child ... children's play is not just sport. It is full of meaning and import."<sup>9</sup> The first documented case describing the therapeutic use of play is when Sigmund Freud published his work with "Little Hans" It happened in 1909. Little Hans was a five-year-old boy who suffered from a simple phobia. Freud saw him briefly once and suggested that his father jot down Hans' play to provide insights that might help the boy. The case of "Little Hans" is the first in which the child's difficulty is associated with emotional factors.

Hermine Hug-Hellmuth formalized the play therapy process by providing play materials for children to express themselves and to emphasize the use of play to analyze the child<sup>10</sup>. In 1919, Melanie Klein (1955) began applying the technique of using play as a tool for analyzing children under the age of six. He believed that children's play was basically the same as the free association used with adults, and therefore it was to provide access to the child's unconscious. Anna Freud (1946, 1965) used play as a tool to facilitate positive crying for the therapist and gain access to the child's inner life.

In the 1930s, David Levy developed a technique he called release therapy<sup>11</sup>. His technique emphasized a structured approach. A child experiencing a particular stressful situation is allowed to engage in free play. Next, the therapist will bring play materials related to the stress-inducing situation that allow the child to reenact the traumatic event and release associated emotions.

In 1955, Gove Hambidge expanded on Levy's work, emphasizing a "structured play therapy" model that was more direct in introducing situations. The format of the approach was to play freely to build relationships, recreate the stressful situation, play the situation and then recover it.

Jesse Taft (1933) and Frederick Allen (1934) developed an approach that they justified in relationship therapy<sup>12</sup>. The primary emphasis is placed on the emotional relationship between the therapist and the child. The focus is on the child's freedom and power of choice.

Carl Rogers (1942) expanded the work of the relationship therapist and developed nondirective therapy, later called client-centered therapy<sup>13</sup>. Virginia Axline (1950) expanded on the concepts of mentor. Axline summarized the concept of play therapy in her article 'Entering the child's world through play experiences'. Axline also wrote *Dibs in Self*, which describes a series of play therapy sessions over the course of a year.

In 1953, Clark Moustakas wrote his first book, *Child Play Therapy*. In 1956, Moustakas compiled *The Publishing of the Self*, the result of dialogues between Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers, and others that shaped the humanistic psychology movement.

Developed by Bernard and Louise Guerney, the child therapy was a new innovation in play therapy in the 1960s. The marriage approach emphasized a structured education program for parents where they learn how to use child-centered play sessions at home.

In the 1960s, with the advent of school counselors, school-based play therapy started a major shift from the private sector.

Guidance counselor's such as Alexander (1964); Landreth<sup>14</sup>; Muro (1968); Myrick and Holdin (1971); Nelson (1966); and Waterland (1970), in particular, began to make important contributions to the use of play therapy as both an educational and preventive tool in coping with children's problems.

### **Types and Tools of Play Therapy**

Play therapy can be divided into two basic types: directed and undirected play therapy types. Play therapy can be divided into two basic types: directed and undirected play therapy types. Undirected play therapy is a non-intrusive method in which children are encouraged to work towards their own solutions to problems through play. It is generally classified as psychodynamic therapy. In contrast, directed play therapy is a method that includes more structure and guidance from the therapist as children work through emotional and behavioral challenges through play. It usually includes a behavioral component and the process involves more prompting by the therapist. Directed play therapy is more likely to be classified as a type of cognitive behavioral therapy<sup>16</sup>. There are studies that form at least some empirical support for both types of play therapy. On average, play therapy treatment groups showed higher recovery rates by 8 standard deviations compared to control groups.

### **Conclusion**

In the play therapy method, depending on the developmental stages, it is predicted that the child will develop his/her expression in a way that reveals his/her identity with the play. For this reason, play therapy skills appear as an important tool for specialists (psychologists, clinicians, social workers, etc.) who will work with children<sup>18</sup>. Play therapy allows children

to express themselves fully and express themselves in the confidence that they will be understood and accepted. One of the important elements in play therapy is the type of play, the duration of the play and the quality of the interviews that should take place together with the observation about whether all the observations that will take place during this process are sufficient. There are social judgments about the formation and maturation of game phenomena. These judgments are important in assessing changes in play within individuals or groups (such as different social classes). Moreover, the creation of different care and educational environments for the therapeutic findings that will emerge through the game should be examined separately from these general judgments. In other words, it is necessary to realize new expansions and arrangements for play therapy both spatially and in terms of pre-school education programs. Unlike social judgments about play and play therapist, parents, teachers, administrators and politicians should be made conscious through widespread education and media.

## References

Allen, Frederick H. (1934). "Therapeutic work with children: A perspective statement". *Amerikan Ortopsiatri Dergisi*. 4 (2): 193-202.

Allen, Kallie B .; Barber, Catherine R. (2015). " Examining the use of play activities to increase appropriate classroom behaviors". *Uluslararası Oyun Terapisi Dergisi*. 24 (1): 1-12.

Astramovic, R. L., (1999). "Play Therapy Theories: A Comparison of Three Approaches", October 27-31, ED435889, New Orleans, LA

Bodenhorn, Nancy; Wolfe, Edward W .; Airen, Osaro E. (2010). "School Counselor Program Selection and Self-Efficacy: The Relationship between Achievement Gap and Equality". *Profesyonel Okul Danışmanlığı*.

Bratton, S .; Ray, D .; Rhine, T .; Jones, L. (2005). "The effectiveness of play therapy with children: A meta-analytical review of treatment outcomes.". *Profesyonel Psikoloji: Araştırma ve Uygulama*. 36 (4): 376-390.

Cochran, Jeff L .; Cochran, Nancy H. (2017). " Effects of child-centered play therapy for students with disruptive behaviors in high-poverty schools ". Uluslararası Oyun Terapisi Dergisi. 26 (2): 59-72.

Hug-Hellmuth, H (1921). "On the technique of child analysis ". Uluslararası Psiko-Analiz Dergisi. 2: 287 305.

Jose A. Fadul (General (2014). Encyclopedia of Theory & Practice in Psychotherapy & Counseling.

Landreth, G (1972). "Why is she playing therapy? ". Texas Personel ve Rehberlik Derneği Kuralları. 21 (1)

Landreth, G. ve Bratton, S., (1999). Play Therapy" ED430172.

Landreth, Garry L .; Jakot, Willard S .; Allen, Louise (1969). "Team Approach to Learning Disabilities ". Öğrenme Güçlükleri Dergisi. 2 (2): 82-87.

Levy, David M. (1938). ""Release Therapy" in Young Childrenf". Psychiatry. 1 (3): 387390.

Paulina F. Kernberg; Saralea E. Chazan; Lina Normandin (1998). "Child Play Therapy Instrument (CPTI): Definition, Development and Reliability Studies". Psikoterapi Uygulama ve Araştırma Dergisi. 7 (3): 196-207.

Ray, D.; Bratton, S.; Rhine, T.; Jones, L. (2001). "The effectiveness of play therapy: Responding to the critics". International Journal of Play Therapy. 10 (1): 85-108.

Rogers, C (1951). Client-centered therapy. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.



Swank, Jacqueline M .; Cheung, Christopher; Williams, Sydney A. (2018). "Play Therapy and Psychoeducational School-Based Group Interventions: Comparison of Treatment Efficiency ". *Grup Çalışmasında Uzmanlar Dergisi*. 43 (3): 230-249.

Wilson, Brittany J .; Ray, Dee (2018). "Child-Centered Play Therapy: Aggression, Empathy and Self-control ". *Danışmanlık ve Gelişim Dergisi*. 96 (4): 399-409