



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PLAY THERAPY

Research. Results. Real Impact. ♥

Decades of research show that play therapy is a powerful, evidence-informed approach that helps children heal, build skills, and experience meaningful behavior change.

WHY PLAY THERAPY WORKS

Play is how children naturally express, process, and make sense of their world. Through safe, supportive relationships and developmentally appropriate experiences, children build the internal skills they need to thrive.



BUILDS REGULATION

Helps children manage big emotions and impulses.



STRENGTHENS CONNECTION

A safe, trusting relationship helps children feel seen, understood, and supported.



BUILDS SKILLS

Children practice problem solving, communication, flexibility, and frustration tolerance.



INCREASES SELF-ESTEEM

Children gain confidence as they experience success, choice, and mastery in play.



SUPPORTS HEALING

Play helps children process difficult experiences and move toward healing.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SHOWS



OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Play therapy has demonstrated a meaningful positive treatment effect across 93 controlled outcome studies.*



BEHAVIOR IMPROVEMENT

Research shows play therapy can reduce externalizing behaviors, including aggression, disruptive behavior, and overall behavior problems.



EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Studies show improvements in emotional adjustment, anxiety, self-concept, and regulation-related concerns.



SCHOOL & SOCIAL FUNCTIONING

School-based play therapy research shows improvements in externalizing problems, internalizing problems, total problems, academics, and other behavioral outcomes.

* Findings based on multiple meta-analyses and systematic reviews of play therapy research.



Meta-analytic research indicates that play therapy can be an effective intervention for a wide range of emotional, behavioral, and relational concerns in children.

– Bratton et al., 2005 (Meta-analytic Review)



EVIDENCE AND EMERGING SUPPORT ACROSS APPROACHES



CHILD-CENTERED PLAY THERAPY (CCPT)

Strong meta-analytic support for behavior, emotional, and school-related concerns.



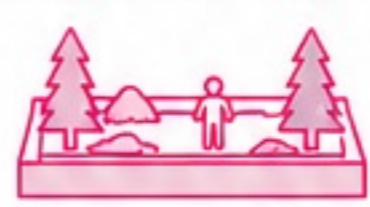
ADLERIAN PLAY THERAPY

Controlled studies show reductions in disruptive behavior and improvements in social skills, classroom functioning, and feelings of belonging.



GESTALT PLAY THERAPY

Emerging research and clinical literature support emotional awareness, expression, creativity, and improvements in behavioral concerns.



JUNGIAN PLAY THERAPY

Primarily supported by theoretical, symbolic, sandtray, and case-based literature. Influential in trauma work and deeper symbolic expression.



SYNERGETIC PLAY THERAPY (SPT)

Neuroscience-informed and clinically grounded, with formal outcome research still emerging.



We aren't building children. We're growing brains.

Play therapy doesn't just help in the therapy room. It helps children build the internal skills they need for lasting change at home, at school, and in life.

When children feel safe, connected, and supported, the behaviors we worry about can begin to shift.



☆ PLAY ISN'T JUST HOW CHILDREN PASS THE TIME— *it's how they heal, learn, and grow.* ♥

SOURCES

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