

Four Session Evaluation with Feedback

The *first evaluation session* is with the parent(s) without the child, so that adults are able to talk freely without the child present. This includes addressing the present concerns and taking a developmental history.

The *second evaluation session* is in the play therapy room with the parent(s) present with the child. This session usually includes siblings.

The *third evaluation session*. One or both parents attend the first 15 minutes with the child. In the remainder of the session, the child has time in the play room, without a parent (unless there is a problem with separation).

The *fourth evaluation session* is used to help to understand the child's symptoms in light of the larger family context. The therapist's understanding of the problem is shared, along with suggestions on how to work with it.

Recommendations Include

Play therapy, parent education, therapy for adult(s), family therapy, or a combination of options. Play therapy may be recommended weekly, every other week, or not at all. Play therapy occurs in a room with the appropriate equipment and includes art therapy, puppets, role-playing, sandplay, and a range of toys. The toys are the child's words for sincere expression of thoughts and feelings, which is needed for healing to occur.

I will consider seeing children when the adult is seeing another therapist, provided the adult stays in treatment with his/her therapist while the child is in play therapy.

Dottie Higgins Klein, MFT, RPT-S, received her Master of Family Therapy from Hahnemann University. She is a supervisor for the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) and a registered play therapist supervisor for the Association for Play Therapy (APT). She is also a Supervisor/Professor for Play Therapy International (PTI). Dottie has spent the last twenty years combining the fields of play therapy and family therapy. The best of both fields is combined in Client-centered Play-Family Therapy, the theory that Dottie has developed. The family therapy aspect gives attention to each family member and his or her extended world. The play therapy aspect allows a particular child to address his or her needs, symptoms, or problems in individual sessions. Client-centered Play-Family Therapy is respectful of the legitimate concerns that family therapists have about children being asked to speak about their family members without a parent or guardian present. Such issues are addressed in a family setting. The play therapy for a child from age three to eleven engages the child's imagination in play. This allows the child to tap into his or her own intuitive healing powers, similar to the value of meditation. Therapists who have been trained primarily in play therapy are encouraged to involve the family more in the process and are exposed to more of the skills of a family therapist.

The Advanced Child Development Course assumes that it is important for the therapist to understand the typical developmental expectations of a child during the first six years of life. Issues and symptoms that arise at a later age can often be helped more effectively when the significance of the problems encountered in earlier years are understood.

Sandtray Therapy, an optional adjunct method for teenagers and adults, offers a powerful way of communicating, which therapists have found to be deeply meaningful. The training at the Family & Play Therapy Center offers four levels of Sandtray Training, with classes for each level held one morning a month. The Advanced Child Development Course offers an introduction to these skills.

The Family & Play Center, Inc., is approved by the Association for Play Therapy to offer continuing education specific to play therapy. Our provider number is 96-030. The Family & Play Therapy Center, Inc., maintains responsibility for the program.

**Dottie Higgins Klein, LMFT, R-PTS,
Director of FPTC**

Phone or Fax: (215) 844-4321, ext. 16

OK to call any time: day, evening, weekends.

Voice mail will take your call if Dottie is not available.

Office Phone: (215) 844-8877

Call directly 9:30 to 2:30.

Visit our Web Site: www.fptcenter.com

Information about the Center

Print-out brochures & map/directions

Play Therapy in a Family Therapy Context



Client-centered play therapy is the most effective and enjoyable tool for working with children ages two to twelve years in a family context. Over the past seventeen years, I have developed a way to use play therapy as an important adjunct to family therapy. In the play therapy, the child's individual personality and unique self are given direct attention within the context of the family. The child is not singled out in a negative way, nor is the child excluded. The adults often begin to see the symptoms in a larger context and feel empowered to make changes themselves.

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IF YOU ARE NOTICING THESE PROBLEMS, PLAY THERAPY CAN HELP:

- low self-esteem
- immaturity
- aggressiveness
- sadness
- anxiety
- nightmares
- social phobia
- difficulty with social cues
- difficulty playing in an age appropriate way
- attention and engagement problems
- clumsiness
- extreme shyness
- separation problems
- withdrawn behavior
- speech and language problems
- self-consciousness
- misbehavior in school
- difficulty with peers
- lying
- temper tantrums
- toilet training complications
- adjustments to death, divorce, new baby, various handicaps, sibling of a child with special needs

Longer term work is necessary for children who may have experienced trauma from the following, for example:

death
divorce
accidents
past or present medical trauma
physical or sexual abuse

Attention Deficit Disorder requires longer term therapy. Our special adaptations of play therapy offer significant help for children in the prevention or remediation of attention processing problems.

HOW PLAY THERAPY WORKS AND WHY IT IS VALUABLE FOR YOUR CHILD:

- The child uses his or her whole mind and body in the play and innocently reveals the deepest unconscious thoughts, fears, anxieties, wishes, etc. The reflections and the silences of the therapist follow the child and s/he opens to unconscious or stuck thoughts.
- The play therapist is trained to read the metaphors of the play (similar to understanding dreams). Then, the patterns that emerge are shared with the parents along the way to work with the healing process at home.
- The play therapy experience itself is actually healing to the child, in a similar way that an adult can have powerful moments of truth revealed in a therapy session. This can happen frequently in subtle ways, and it causes shifts that are evident in the child's life.
- Three major goals of working with play therapy, regardless of the symptoms, are the enhancement of self-esteem, self-responsibility, and decision-making skills. At its best, play therapy reaches into the place of self-love deep within the child.
- Many of the problems presented in private practice will see significant shifts in fifteen to twenty sessions. Often, that is all that is needed, although parents realize that the experience often raises issues in the broader family.

Without addressing the roots of the symptoms in an adult context, the desired changes may not remain intact. Many issues indicate a need for more than 20 sessions.

SIX STAGES OF PLAY THERAPY

- Family member with the child.
- The child explores the environment.
- The child tests the limits.
- The child and the therapist establish a relationship of trust.
- The integrative growth stage. (Putting it all together.)
- Termination of play therapy.

As the trust relationship develops, the child learns to open him/herself and reveal the innermost world. S/he plays out accumulated feelings of insecurity, fear, anxiety, anger, frustration, confusion, inadequacy, etc. The feelings come to the surface and eventually s/he is able to control them, express them, and let go of them. In the integrative stage, s/he begins to realize his/her own personal power, to think for him/herself, to make decisions, and to become a more mature, independent person. When a family is supportive of the process, play therapy works!

FEES: Sessions are \$105 to \$120 on a sliding scale for licensed therapists. We are able to take insurance from some companies. Many insured by HMO choose to use our quality services with a sliding scale of \$65 to \$100 per session. This is available for children and families who see qualified and experienced