

APPLIED THERAPIES & WELLNESS CENTER, S.C.

School-Based Therapy Services

What is Play Therapy and how can it be beneficial for my child?

When it comes to children, play is their language. Just as adults communicate through verbal, written, or sign language, children use play to express their fears, wants, needs, and underlying concerns. So much of the world is abstract. Play helps a child make sense of the world through concrete materials to help them express the things that are taking place under the surface. Play therapy offers a window into age-relevant anxieties and fantasies and is powerful for communication, assessment, and treatment, especially in younger children. Play therapy incorporates information from various fields and recognizes the importance of biological factors, attachment, relationships, and cultural influences for the child.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy in connection with Play Therapy engages the child in the following processes:

- Insightful and flexible problem solving
- Development of social skills
- Diverse thinking
- Considering alternative coping strategies
- Increasing the experience of positive emotions
- Improving emotional awareness and understanding

The link between play therapy and academic achievement exists. Developing play therapy programs in the school setting has been suggested to be the most likely way children will receive mental health interventions (Blanco & Ray, 2011). Armed with established evidence that a strong connection between play therapy and academic achievement exists, counselors, administrators, and parents can feel assured that play therapy and academic success are inextricably linked. When children's emotional needs are met with a developmentally and culturally sensitive play therapy approach, they engage more fully in the school experience helping them to reach their academic potential.

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