

What to Expect in a Play Therapy Session



1. Information Gathering:

The therapist assesses the child's developmental, social, and emotional needs to tailor the therapy plan.

2. Structured Play:

Sessions often include both free play and structured activities designed to target specific goals (e.g., social interactions, sensory regulation).

3. Parent Involvement:

Parents are an integral part of the process. Therapists often provide feedback and guidance for reinforcing therapeutic goals at home.

4. Progress Monitoring:

Over time, therapists track progress through observations and feedback from parents and teachers.

How Parents and Therapists Can Support the Child's Growth

For Parents:

- Encourage play at home and observe what types of play your child gravitates toward.
- Be patient. Changes may be gradual as your child works through emotions and social challenges.
- Communicate regularly with your child's therapist to reinforce therapeutic goals.

For Therapists:

- Create a sensory-friendly play space, considering the child's sensitivities (e.g., noise levels, textures).
- Adapt the play to fit each child's unique needs, fostering an environment of trust and openness.
- Collaborate with parents to ensure therapy is consistent across home, school, and therapy settings.



Empowering Children on the Autism Spectrum Through Play Therapy

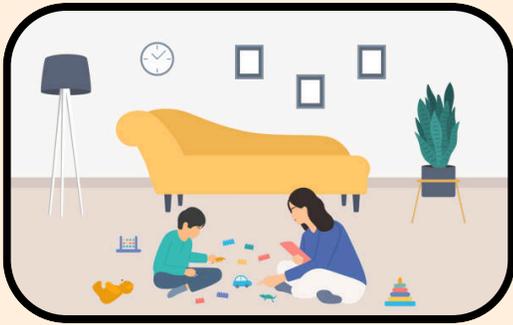


A Guide for Parents and Therapists

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What is Play Therapy?

Play Therapy is a therapeutic approach that uses play as a medium for children to express their emotions, process experiences, and develop social, communication, and emotional regulation skills. Play serves as a child's natural language, making it a powerful tool for intervention.



Child-Led:

The therapist follows the child's lead during sessions to ensure comfort and emotional safety.

Verbal & Non-Verbal Expression:

Children, especially those with autism, may find it difficult to articulate their feelings verbally.

Play therapy allows them to communicate in a language they understand.

Why Play Therapy for Children on the Autism Spectrum?

Children on the autism spectrum may experience challenges related to communication, social interaction, and sensory sensitivities. Play therapy provides a structured yet flexible approach to address these issues.

Communication:

Play therapy creates a non-verbal, creative outlet for self-expression, helping children communicate in ways beyond words.

Emotional Understanding:

By observing and participating in play, children learn to identify and regulate emotions.

Social Skills:

Role-play and guided activities help children improve social interactions, such as turn-taking, eye contact, and cooperation.

Sensory Processing:

Therapists can incorporate sensory-friendly toys and activities that help children explore their environment comfortably and safely.

How Play Therapy Helps Children on the Autism Spectrum

Building Emotional Resilience:

- Through repetitive play, children practice processing challenging emotions like frustration or anxiety in a safe space.

Problem-Solving:

- Play allows children to explore various solutions to challenges and gain confidence in managing everyday problems.

Strengthening Relationships:

- Play therapy encourages bonding with peers, siblings, and family members by improving communication and relational dynamics.



Reference:

<https://www.a4pt.org/page/PTMakesADifference/Play-Therapy-Makes-a-Difference.htm>