

**Inscape
House
School**

**TOGETHER
TRUST**
charity

Play Therapy

At Inscape House School





What is Play Therapy?

Play Therapy is a type of therapy where play and art materials are used to help children explore their thoughts and feelings in creative and dynamic ways, without having to use words to articulate themselves.

In Play Therapy, children explore their own creativity and express themselves using media such as: drawing and painting, water and clay, sand tray and miniatures, guided imagery and relaxation techniques, drama and puppetry, movement and music.

Why Play Therapy?

Talking about problems can be hard for children. A child may not have the words to describe how they are feeling, or why they are behaving as they do. Play Therapy provides the expertise and time to do this through play. Play Therapy is a developmentally sensitive form of psychotherapy specifically suited to children as it enables them to communicate through their primary means of expression, play and creativity.

Play Therapy is also beneficial for any kind of trauma. The physical and role-playing activities have proven instrumental in helping children process memories and sensations from right brain to left brain regions.



How does Play Therapy work?

The amazing thing about play is that it allows communication to happen on an unconscious level, so the child does not always need to understand what they have played, drawn or communicated, but they will still be able to benefit from allowing those things to be expressed. The relationship that develops between the child and therapist facilitates the child's ability to explore not only their thoughts and feelings, but also their perception of relationships and life experiences. Children are given the opportunity to work through what they have experienced and are therefore able to release and control some of their memories stored in their bodies or deep in their unconscious.



What happens in the sessions?

The time spent with the therapist is non judgemental, non directive and non interpretive. The permissive free space allows for the child to tap into areas that may be affecting them, such as, trauma, unprocessed emotional experiences, as well as an opportunity to re-visit any areas of development that may have been missed.

Each week, at the same time, your child will be able to choose from an array of play and creative arts materials. The therapist will enter their play and follow their lead. Your child will be able to work at their own pace and explore narratives and experiences in the metaphor of the play, without being asked to explain it verbally. Over the first few sessions your child will begin to forge a relationship with their therapist and experience the consistency of the session and its predictable boundaries.





How does Play Therapy help the brain?

Play Therapy helps lower cortisol (the stress hormone), increases dopamine (the pleasure/reward chemical), Oxytocin (the bonding hormone) and GABA (the calmer of the nervous system, ANS).

Play Therapy integrates left-brain regions (logical, analytical, emotional language) with the right brain regions (creativity, sensations, expression).

Play Therapy helps children let their filter down in the conscious, verbal, rigid left side of the brain to express their inner emotions (right side of the brain).

What are the benefits of Play Therapy:

The trust, acceptance, boundaries, mirroring and reflectiveness of a Play Therapist alongside a child can enable them to:

Develop new and creative solutions to problems and improve concentration.

Improve self-image and self-esteem.

Develop acceptance of self and others.

Increase regulation.

Development of their emotional vocabulary by accessing the language the therapist relates to their experiences.

Increased confidence expressing their thoughts and feelings.

New social and relational skills.

Develop self-efficacy and a better confidence in their abilities.

The Play Therapy Tool Kit:

Storytelling

Clay

Art

Puppets

Sand play

Dramatherapy

Music

Dance & movement

Creative visualisation

Therapeutic stories

The Play Therapy tool-kit is based upon the set of competencies described in the Professional Structure Model (PSM) developed by Play Therapy UK (PTUK).

Who Play Therapy is intended for:

- ADHD
- Anger
- Attachment
- Autistic Spectrum Condition
- Behaviour
- Bereavement and any kind of loss
- Bullying and bullied
- Communication problems
- Delayed development
- Abuse
- Nightmares
- Attendance
- Separated/divorced parents
- Social exclusion
- Trauma
- Withdrawn personality
- Under performing (academically, socially, culturally)

Referral process

Inscape House School accepts referrals from teachers, parents/carers through our school therapy service. Referrals can be accessed via reception. If you are concerned about a child, please complete a referral form and return via secure email to:

paula.rogers@togethertrust.org.uk

Working with parents

The play Therapist will provide ongoing consultations that track your child's therapeutic process. In these sessions the play therapist will discuss play themes that have emerged or been processed during the course of therapy. In addition to themes therapeutic goals are also considered in relation to whether further sessions are needed.



AutPlay

Here at Inscape, our play therapist is Certified AutPlay Therapy provider. AutPlay is neurodiversity paradigm designed to help address the mental health needs of neurodivergent children ages 3 –18. A variety of AutPlay techniques and strategies are used to support the inclusion of Play Therapy.



Confidentiality, safeguarding and child protection

In Play Therapy, confidentiality in a child's therapeutic process is like a nest for chicks, the space creates a sense of safety for the child that serves their development. Without confidentiality there is no therapeutic alliance.

Ethically and legally, a therapist is required to breach confidentiality if the child indicates that someone is hurting him or her, if the child plans to hurt him or herself or another, or if there is a subpoena from a judge court ordering treatment records. Barring those limits, confidentiality remains between the child and therapist, however the play therapist will always gain consent from parents/carers before commencing any treatment, and will continue to work closely with parents throughout the Play Therapy process.

All Inscape House school counsellors always follow Inscape House school safeguarding and child protection guidance and the Together trust Safeguarding Policy.

Play Therapy Register

The Play Therapy UK's Register of Play and Creative Arts Therapists is accredited by the Professional Standards Authority. Visit playtherapyregister.org.uk for more details.





Sandy Dunphy (MBACP) Senior School Counsellor

Holistic Integrative Counsellor, Dip. Couns

Accredited Play and Creative Art Therapist - PG
Cert, Post Grad Dip

Certified Child & Adolescent Trauma Informed
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Clinical Supervisor - Post Graduate - level 7

Theraplay Practitioner



Paula Rogers (MBACP) Senior School Counsellor

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AutPlay Therapist