

What is Play Therapy?

Children are precious and represent innocence. When children are troubled, it is more than sad, it is tragic and heartbreaking. In addition, children do not respond to adult talk therapy because adult talk therapy requires a maturity that children have not reached. Fortunately, play therapy is a form of counseling or psychotherapy that uses play to communicate with and help people, especially children, to prevent or resolve psychosocial challenges. This is thought to help them toward better social integration, growth and development, emotional modulation, and trauma resolution.



The Child-Centered Play Therapy Model

Child-Centered Play Therapy (CCPT) is the method of play therapy developed by Virginia Axline, an associate of Carl Rogers. CCPT follows the principles of Client-Centered Therapy of creating a non-judgmental, emotionally supportive therapeutic atmosphere, but with clear boundaries that provide the child with psychological safety to permit the learning of emotional and behavioral self-regulation. Research has validated that this is a powerful method for decreasing a wide range of child problems,

for overcoming traumatic experiences, for developing expressive freedom and creativity, and for building self-esteem and more mature, pro-social behaviors. CCPT is based on eight clear cut principles applied in a systematic way to equip the therapist with a method uniquely capable of handling the many challenges of playing therapeutically with children and achieving predictively positive results.

The Cognitive-Behavioral Play Therapy Model

Cognitive-Behavioral play therapy combines cognitive and behavioral theories within a play therapy model. CBPT is a developmentally sensitive therapeutic approach to cognitive and behavioral therapies. Through the use of play, therapy is carried out in a non-threatening and indirect style. It is structured, directive, problem-oriented, and educational. In cognitive-behavioral play therapy, the therapist enters into the play world and gains the acceptance of the child. Once that happens, the therapist begins to gently guide the play. The toys are used to model different reactions and teach the child new ways of thinking. CBPT uses materials and settings such as sand, puppets, toy animals, action figures, dolls and games as well as nature walks and baking. Therapy is conducted individually as well as in group settings.



At Open Arms Behavioral Health we are proud to offer both Child-Centered and Cognitive-Behavioral Play Therapy. Each counselor/therapist chooses the theoretical orientation that fits the needs of the client.