



OKLAHOMA PLAY THERAPY
TRAINING INSTITUTE

expanding the power of play

Empathy Builders: Using Play Therapy for School Social Skills Groups

PRESENTERS



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will learn:

- ❖ the basic tenants of play therapy
- ❖ how empathy is tied to social skills
- ❖ how empathy can help with conflict resolution
- ❖ learn play therapy techniques can be used to build empathy

WHAT IS PLAY?



- Play is spontaneous, enjoyable, voluntary, and non goal-directed.

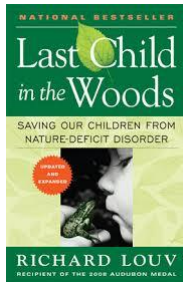
BENEFITS

- Through the process of play, children learn to make sense of their world.
- Through play children express themselves, problem solve, learn mastery, and social skills

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WHAT HAPPENS TO CHILDREN LACKING PLAY?

Play Deficit



The Play Deficit

The Play Deficit is the very real decline in play in our society. Children are playing less than ever, especially in low-income neighborhoods. Only one out of five children in the United States lives within a half-mile of a park or playground, and the availability of places to play is far worse in low-income neighborhoods.*

Signs of the Play Deficit include a general decrease in or elimination of recess time, a frequent consequence of children being in school settings, an increase in children's weight usage, an over-scheduling of children's lives, the prevalence of play centers in areas where few if any places to play exist within walking distance, and a critical lack of awareness about the benefits of play.

Consequences of the Play Deficit

Play is the primary means by which children develop, and lack of play is causing them profound physical, intellectual, social, and emotional harm.

Physical Harm

Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 20 years. There is a twenty-fold greater increase of childhood obesity in neighborhoods without a park or playground. In fact, children with a park or playground within a half-mile are almost five times more likely to be a healthy weight than children without playgrounds or parks nearby.**

Intellectual Harm

If play is not made a priority, we will continue to see a decrease in creativity and imagination, as well as vital skills including curiosity, social skills, resilience, and the ability to manage risk.***

Social Harm

During play, children learn to work in groups, share, negotiate, resolve conflicts, and ask for their needs. Children who do not play are at an increased risk for depression, problems during core instructional interactions.***

Emotional Harm

Our study found that nearly 70 percent of fathers reported that "Play Behavior" had been lacking in their childhood. Without outdoor recess, the increased incidents of depression, behavioral problems, including emotional distress, and problems when interacting with peers and authority figures.***

The KaBOOM! Vision

KaBOOM! is committed to eradicating the Play Deficit and to ensuring that every child in America has a great place to play within walking distance. We are doing this by building playgrounds through the participation and leadership of communities, engaging the power of play to the nation, and championing local policies and advocates who are increasing opportunities to play.

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WHAT IS PLAY THERAPY?

The Association of Play Therapy defines play therapy as "the systematic use of a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein trained play therapists use the therapeutic powers of play to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development."

BECOMING A SCHOOL BASED-REGISTERED PLAY THERAPIST

School Based-Registered Play Therapist (SB-RPT)

- Current and active state license or certificate to practice from State Dept. of Ed.
- Master's Degree with coursework including: child development, theories of personality, principles of psychotherapy, and child & adolescent psychopathology, and ethics
- Clinical experience required by State Dept. of Ed. **PLUS** 2 years continuous school experience post certification/license
- 150 hours of Play Therapy instruction. APT recommends: Play Therapy History 4-5 hours, Play Therapy Theories 40-50 hours, Play Therapy Techniques/Methods 40-50 hours, Play Therapy Application 40-50 hours
- Supervision
 - **REQUIRED** to be supervised by RPT-S **AFTER** completion of master's degree for a time period of no less than 1 school year with a minimum of 600 contact and 50 supervision hours
- Renewal
 - Annually send in active state license
 - 18 hours of CE from APT approved provider every 36 months **PLUS** 3 hours DSM/Psychopathology

***All this information is found in more detail in the SB-RPT Guide at www.a4pt.org*

EMPATHY AND SOCIAL SKILLS

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ewgu369Jw>

Brene Brown Short Video on Empathy



EMPATHY

*Emotional Sharing

*Empathic Concern

*Perspective Taking



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DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY

Provide children with the support they need to develop strong self-regulation skills

Seize everyday opportunities to model—and induce—sympathetic feelings for other people

Help kids discover what they have in common with other people

Foster cognitive empathy through literature and role-playing

Foster cognitive empathy through compassion training

–Dr. Gwen Dewar

EMOTIONS



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DEVELOPMENT OF EMPATHY, CONT.

Help young children improve their face-reading skills


Show kids how to "make a face" while they try to imagine how someone else feels.

Help children develop a sense of morality that depends on internal self-control, not on rewards or punishments

Educate kids about failures of the imagination

Talk with children about mechanisms of moral disengagement -- the rationalizations that people use to justify callous or cruel acts

-Dr. Gwen Dewar

THE  FEELINGS GAME		
FOR EVERY		SHARE
Red		_____ _____.
Brown		_____ _____.
Green		_____ _____.
Yellow		_____ _____.
Blue		_____ _____.
Orange		_____ _____.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

References and Resources

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