

Pictures for Reflection Recommended Toys for the Playroom

Hannah Robinson^a

^aMiddle Tennessee State University

Dr. Hannah Robinson is an Assistant Professor at Middle Tennessee State University in the Professional Counseling Program. Dr. Robinson earned a Ph.D. in Counseling at the University of North Texas, specializing in play therapy. Dr. Robinson is a Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor in Texas and a Registered Play Therapist (RPT) credentialed by the Association for Play Therapy. Dr. Robinson has experience counseling diverse clientele across the lifespan including children, adolescents, adults, couples, families, parents, and children, adolescent, and adult groups in community agencies, elementary and preschool schools, and private practice. Furthermore, Dr. Robinson specializes in providing play therapy services to children who have experienced adversity and children from Title 1 Schools. Dr. Robinson's research interests include examining the effectiveness and process of Child-Centered Play Therapy (CCPT) and Child-Parent Relationship Therapy (CPRT) with Marginalized Communities.

When working with children in counseling, it is often difficult to decide which toys to include in the playroom. Landreth (2012) recommends that toys be intentionally selected instead of collected. Play is a child's universal language and toys are their words; therefore, each and every



toy should be purposeful (Landreth, 2012). The carefully chosen toys allow children an ability to express a full range of emotions, with toy categories including the following: real-life toys, acting-out aggressive-release toys, and toys for reactive expression and emotional release. Real-life toys may include toys that can represent figures and materials in the child's life such as puppets, dolls, vehicles, a play kitchen, a cash register, and food. Acting-out aggressive release toys include toys such as a bop bag, play guns, and a shark. Finally, toys for reactive expression and emotional release may include paints, sand, and Play Doh. With these toys in the playroom, the therapist is able to establish a positive relationship with the child in which the child can express a wide range of feelings, explore real-life experiences, test limits, develop a positive self-image, develop

self-understanding, and develop self-control (Landreth, 2012). Further recommendations for specific toys to include in your playroom as well as detailed information regarding structuring your playroom can be found in Landreth (2012).

References

Landreth, G. L. (2012). *Play therapy: The art of the relationship* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.