



Add Play To Your Work.... Spring 2010

New England Association for Play Therapy.

Play—An Essential Part of Childhood

By: Laurel Hemmer, LICSW

The NEAPT Board met in January. We discussed many issues including how each Branch of APT reaches out to the larger community to teach others about play therapy. As we pondered what this means to our Branch we all agreed that one initiative we would like to take on is teaching our communities about the importance of play.

The topic of “play” seems to be getting a great deal of well deserved air time lately. Sarah spoke about “Where do the children play?” a PBS documentary regarding play in our society. NPR did a piece entitled “Old-Fashioned Play Builds Serious Skills” on Morning Edition a couple of years ago. Magazines have published articles and research is being done. Children’s play has become less improvisational and more directed as toys become more specific. Legos are no longer containers filled with blocks of differing sizes to be molded into whatever a child’s imagination creates. They are kits specific for Star Wars or Pirate Ships or robots. Parents’ ever increasing concern with safety has led to less days wandering the woods behind one’s house and more official “play dates” at commercial locations that charge money for you to watch your child play. The decrease in make-believe play is being linked to a decrease in children’s executive functioning skills including emotional regulation. There’s also a push for parents to “enrich” their young children’s

lives with pre-schools that limit free play and push A B C’s and 1 2 3’s. This is complicated by public school systems cutting related arts programs and shortening recess and lunch times. When I attended school (in the 70’s and 80’s) we had gym 5 days a week through senior year of high school. In the school system where I currently work K – 6 grade has gym once a week and recess is a mere 15 minutes a day. The lack of play is having a serious negative impact on our children and, as a result, on our society.

Being on the front lines as play therapists, we inherently believe in the power of play and see the benefits in our work and even in our own families on a daily basis. However, has the average family, the average school system, the average community lost sight of the power of play? Is there something we as a professional group can do to highlight the importance of play and empower local communities and school systems to embrace play as not just “free time” but “crucial time” for the benefit of our children.

If this article interests you, if you have experience with spreading the word about the importance of play, if you’d like to be on a committee to discuss how to implement such an initiative, or if you’d just like to give your two cents, please contact

Laurel Hemmer at laurelsquilts@msn.com.

Thank you for your interest and input.



New England

Upcoming Training Announcements: The following workshops (unless otherwise listed) are offered by or in conjunction with the New England Association for Play Therapy. NE-APT is APT Provider #02-123. Also see www.a4pt.org for more events and info:

April 9-10th, 2010: **ROARS FROM THE UNCONSCIOUS: Animals in Play Therapy and Sandplay** with Sally Sugatt, ISST/STA. Cornerstone School, Stratham, NH. 1-2 days avail. **Registration** (603)778-3180, ssugatt@comcast.net.

April 23rd, 2010. **Child Parent Relationship Play Therapy: Building and Strengthening Parent-Child Relationships through the use of Special Playtimes**. With Sarah O'Brien, LICSW. RPT-S. Rhode Island College, Providence, RI 6 hrs. \$80 <http://www.ric.edu/socialwork/pceLicensing.php> (can be taken as part of the Adoption certificate program or as Continuing Ed) (pre-requisite required of Doing Child Centered Play Therapy or Child Centered Play Therapy with Foster/Adoptive Children and Families.

April 29th, 30th, 2010. **Play Therapy In Clinic and School** with Wendy Monahan, MS, RPT-S and Stannard Baker, MA, RPT-S in Vermont. [Full Brochure](#)

May 7th, 2010. **Play Based Assessment and Treatment of Special Populations** This includes NLD, Aspergers, SID and ADHD. Presented by DeeDee Nold, LICSW, RPT-S. Sweetser Institute, Administrative Bldg. Saco, Maine 9-4pm. nolddeedee@aol.com APT # 99-077

May 21st, 2010. **The PLAY Project: Introduction to the DIR/Floortime Model of Play Therapy** SERESC Conference Center in Southern New Hampshire \$150 6 hrs. <http://greenhouseplay.org/?q=May-21st-Workshop>

May 21st, 2010. **Advanced Teaching in Play Therapy: Case Study, Trauma and Metaphor**. Presented by Laurie Parker, LMFT, RPT-S and Aimee Kolomic, LMHC, RPT. 9-4 pm. lsarker77@gmail.com APT #99-077

May 25th-June 29th, 2010. Tuesday evenings. **Child Centered Play Therapy** with Sarah O'Brien, LICSW, RPT-S at Rhode Island College. 24hrs or 2 credits. Sarahob1@msn.com

Spring-summer 2010 **6 Level Sandtray-Worldplay and Dynamic Expressive Play Therapy Training Course** with Gisela De Domenico, Phd, R-PTS. near Portland, Maine **Please go to:** <http://vision-quest.us/vqisr/schedule.htm> Registration is open for these workshops. *Note that: Folks may attend Level 1, The PlayTherapy and Sandtray Experience, (Level 3 prt1) and the Transformational Day without having had prior experience. RARE OPPORTUNITY to take all 6 workshops in one year.*

July 29-30th 2010 with Daniel Yeager **Integrating Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy and Play Therapy** www.playtherapyworks.com #00-098.

August 2-6th 2010 with Eliana Gil **Family Play Therapy** www.playtherapyworks.com #00-098.

Fall 2010 **Child Centered Play Therapy** with Sarah O'Brien, LICSW, RPT-S at Rhode Island College. 24hrs or 2 credits. Sarahob1@msn.com

Remember, regardless of whom the presenter is, if the workshop announcements do not state APT approval with a provider number, APT will not approve it for RPT/RPT-S application or renewal.

If you are not a member, please join to receive the member discounts plus many more benefits outlined on www.a4pt.org.

PLAY THERAPY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

COMING UP THIS SPRING AND SUMMER:

Play Therapy Associates of Vermont present: Play Therapy in Clinic and School. April 29 & 30, 2010 at Johnson State College, Johnson, Vermont. This is an exciting two-day Play Therapy workshop is being offered by two professional play therapists, one clinically based and one school-based. This experiential and didactic workshop will cover theories, ethics, treatment modalities, and techniques for use with a variety of populations. Healing factors of play therapy will be highlighted. We will also talk about the nuts-and-bolts of communicating play therapy sessions to families, school personnel, insurance companies, and other practitioners. Some play therapy materials will be provided as well practical and fun ideas for individual, group, school, and family settings across all developmental levels. The presenters are Wendy Monahan, MS, RPT-S and Stannard Baker, MA, LCMHC, RPT-S. 12 hours of continuing education credits will be offered. Play Therapy Associates of Vermont is a Continuing Education Provider for the Association for Play Therapy, APT provider # 07-214. More information at www.playtherapyvt.org or Contact Cathy Higley: (802) 635-2356 x1244, Catherine.Higley@jsc.edu

A note from Sarah:

Happy Spring! After several days of close to 60 degrees, I can declare, spring is here in New England, even if it only lasts a few more days. What a pleasure it is to walk outdoors and see everyone come out with their families to enjoy the sunshine. It brings out the playful in all of us, let's enjoy it. Today, I have been thinking about the following quote from From Mike Lanza - the Playborhood guy - My Goal

"I want my kids to play outside with other neighborhood kids every day.

I want them to create their own games and rules.

I want them to play big, complex games with large groups of kids, and simpler games one-on-one with a best friend.

I want them to decide for themselves what to play, where, and with whom.

I want them to settle their own disputes with their friends.

I want them to create their own private clubs with secret rules.

I want them to make lasting physical artifacts that show the world that this is their place.

I want them to laugh and run and think. *Every day.*

That's what I had. It's my standard for a good childhood. It's my goal for my kids."

I would like to take this one step further, beyond my own children, to "our children". Read Laurel's article above and join us in the discussion of how we can take the value of play beyond our play rooms and therapy time and into the communities in which we work and live to improve the quality of life for everyone. I really think the future of our communities depends on it.

Join the discussion here and in your community.

Happy Spring!

Playfully yours, Sarah

Speakers Wanted!

One of the ideas that came out of the January NE-APT board meeting was to create a "speakers' bureau" of people from the New England branch who have given workshops in the past. We would then "spotlight" one in each newsletter. That way, if your group, or agency, would like a training on a particular topic, we would have the resources to recommend some local talent.

So, if you have given a play therapy workshop in the past, please send us a short bio, plus a list of workshops or topics that you enjoy speaking about. If you have been to a workshop that was exceptionally good, please pass that along and we will contact the speaker ... we hope to have someone spotlighted in the next newsletter!

Please send info to:

barbaravh@mail.com,

nolddeedee@aol.com, or

laurelsquilts@msn.com.



The P.L.A.Y. Project Workshop

Play and Language for Youngsters with Autism:

An Introduction to the DIR/Floortime Model

A workshop for professionals and
family members of children with Autism Spectrum
Disorders.

Thanks to the New England Association of Play Therapy, and Green House Play, Rick Solomon, MD, founder and Medical Director of the PLAY Project, is coming to New England! On May 21st in Bedford, New Hampshire Dr. Rick will present an introduction to the DIR/Floortime Model and how it is used in PLAY Project programming. This is the first PLAY Project Training in New England and is an opportunity to expand your play therapy skills for working with young children with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other social communication challenges.

The PLAY Project model is based on the developmental theories of Stanley Greenspan, MD, known as the Developmental, Individualized, and Relationship (DIR) Oriented Model – also referred to as “Floortime.” Floortime refers to the practice of getting down on the floor and playing with the child at his or her level. Floortime is considered a type of child-centered play therapy for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders.

In the DIR/Floortime model specific play therapy techniques are used to match the child’s developmental level – in other words, “meet ‘em where they’re at.” The play is tailored specifically to each child by taking into

account his or her individual needs, sensory processing profile, and interests. During Floortime special play times adults follow the child’s lead and build on their natural interests to engage the child in socially interactive play.

The emphasis in Floortime is on enticing the child into the social world by giving him or her a greater degree of pleasure in relating and interacting with others. Yes, Floortime is play therapy, but it is also the child’s time to practice relating to others. Each time an adult engages a child on the autism spectrum in a spontaneous and joyful way that child has the opportunity to practice their social skills, and in doing so move forward on the journey up the developmental ladder.

During this workshop DIR theory and research will be presented along with videotape case examples to help participants learn Floortime strategies, methods, and techniques. This workshop was designed to help parents and professionals learn effective, low cost, efficient, and playful therapeutic methods to provide intensive programming for young children (18 months through 8 years) with Autism Spectrum Disorders, ultimately helping them gain language and social skills.

Please come join us for this exciting opportunity!

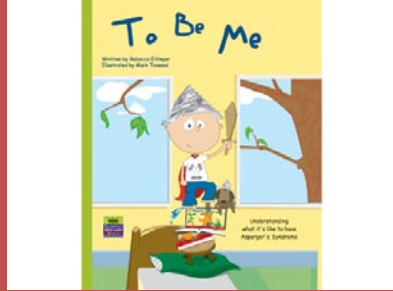
For more information or to register:

Go to

1) <http://www.greenhouseplay.org/?q=May-21st-Workshop>

2) Contact Lara Kroodsma, PsyD
Phone: 603-668-3959extension*22

Email: lara@greenhouseplay.org



Book Nook

Reviewed by Laurel L. Hemmer, LICSW

To Be Me

Written by Rebecca Etlinger

Illustrated by Mark Tomassi

My first job out of college was at the New England Center for Autism in Southborough, MA. I applied as a psychology major who had babysat a boy with autism and fallen in love with him – with all his strengths and weaknesses, with all his little quirks. I now work in the public school system and every year meet more students diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome or High Functioning Autism. I’m always looking for good resources yet seem to be quite picky. Something about this book, however, caught my eye and I was not disappointed when it arrived in my office. I’ve used it for 4 years in individual counseling, social skills groups, and for full class lessons on differences (grades 2 – 5). The book has been well received by students, teachers, parents, and guidance counselors. If you decide to run right out and get your own copy, I hope you are as satisfied as I am.

This is a cheerfully illustrated book about David - a 10 year old boy with Asperger’s Syndrome. He tells the story of what school was like for him, how he met his doctor and learned about his diagnosis, what he learned about himself, and how others in school can help him. I love the way “David” educates the reader about Asperger’s Syndrome.

Available at: www.creativetherapystore.com

“Letters from our Readers”

We would like to introduce this as a new section of the newsletter. We invite you, our readers, to write in with questions you might have for the board, responses to articles or book reviews, or suggestions for future articles/reviews. We ask only that they be tasteful ... ok, at least not crude ☺. So come on, tell us what you are thinking! Send in your letters to barbaravh@mail.com and watch for them to appear in future newsletters! This is your sounding board!

Report on NE-APT Board Meeting

The NE-APT board held a retreat/board meeting on Saturday, January 23rd, 2010, from 10am – 3pm. Stefani Misiph was kind enough to offer the use of her office in Framingham, MA for the meeting. Present were Sarah O'Brien, Kay Edwards, Peter Hunt, Stefani Misiph, Laurel Hemmer and Barbara van Hoff. The following is a brief summary of the day's work:

Stefani and Laurel were welcomed onto the board.

We spent the morning and over lunch discussing and planning for the fall annual conference. Although we are still working out dates and place, it looks like Paris Goodyear-Brown will be our speaker! (I will caution you that this is not a done deal yet, and if we can not get the dates and place to agree with her schedule we may have to change. If that is the case, we will let you know in the next newsletter!)

We also talked about expanding the conference to include either Friday night and/or Sunday morning. This time would be used to offer some shorter workshops that are more specialized in focus, or are more geared towards experienced practitioners. We would attempt to have local New England speakers do these pre or post conference workshops. The main speaker would still be all day Saturday, and people could register for however many workshops they wanted to attend. The conference is still in the planning phase, and as we know more information, we will pass it onto you!

After lunch we spent some time discussing the structure of the board itself. We looked at the history of the board, and the bylaws that are already in place. The bottom line is that Sarah, our president, has been doing the work of the board almost single-handedly. We made some initial changes to spread some work around. Barbara was named secretary of the board. Stefani became the conference coordinator. Laurel became the membership coordinator. DeeDee Nold and Barbara had taken over the newsletter editing after the last conference. Laurel is helping with that also. We decided that we would make this all day retreat an annual meeting because we can accomplish a lot when we are altogether for an extended period of time. Next year we will talk again about terms and elections.

We decided that the goals for the board this year will be two-fold. First, we want to expand and improve

our annual conference. We want to attract new play therapists and also offer things for those who are more experienced with play therapy. And then, we also want to do more in the way of community outreach. This year we will focus on connecting with local schools. Laurel will keep you up to date with our efforts in that area.

We finished this part of the day talking about benefits for board members. This topic had come up in the branch meeting at the national conference in Atlanta. We came up with two benefits. First, our annual conference would be free to board members – although we will be expected to “work” at the conference ☺. And, secondly, \$1000 will be budgeted each year to be divided among board members who are going to the national conference.

As far as the newsletter is concerned, one of the items discussed was to have a local speaker spotlighted in each issue. See more information on this in the “Speakers Wanted” section of this newsletter.

We ended the day by going over our annual budget and reviewing the agenda from the national branch business meeting that was held in Atlanta.

It was a full day but much was accomplished. Work is on-going, especially around planning for the annual conference.

