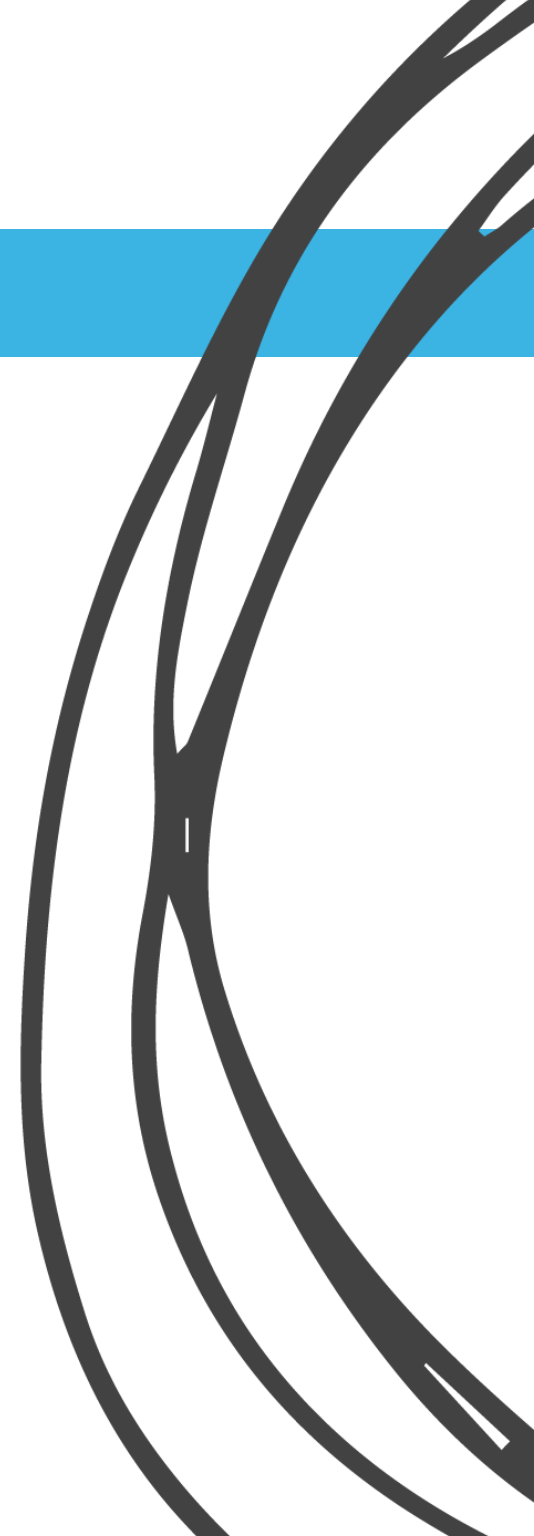


Child-Centered Play Therapy

CAREGIVER HANDBOOK

Dr. Gary Landreth defines Child Centered Play Therapy as

“... a dynamic interpersonal relationship between a child (or person of any age) and a therapist...who provides selected play materials and facilitates the development of a safe relationship for the child ... to fully express and explore self (feelings, thoughts, experiences, and behaviors) through play, the child’s natural medium of communication, for optimal growth and development.”



A Note from our Clinical Director, Claire Wick



Dear Caregivers,

We hope this information will be helpful to serve as a resource around what you can expect from engaging in Child-Centered Play Therapy. We are honored to have the opportunity to work with you and your family and truly believe that the CCPT model serves our families well.

If you have any questions or concerns, I am happy to be a resource at any time and can be reached by email at: **Claire@spottotalk.com**

Sincerely,

Claire & The Spot to Talk Team



Child-Centered Play Therapy

CAREGIVER HANDBOOK

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What is Play Therapy and why does it work?





Child-centered play therapy is a research-backed form of mental health therapy that best serves children **ages 3 - 13** and their families. **CCPT** utilizes the relationship built between the child and the therapist as well as a playroom filled with specifically chosen toys to assist children in working through challenges that they have faced in their lives. Through a safe and consistent environment, alongside the connection with their therapist, children are able to work through social, emotional, behavior, and relational challenges.

While adults communicate and process through words, children under the age of 13 **process through their expressions and emotions**. Children are not capable of rational and cognitive processing and therefore benefit greatly from having a way to work through their struggles in a manner that meets their developmental needs: through play.



CCPT is offered by specifically trained CCPT therapists who have dedicated their careers to learning how to best serve children. These therapists assist children through their play therapy journey in a non-directive manner by responding to their play in ways that help children be prepared to better handle the challenges they are experiencing or may experience in the future. CCPT is designed to provide a fun, inviting, and welcoming environment for children to be able to process through their struggles.

“therapists who have dedicated their careers to learning how to best serve children”



Through weekly CCPT sessions, children are **given opportunities to develop growth in their emotional awareness and regulation, increasing their problem solving skills, and building self-esteem.** The child will experience a safe and consistent therapeutic environment where he/she can experience full acceptance, empathy and understanding from the therapist.

The objects and toys present in the playroom allow the child to address emotions and explore their life experiences through pretend play and role play. The **playroom is a purposefully permissive space** where limits are minimized in order to allow for the expression and processing of emotions that are often seen as “unacceptable.”



“fostering accountability and self-regulation skills”

The permissive nature of the playroom also allows the child to experience consequences of their actions, fostering accountability and self-regulation skills. Through active listening and reflective language the therapist will provide a space for the child to feel seen, heard, cared for and understood.



In addition to CCPT meeting children at their age appropriate developmental level, **it also provides caregivers with skills to be utilized outside of the playroom with the child.**

Caregiver consultations occur every five sessions and during these meetings, the child's therapist will provide an opportunity to discuss progress, challenges, and themes occurring within the playroom and in the child's home life. In addition, throughout these meetings, the therapist will provide caregivers with information on skills that can be utilized outside of the playroom to continue the children gain in their play therapy sessions.



It is through the combination of the therapeutic relationship, a safe and consistent environment, and caregiver consultations that true change can occur for both the child and the family. CCPT enables relationships between caregivers and the child to strengthen, for the frequency and duration of symptomatic behaviors to decrease, and an increase in overall functioning of the child to occur.

“true change can occur for both the child and the family”



Universal Outcomes of CCPT

- Increased **regulation**
- Increased **worldview**
- Increased **emotional vocabulary**
- Increased **self-esteem**

Treatment Timeline and Expectations

Research shows average length of treatment is 30-40 sessions

Four identified phases of treatment:

- Initiation
- Resistance
- Work
- Termination

Treatment Timeline and Expectations

1) Initiation Phase

- Your child is getting to know their therapist, the process and exploring the playroom

2) Resistance Phase

- **Resistance is a normal and expected** phase of the CCPT treatment process
 - For some children, this may present as your child refusing to go into the playroom
 - For others, it may present as subtle behaviors in the playroom that only the therapist is aware of
- We will always meet your child where they are at, especially in these moments of resistance. Allowing your child to remain in charge of choosing how they spend their playtime is a key therapeutic component of the CCPT process
- *Why is your child being resistant?:*
 - Your child is asking themselves, “Am I ready/able/willing to face the internal work I need to do?”
- Resistance or regression may occur at home, school, and/or the playroom

Treatment Timeline and Expectations

3) Work Phase

- The longest and most significant phase in which change occurs
- Your child is **building the tools they need to better cope**
- Shifts in themes of play occur most during this phase
- Your child is working toward the four universal outcomes of CCPT

4) Termination Phase

- Provides opportunity for your child to experience a healthy goodbye, knowing their new skills are internalized and will stay with them outside of the therapy context
- We require a 5-session countdown process leading to the final session (5 more weeks, 4 more weeks... etc.)
- **Due to the importance of therapeutic relationship between child and therapist, termination countdown is essential. Please be sure to reach out to your child's therapist to plan a countdown if you're considering early termination for any reason.**

How to prep your child for session

- Give as little information as needed, but do not lie to the child
- Answer questions by offering developmentally and factually appropriate information
- **We recommend saying, “I met this really nice person named (therapist’s name) who has a playroom with lots of toys. You’ll get to go play with her every week at this time.”**
- Please let your child know the name of the therapist they will be going to play with
- Where: In the special playroom
- When: Weekly at X time
- Please **have your child wear clothes that can get messy**; washable paint, sand, water and other craft items are available in the playroom
- *Please do not prompt your child around talking, sharing, or expressing emotions. Issues that need to be worked through come up naturally as part of the CCPT process!*

What to expect day of session

- Please **have your child use the restroom and wash their hands prior to session** start time
- Therapist will greet you and your child in the lobby at the start time of your session
- Session starts when the therapist greets your child. **Therapist takes the lead from here.**
- Please remain in the lobby for the duration of the session unless otherwise arranged with the therapist
- There are toys for other children in lobby if needed
- Your child will be offered a snack. *Please let your child's therapist know prior to the first session if you would not like any snacks offered.*
- **Therapist will refrain from discussing your child with you while your child is present. If you initiate conversation regarding your child, therapist will promptly request that you share this important information by text, email, or phone call.**
- Your child will be told by their therapist at the start of session the following: This playroom is a special place where we will play once a week and you get to be in charge. You can play with all of the toys in here in most of the ways you want.

Caregiver Consultations

- Hour-long, in-person sessions occurring every 5th session (typically every 5 weeks)
- **Therapist will schedule the first 5-week consultation at your initial intake**
- Therapist will discuss therapy phase and themes present in your child's play
- Caregiver will have an opportunity to discuss questions, concerns, and successes.
- Therapist will collaborate with you to support your child and will offer skills to use with your child to support their growth

Resources

Play Therapy Parenting Podcast

A.C. T. Limit Setting Guide

Good Inside

Anxious Generation

Whole Brain Child

How to Talk So Little Kids Will Listen



Feelings Wheel

