

## Play Psychotherapy

Play is a fundamental and crucial activity for healthy brain development in children and it can be seen as a reflection of their mental functioning. It allows them to use their creativity while developing their imagination, and physical, cognitive, and emotional strengths. It is a very natural form of interaction with others and the world around them. Play is also an important aspect in developing one's identity and accepting oneself.

In a therapeutic setting, younger children may have trouble talking directly about their feelings, but a child's experience and knowledge can be communicated through play. In play therapy, children are led to play out undesirable experiences, break them into smaller pieces, vent emotional states, and integrate them back to the understanding they have of themselves or something they are concerned about. The therapist identifies themes expressed within the play and shares them with the child either within the play frame or directly by verbalizing them. Through this process, the child develops control over inner problems and learns how to cope with them effectively. Particularly in Cystic Fibrosis, play therapy may help children to explore and understand their thoughts and feelings towards their illness. For example, what is holding them back, what terrifies them or helps them cope. Being aware of these themes may help to reduce anxiety and depression, improve adherence, support the separation process and reduce psychosomatic symptoms.