

Play therapy with children

M Maldonado



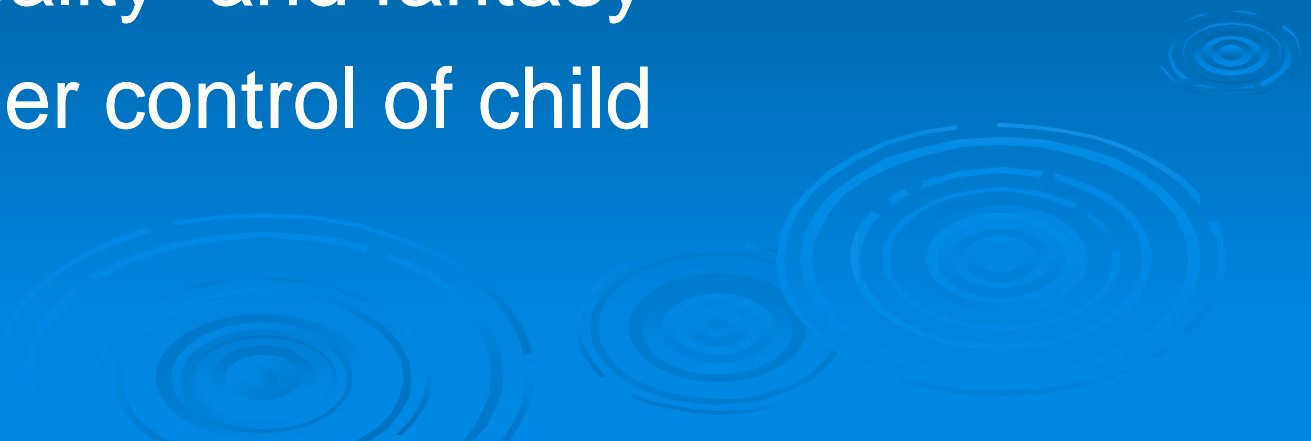
Development of play

- “somatic play” --- infant
- Self –referred play , symbolization .
Toddler, 2nd year of life
- Play as repetition of daily life scenes
(feeding, putting to bed, bathing, etc.)
- third year of life, symbolic play
- Preschooler. Dramatic plots and
representations


Socialization and play

- Interpersonally, at first only “parallel play”
- Young children cannot participate in cooperative play until about five or six years old (cooperative play)
- Then, organized and “rules” come into the play (sports, etc.)


Functions of play

- Play is a natural activity
 - Does not have to be taught
 - Does not disappear with childhood, adults also play
 - Play occurs in a “transitional space’, between reality and fantasy
 - Play is under control of child
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Functions of play

- Play as expenditure of energy and “exercise”
 - Play as “practice of skills”, e.g. play fighting (in animals and children)
 - Play as socialization
 - Play as “catharsis”
 - Play as imitation
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Functions of play

- Play for representation of life experiences
 - Play for elaboration of anxiety provoking and traumatic experiences
 - Play to realize fantasies, fulfill wishes and achieve goals
 - “pretend” to be something one is not
 - “suspension of reality”
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“Play therapy”

- First used by Melanie Klein and her disciples as a substitute of “free association” in the adult
 - The therapist tried to guess the meaning of the play sequences
 - Spontaneous and uncensored productions of the child
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Schools of play therapy

- “Profound” play therapy. Psychoanalytical therapies
- Individual Therapy , Alfred Adler
- Analytical Psychotherapy CG Jung
- Sand Therapy D Kalff
- Oriented to the person, not directive.

Play therapies. Other developments

- Art therapy
 - School of Milton Erickson
 - Focused play therapies
 - Cognitive and behavioral play therapy
 - Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)
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Play therapies new developments

- Dynamic play family therapy
 - Strategic Family play therapy
 - Family play therapy with young children
 - Filial therapy
 - Developmental play therapy
 - Theraplay
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Play therapy

- Psychodynamic play therapy
 - Play for cognitive and behavioral interventions
 - Play to reduce symptoms (anger, anxiety, fear, trauma)
 - Play to promote socialization
 - Theraplay
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Psychodynamic play therapy

- The child has the freedom to play (or not to play)
- The therapist respects the child's themes, topics, timing, and "script".
- The therapist observes and attempts to understand. Play as communication
- Occasional interpretations of the "inner content" of the play re emotional life of child (conflict, fear, anger, etc.)

Psychodynamic play therapy

- Anchored in psychoanalytic theory, e.g. psychosexual development
- E.g. modulation of impulses by ego and superego
- Controversies M Klein-Anna Freud
- Over transference, handling of play and free association , and interpretation of conflict

Analytical therapy with children.

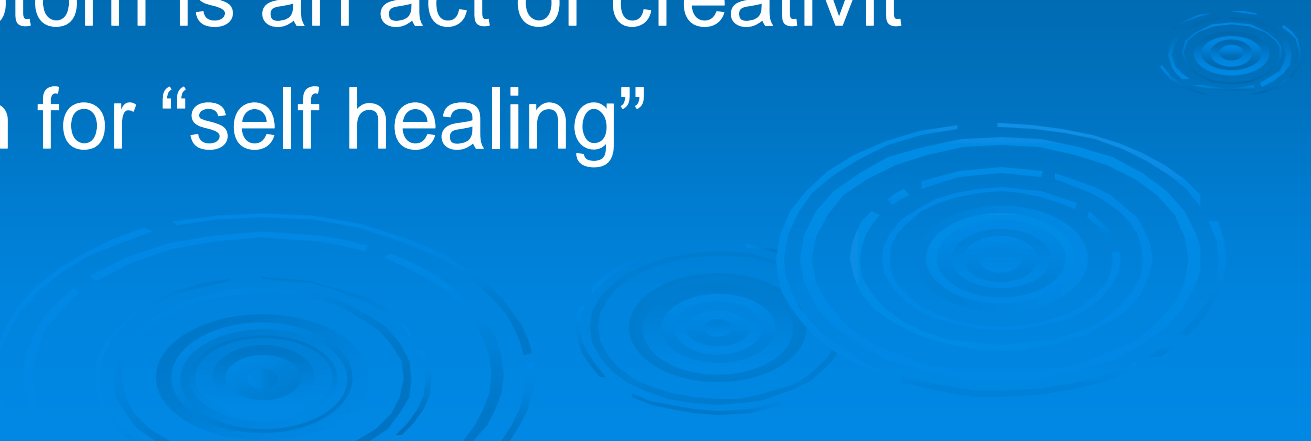
A. Adler

- Importance of feeling of belonging.
- Each person wants to belong to a group and to have meaning
- Children. Have a social orientation and need of social exchanges
- Need of affection
- Satisfaction or denial of this need
- By 6 years old child has developed conclusions about him or herself


A Adler

- Conclusions about others and the world
- If a child does not get affection and belongingness to family, he will find “belonging” in a negative way, based on private and individual logic
- Attempts to compensate feelings of impotence and inferiority
- To stabilize self esteem, or balance

A. Adler

- Symptoms have a function of signal
 - To stabilize the self esteem
 - The symptom expresses the wish for meaning and not feeling powerless
 - Wish to have an impact on something
 - The symptom is an act of creativity
 - The search for “self healing”
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A Adler

- Play allows expression of creative force
 - In early childhood develops a feeling of inferiority
 - Due to chiasm between ego ideal, self-perception and negative experiences
 - Symptoms develop from demoralization and feeling of inferiority
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Analytic play therapy (Stadler, 1992)

- Creating a space where these conflicts can be represented
- Interpersonal space. Find solutions to intrapsychic conflicts
- Reexperience the compensation-mechanisms, security mechanisms, failed ambitions
- These are worked through in the relationship with the therapist
- (Von Gontard and Lehmkuhl, 2003)

Analytical Psychotherapy CG Jung

- Process of individuation. Separation from parents and formation of individual identity
- Based on Freudian ideas supplemented
- Libido is a “vital energy”(not only sexual)
- The Ego is the center of consciousness and mediator between inner and outer needs or claims
- The personal unconscious contains repressed and blocked material from personal experiences

Analytical psychology

- Additionally, there are expressions from collective unconscious and which reflect archetypes
- Central archetype is the self, which contains the totality of the psyche
- Initially the child is bound to his self, then there is de-integration of ego and self (through pain, hunger, etc.)
- There should be a reintegration (through satisfaction, calming) that brings self and ego together again

Analytical (JUNG)

- The *persona* (mask) is the face that the child shows to the world
- In the shadow of it, are unacceptable parts of the psyche, unconscious.
- Other archetypes are Anima and Animus. In contraposition, one feminine and one masculine
- Symptoms occur from interruption of flow of libido (vital energy) along the ego-self axis
- The energy may be bound in “complexes” (e.g. inferiority, superiority, etc.)


Analytical therapy (Jung)

- Play therapy in a “play room” with multiple play materials
- A selection of symbolic play material
- Miniature figures and a sand tray
- 1 to 2 per week and conversations with parents
- The relationship is an existential encounter between two people
- The therapist is active in the relationship
- Analytical attitude expands on the meaning of play, symbolic and direct expressions.
- Transference and countertransference emotions very important

Analytical therapy

- Interventions comprehend
- Observation
- Reflection on thoughts Reflection on feelings
- Clarification
- Amplification of symbols Interpretation
- Correlating: past and present, conscious and unconscious
- Sand Play therapy D. Kalf. In Schools. Also “story writing” ”story telling”, foster the flow between conscious and unconscious, and integration of painful emotions in the ego


Sand Play therapy . Dora Kalff

- Derivation of Jungian psychotherapy
 - a school teacher collaborator of Jung
 - Method for children and adults
 - 3 sources.
 - Analytical therapy of CG Jung
 - Technique of Margaret Lowenfeld
 - Meditative/spiritual Buddhistic traditions
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Sand play therapy

- Two sand trays next to each other
- 52cms x 72 cms x 9 cms
- Tray over an adequate supportive device
- One has dry sand, the other wet sand
- The bottom and sides are blue, to represent water (rivers, sea, lakes, etc.)
- Hundreds of miniature toys from all sides of human experience
- Free and easy access to them, placed on shelves

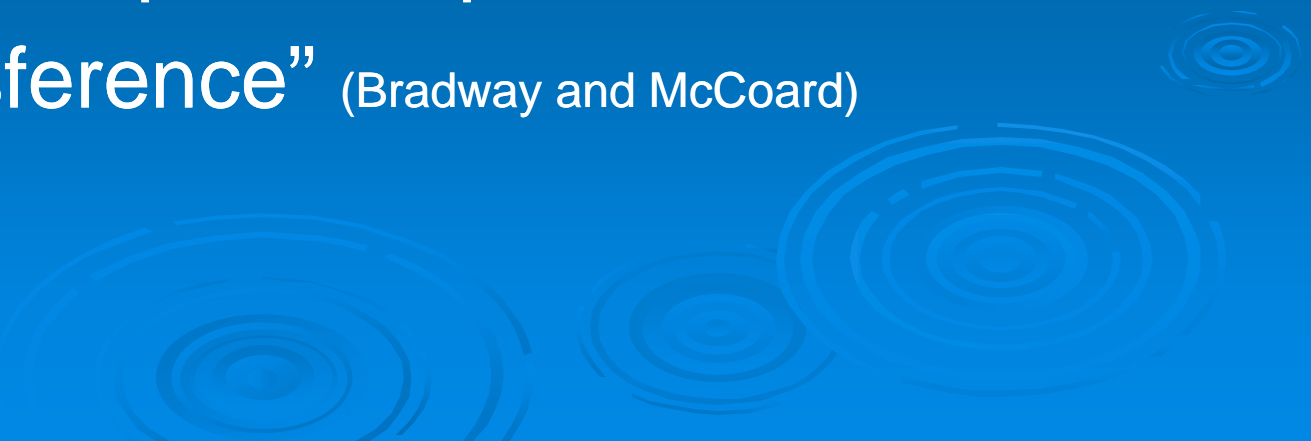
Sand Play therapy

- Children are asked, without being given direction, to build a picture on the sand
 - Therapist observes with attention
 - Creates a “free and protected space”
 - Makes possible free expression, the creation of something without judgement and protecting the patient
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Sand play therapy

- There is a regression due to the non-verbal character of the process and the character of the materials
 - Children impress on the sand their real experiences and their intrapsychic symbolic pictures , without verbal interpretation
 - Their understanding, produces a healing relationship with the therapist
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Sand Play therapy

- Transference is a dialectical process between the conscious and unconscious, and between both participants
 - Through the sand-picture a “third space” is created
 - Between therapist and patient
 - A “co-transference” (Bradway and McCoard)
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Sand Play therapy

- The picture can be discussed after it is built
- Or “amplified” with tales, symbols etc.
- Once patient has left, therapist takes a picture
- Important that the therapist, not the patient, dismantle the production
- The symbolic representation reminds in the mind of the child



Sand Play therapy

- Combined play therapy with art therapy
- Therapists from other schools use sand trays
- It can be used with groups of children
- Or with entire families
- Combination of play, play in sand and family therapy. Observe dynamics of the family

Cognitive behavioral play therapy

- The themes are suggested by the therapist
- Taking advantage of the natural interest in play to “practice certain skills”
- To model behaviors and responses
- To suggest alternatives