

**Spring
2003**

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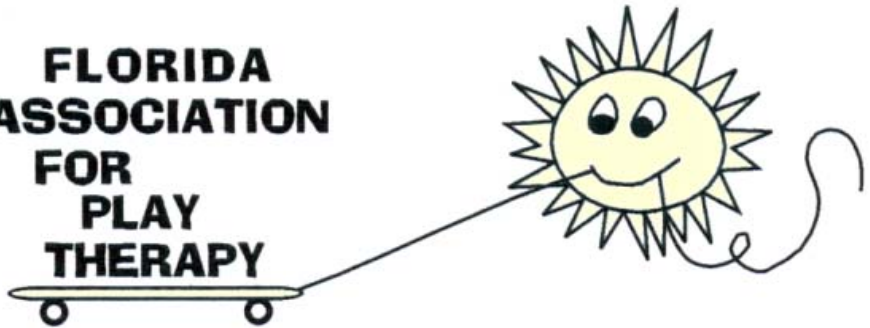
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**Nominations
are now being
accepted for
the 2003-
2005 FAPT
Board
positions. See
nomination
form on
page 6.**



**FLORIDA
ASSOCIATION
FOR
PLAY
THERAPY**



The Playful Healer

The Newsletter of the Florida Association for Play Therapy, Inc.

Treating Childhood as a Disease: Implication for Treatment

Lawrence C. Rubin, Ph.D., RPT-S

Several years ago, an article entitled, "The Etiology and Treatment of Childhood" was published in the Journal of Polymorphous Perversity (Smoller, 1995). In it, the author re-framed the normal vicissitudes of childhood as a pathological process, and noted among other points, that "childhood is almost always present at birth, [is characterized] by short stature, emotional lability, immaturity and knowledge deficits" and that "spontaneous remission is not uncommon". While the article was clearly satirical, there was, and remains an important lesson. As you read the following brief case scenario, consider the *seemingly* clear line that separates pathology from normal developmental variation, and the implications for assessment and treatment.

In late August, Joseph, barely age four, started a new preschool class. The teacher, her rules, and his classmates were largely unfamiliar. Joseph, who had been toilet trained, began soiling himself. His teacher, a strict middle-age woman, quickly lost her patience and complained that Joseph raised his hand incessantly and stayed in the bathroom for extended periods of time. She soon referred him to the team of agency clinicians who were working in

this particular setting. Dutifully, the team observed Joseph in class, spoke with his guardian, the teacher and the principal. A very clear behavioral plan was developed and implemented, and Joseph was assigned a psychiatric diagnosis (since the agency relied on Medicaid reimbursement).

Several weeks passed with little noted progress. When finally asked what the problem was, Joseph seemed embarrassed and spoke about his teacher not calling on him when he raised his hand to go to the bathroom. Play therapy was introduced into the treatment plan in an attempt to understand, work through and symbolically resolve Joseph's dilemma. This too was unsuccessful. At that

Continued on page 3 . . .

Contents:

APT News..	2
Letter to the Editor.	3
Play Therapy Ideas.	4
Congratulations!	4
Message from the President	5
Coping With War	5
Announcements	6
Membership	8



News from The Association for Play Therapy

Important Change for all Registered Play Therapists !

During its Feb. 8, 2003 meeting, the Board of Directors voted to require that all Registered Play Therapists (RPTs) be licensed or certified by their primary state boards or their professional associations. This policy was adopted to better assure protection of and accountability to the general public and our clients. Letters addressing this change have been mailed to our 481 RPTs. Contact **Carol Muñoz**, cmunoz@a4pt.org, for details. [Note: Registered Play Therapist-Supervisors are already required to be licensed or certified.]

APT To Honor Mr. Rogers

To acknowledge the death of a man who believed in the worth of all children, APT would like to publish a tribute to Fred Rogers. Please send your memories to the APT Newsletter. This can be as short or as long as you wish to make it. It can involve your own childhood memories of Mr. Rogers, your observations about your own children's or grandchildren's relationships with Mr. Rogers, your use of Mr. Rogers' books, materials, insights, etc. in your work (including his wonderful public service announcement after 9-11), or any other form of tribute.

Send memories to **Sandi Frick-Helms** at : sandifh@sc.rr.com.

FREE 2003 Conference Registration & Lodging

Why pay when you can register for and lodge at our 2003 APT Conference & Pre-Conference without charge - and help grow the play therapy community? The member who earns the most recruitment points by Sep. 15 will be awarded this prize. Earn 2 points for each new Professional member and 1 point for each new Affiliate member (and be sure to include your name as Sponsor on their applications). See page 8 of this newsletter for a membership form or contact **Diane Leon**, (559) 252-2278, dleon@a4pt.org

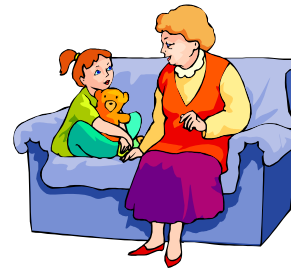
If you plan to attend the Conference and/or Pre-Conference in Toronto, please reserve your air and lodging arrangements as quickly as possible. Toronto rooms will be scarce due to several large visitor activities (e.g. international cycling race, etc.) also occurring during our conference. Our conference site is the Westin Harbour Castle Hotel, (800) 228-3000.

2003 Research Grant Applications Available

June 30 is the deadline by which APT must receive 2003 play therapy research grant applications. For info, contact Bill Burns, bburns@a4pt.org. Forms are also available on the APT website at: http://www.a4pt.org/2003_RFP_Package.doc.

Bill Burns, CAE

Executive Director
Association for Play Therapy, Inc.



Have a Great Idea or Experience to Share?

We welcome contributions to the newsletter. We are looking for letters to the editor, tips and techniques our members have developed, resources they've found, research they've done, experiences they've had that led to professional growth. Articles on child development, family play therapy, supervision, and multicultural issues in play therapy are needed in order to create series on these topics.

We're not asking for a long term commitment, although it would be wonderful to have regular contributors. You don't need to write a long, scholarly article, although we'd love to receive those, too. What have you found that works, or doesn't work, in the play room? What books have you read that we should read? We want to share the ideas and techniques our fellow Play Therapists have discovered and developed.

There's a lot of wisdom, knowledge, and experience among our membership. We hope you'll share some of it with us:

FAPT c/o
Children's Psychiatric Center
9380 Sunset Drive Suite B-235
Miami, Florida 33173

The Playful Healer Editor

Lisa Saldaña

Contributors:

Janet Courtney, Larry Rubin
Cristina Uribe

Treating Childhood as a Disease

Continued from page 1 . . .

point, the team considered referral to a psychiatrist for medication management. Joseph, become sullen and withdrawn, barely raising his hand, playing or interacting in class. His soiling problem now spread to the home.

In my experience providing supervision to agency clinicians, scenarios like this one are not uncommon. Children, in attempts to adapt to new educational, social and familial contexts, struggle with their limited resources and soon come to the attention of clinicians. A child, as in the above scenario, whose adjustment difficulties are just as easily understood as developmental and contextual, soon comes to be seen as a patient, and the dutiful clinician ventures off on a hunt for pathology. The present circumstance of the child's life is overlooked in favor of either an etiological understanding of the past or a future prognostication. Treatment goals supplant relationship development, while rich narratives are condensed into meager, depersonalized and reductionistic progress notes. The child is no longer an ally in treatment, but an adversary to be vanquished. Play is surrendered to rigidity, and spontaneity is considered an extravagance—a distracter from the 'real' work of treatment. External resources are marginalized in favor of those of the treatment team. In many cases, 'developmental differences' and 'adjustment difficulties' become medicalized, and the road to psychological salvation becomes a pill. All too often, hope surrenders to apathy and childhood does indeed become a disease for which we truly have no cure.

I hesitate to offer quick solutions to dilemmas like this one. Solutions are easily generated from afar, and quick solutions, like gimmicks and fix-all techniques offer false promises—both to the clinician and to the child. Instead, I challenge you to look at your young clients, not as a caseload, the very sound of which implies burden, but simply as children. And these children are attempting to communicate their needs to us in ways that are as creative as must be the efforts used to meet those needs.

Childhood is not the disease, it is the cure.

Smoller, J. (1985). The Etiology and Treatment of Childhood. *Journal of Polymorphous Perversity*, vol.2, no.2, 3-7.

Larry Rubin, Ph.D., RPT-S, is the Vice President of FAPT, where he is involved in the continuing education and chapter building activities of the

organization, and was instrumental in starting the first Florida Chapter (Broward). In his spare time, Larry is a psychologist in private practice in Fort Lauderdale, an Associate Professor of Counselor Education at St. Thomas University in Miami, and he supervises play therapists in several local facilities.



Letter to the Editor:

Scott Ryan, Ph.D., LCSW, RPT-S was recently nominated to serve on the Association for Play Therapy's national Board of Directors. Scott is an Assistant Professor at FSU's School of Social Work, where he has taught, researched, and practiced play therapy. He has served as the FAPT Treasurer for the past 1 1/2 years. With his financial leadership FAPT has become a strong and viable State association, and I know that the National Association would benefit from his participation on the Board. I urge the membership of FAPT to elect one of its own.

Janet A. Courtney
President, FAPT



Advertise in the FAPT Newsletter

Business card sized: \$10.00
1/4 page: \$25.00 1/2 page: \$50.00
Full page: \$75.00

Contact Lisa Saldaña (305-975-4690 or lisasaldana@aol.com) to advertise in the next newsletter.

FAPT reserves the right to reject or cancel advertising for any reason. We will not accept any ad that discriminates against any group or individual.

The publication of any advertisement in the Playful Healer is not an endorsement of the products or services advertised. FAPT is not responsible for any claims

Play Therapy Ideas:

Affirmation Cards

**By Cristina Uribe, M.S.W.
Registered Clinical Social Work Intern**

As an Intensive Therapeutic On-Site therapist, I consistently see the detrimental effects of negative messages on children. Many of the families I work with don't understand the effects that these comments have on their children. Many believe that criticizing children, such as telling them that they are fat, stupid, or unattractive, is a "good" method to help the child change. What these parents don't know is that their negative messages may become ingrained in the child's mind and set a self-fulfilling prophecy that follows that child for the rest of their life.

In order to counteract the negative effects of the messages sent to these children, I have developed a technique that I believe will help a child reframe their negative self-image and increase their self-esteem. It requires a small manila envelope, such as the kind you mail documents in, some 3 X 5 cards, and some arts-and-craft supplies.

At the beginning of each therapy session, I ask the child how their week was. Usually, a child will tell me about something bad that had happened during the week or maybe something good. I then tell the child that we're going to write positive affirmations. In the first session that we do this, I explain to the child what affirmations are, and tell them that I'm going to give them their own envelope to carry their affirmations in. I have the child decorate their envelope so that they will feel that it's their own. The child can decorate their envelope in any way they wish, using feathers, buttons, glitter glue, construction paper, or even just plain markers and crayons. It is important that the child feels that this is their own envelope, as it will hold very important and powerful messages about themselves.

After they've finished decorating their envelope, I give them a few 3 X 5 cards and encourage them to think of positive things about themselves to write on the cards. If the child has difficulty thinking of anything positive, I tell them something positive about him or herself. I then encourage the child to think of a few more things such as "I'm good at math" or "I have a beautiful smile," etc. They can decorate the cards if they wish. If the child doesn't know how to read or write yet, then I have them draw pictures of things that make them feel good, such as a favorite pet, a favorite color, or just a smiley face.

Small children enjoy this exercise and love knowing that something is theirs, especially their manila envelope. You can even help them give their envelope a special name that only the therapist and the child know.

When we're done, I give the child a few blank cards to take with them. I encourage them to think of other positive affirmations throughout the week and create cards to share with me in our next session.

Positive affirmations are a way of helping the child reframe their negative self-concept. As you work with children on this technique, they will have a growing collection of positive affirmations that they can turn to whenever they feel put-down or when their self-esteem is beaten.

Although it is important to work with the children on their affirmations, it is also extremely important to work with their parents or caregivers in helping them build up a child's self-esteem and not put a child down. Family therapy sessions are an integral part of the therapeutic process, as it helps the parents and child understand each other and learn positive ways to communicate



Cristina Uribe has been working as an Intensive Therapeutic On-Site (ITOS) therapist for approximately eight months at Psychsolutions, Inc. in Miami, Florida. She has her Masters degree in Social Work, and has previously worked with a variety of populations, including people with substance abuse and major mental illness. Cristina aspires to eventually enter psychoanalytic training and work as a child analyst. She also wants to work with people touched by adoption.

Congratulations!

We want to honor our two latest Registered Play Therapists:

Karyn Jones, Ph.D., RPT of Orlando
and
Nancy Wozniak, LCSW, RPT, also of Orlando.

Please let us know when you or another member receive your RPT or RPT-S designation. We want to acknowledge your hard work and dedication.

Message from the President

What a wonderful time to be in Florida. The weather is beautiful. My office looks out over a field of trees and wildlife. There is a lot of LIFE in this area. I can see butterflies, a variety of birds and even raccoons from my window. I take advantage of any opportunity to use the gift of the trees or animals as therapeutic metaphors or bridges to co-created stories. Let's tell a story about that Mommy or Daddy raccoon we see out there....What do you think it is? What is that Mommy/Daddy up to?"

Our work with children is very crucial now. Statistics have shown a significant increase in child abuse since the 9-11 attacks in New York City. The need to create safety within our therapy sessions and to bridge safety issues into the home environment is important for children. Simply asking children, "Where is your safe place at home?" can be a helpful question towards decreasing anxiety. Recommending nurturing transitional objects to parents that can be housed in this "safe place area" can also help.

FAPT is in the process of planning an Annual Conference. The Annual Committee is conferencing about once every two weeks, and sub-committees are now being formed. Tentative arrangements for a two-day conference in February 2004 in Orlando are now being more solidified. We hope to have our location and conference main speaker established within the next month. Thanks goes to the FAPT members who responded to the Conference Needs Assessment Survey. Your input was valuable and has helped the committee to better formulate a more informed time frame and conference direction. Your input and participation counts!

There are many ways in which you can participate. The FAPT board is encouraging regions to form chapters. This can help to increase localized membership leadership, play therapy education, supervision and participation. FAPT Vice President, **Larry Rubin** is the contact person for chapter formation and questions, and Chair of the Chapter Education Oversight Committee. A membership/outreach committee has been formed and **Diana Malca**, FAPT Member-at-Large is Chair of this committee. Please contact Diana at 305-945-2774 if you have any questions, or if you know of any interested potential members. She is a great resource.

Looking forward to meeting you all soon. APT is urging those who plan to attend the APT conference in Toronto to secure your lodgings early.

With Warmest Appreciation for your Service to Children,

Janet A. Courtney, LCSW, RPT-S

Helping Children Cope With War

Lisa Saldaña, LMHC, RPT-S

As this issue of the Playful Healer goes to press, the United States is at war. Although the fighting is geographically far away, many of the children we work with feel that it is very close by. It is often a pervasive topic of conversation at home, work, and school. This is the first "real-time" war: It is beamed, live and in living color, into our living rooms. It's on the front page of the paper every morning. Parents, relatives, and friends have been deployed to the war zone. Often, parents and teachers are faced with trying to calm children's anxiety while hiding their own. Here are some resources for parents and professionals that are available on the Internet. They provide suggestions on how to respond to children's questions and concerns in a manner that is understandable, age-appropriate, and reassuring.

The Crisis Management Institute has a handout for parents that you can download in English or Spanish: www.cmionline.org

Familyeducation.com offers "Talking with Kids about War: Pointers for Parents" at www.familyeducation.com

Aboutourkids.org, has "Talking to Kids About Terrorism or Acts of War" www.aboutourkids.org

Zero to Three offers "Little Listeners in an Uncertain World: Coping strategies for you and your child" www.zerotothree.org/coping/

Public Television's website for children has some wonderful articles, including one for parents about play: www.pbs.org/parents/issuesadvice/talkingwithkids/war

Of course, Mr. Rogers's website has information: <http://pbskids.org/rogers/parents/war.html>

The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry has a number of articles: <http://www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/87.htm>

Educators for Social Responsibility offers articles for teachers: <http://www.esrnational.org/sp/we/heal/guide.htm>

The National Association of School Psychologists offers tips for parents and teachers: http://www.nasponline.org/NEAT/children_war.html

The American Psychological Association has articles offering age-specific guidelines on fostering resilience in children: <http://helping.apa.org/resilience/war.html>

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

FAPT Board Nominations

It's that time again . . .

The two year terms of our Secretary, Treasurer, and one of our Members-at-Large will expire in October, 2003. The Nominations Committee is calling for nominations for these positions. Here's a chance for our members to become more involved in FAPT leadership.

Nominations:

Secretary:

Treasurer:

Member-at-Large:

Please mail your nominations to:

Janet Courtney
Chair of the FAPT Nominations Committee
15408 Alexander Run
Jupiter Farms, Fl 33478
561-624-8819 ext. #3
FAPTcentral@myacc.net

Calling All Presenters!

The Florida Association for Play Therapy is in the planning stages for its 1st Annual FAPT Play Therapy Conference in 2004.

There are so many talented, creative, and knowledgeable members of FAPT, and we hope that you will consider being a presenter.

We will be publishing a formal "Call for Presenters" in the next issue of this news letter. In the meantime, any preliminary questions can be sent to **Larry Rubin** at lrubin@stu.edu or by telephone at 305-628-6585.

Tampa Bay FAPT Members

The Tampa Bay Chapter of FAPT is now forming. For more information, contact **Charlie Myers** at cmymers813@cs.com; **Loretta Gallo-Lopez** at glfour@aol.com or **Jennifer Baggerly** at Baggerly@tempest.coedu.usf.edu

How to Contact Your Current FAPT Board Members

President:
Janet Courtney, LCSW, RPT-S
600 Sandtree Drive Suite 203-C
Palm Beach Gardens, Fl 33403
561-624-8819 ext. #3
Please note, new e-mail address:
FAPTcentral@myacc.net

Vice President:
Larry Rubin, PhD, RPT-S
941 NE 19 Ave. #204
Ft. Lauderdale
Florida 33304
954-875-8505
e-mail: rubin@pstcomputers.com

Treasurer:
Scott Ryan, MSW, PhD, LCSW,
RPT-S
School of Social Work
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL 32306-2570
850-644-9747 (fax) 850-644-9750
e-mail: sryan@mailier.fsu.edu

Secretary:
Ellen B. Wood, LCSW
15490 NW 7 Ave.
Miami, Florida 33169
305-685-0381
e-mail: ellenwood@juno.com

Members at Large:
Tracy L. Howard, MS
Florida State University
Center for Marriage and Family
Therapy
540 W. Jefferson St.
Tallahassee, FL 32306
850-644-1588
e-mail: tlhoward@rose.net

and

Diana Malca, LCSW, RPT-S
Healing Through Play, Corp.
20225 NE 34th Ct. #1514
Aventura, FL 33180
305-945-2774
e-mail: diana@etca.net

Immediate Past President:
Lisa Saldana, LMHC, RPT-S
7765 SW 87 Avenue
Suite #104
Miami, Florida 33173
305-975-4690
e-mail: lisasaldana@aol.com



THE SPRING 2003 PLAY THERAPY SERIES

The Center for Professional Advancement
Barry University School of Social Work
Co-Sponsored by Florida Association for Play Therapy

Series Convener: Professor Janet A. Courtney, RPT-S, LCSW

Friday April 4, 2003 - 6 contact hours

GAME PLAY THERAPY

Presenters: Janet A. Courtney, RPT-S, LCSW

Christine Franklin-Faustini, LMHC

This workshop will review a variety of different therapeutic games that are available to practitioners. Emphasis will be on the critique of these games for their therapeutic value. Participants will also learn how to create their own therapeutic board games for children.

Friday, May 2, 2003 - 6 contact hours

FAMILY PLAY THERAPY AND CASE STUDY REVIEW

Presenters: Janet A. Courtney, RPT-S, LCSW

Robert Nolan, Ph.D. RPT-S

The morning workshop will focus on Family Play Therapy techniques and application. The afternoon will include case studies and opportunities for participants to share and explore personal case examples.

Friday, June 6, 2003 - Morning - 3 contact hours

PLAY THERAPY TREATMENT OF CHILDREN WITH ANXIETY DISORDERS

Presenter: Janet A. Courtney, LCSW

The focus of this presentation is to identify the common types of childhood anxiety disorders and play therapy methods of treatment.

Friday, June 6, 2003 - Afternoon - 3 contact hours

USING PSYCHODRAMA IN PLAY THERAPY

Presenters: Janet A. Courtney, RPT-S, LCSW

Delores L. Ripper, MSW, C.P. (Certified Practitioner in Psychodrama, and Group Psychotherapy)

This workshop will give participants an introduction to psychodrama theory and methods. The workshop will contain didactic and experiential opportunities.

CE approvals: The Play Therapy Series has been planned in accordance with the criteria set forth by the Florida Department of Health for Licensure renewal. CE's have been approved for Clinical Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists and Mental Health Counselors. The Barry University School of Social Work provider number is BAP-55.

This workshop is Co-Sponsored by The Florida Association for Play Therapy. FAPT is approved by the Association for Play Therapy to offer continuing education specific to play therapy. Our provider number is 02-115. FAPT maintains responsibility for the program. An additional \$5.00 fee will be charged for those seeking an FAPT Continuing Education certificate.

WORKSHOP FEES: 1 day program - \$90 (includes lunch and materials fee. An additional \$5.00 fee will be charged for FAPT Continuing Education certificate.)

Please contact Mary Consuegra at 305-899-3900 for registration, CE, and fee information, or call Janet Courtney at 561-624-8819 ext. #3

APT MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The directory information provided below will, unless otherwise noted, appear in your annual Membership Directory listing. Please provide the information requested in each item.
I wish to promote and support the field of play therapy by becoming a Member of the Association for Play Therapy, Inc. and the Florida Association for Play Therapy, Inc Branch!"

Category: _____ Professional (Individual mental health professional)
_____ Affiliate (full-time student, parent, etc.)

First Name: _____ **Last Name:** _____

Degree/Designation _____ **Sponsor Name:** _____

Branch: **Florida** SSN _____ - _____ - _____ (Confidential. Used only for identification purposes)

Business/Affiliation: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State: **FL** Zip: _____

Telephone (____) _____ - _____ Fax (____) _____ - _____ Email: _____

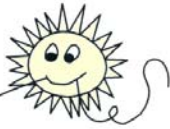
Annual Dues: APT: \$ **55.00** + Florida Branch: **\$20.00** = **\$75.00** Total dues

___ Check/Money Order Credit Card: ___ Visa ___ MasterCard Acct. # _____

Expiration Date (mm/yy) _____ Signature: _____

Mail application with payment to: Association for Play Therapy; 2050 N. Winery Ave. #101,
Fresno, California 93703 Fax: 559-252-2297

**FLORIDA
ASSOCIATION
FOR
PLAY
THERAPY**



www.floridaplaytherapy.org

The Children's Psychiatric Center, Inc.
9380 Sunset Drive
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Miami, Florida 33173