

30 Ways to Become a Better Play Therapist

Presented by Charles Schaefer, Louise Guerney, & Garry Landreth at the APT Conference on October 8, 2005

Suggestions 1-10 were offered by Garry Landreth; 11-20 were given by Louise Gurney, and the last 10 were given by Charles Schaefer

1. Write a thorough description of your play therapy approach.
2. Watch videos of your play therapy sessions
3. Transcribe 3 of your play therapy sessions.
4. Train parents or paraprofessionals in basic play therapy skills.
5. Observe play therapy sessions of effective play therapists.
6. Make a list of everything you do in play therapy that you consider therapeutic.
7. Read *Dibs in Search of Self* by Virginia Axline (available in paper back).
8. Have play sessions with normal children.
9. Visit an elementary classroom for an hour.
10. Supervise someone in training.
11. Stay on the same plane as the child.
12. Develop your limit setting skills.
13. Use developmentally appropriate vocabulary.
14. Thoroughly explain confidentiality to child and family.
15. Keep conversations with parents separate from the child.
16. Establish contact with schools/day care providers.
17. Monitor your client's progress in play therapy.
18. Be consistently empathic.
19. Base your intervention on developmental norms.
20. Be true to the approach you have chosen for a given case.
21. Obtain ongoing supervision/consultation for your cases.
22. Continually update your play therapy knowledge.
23. Incorporate evidence-based practices.
24. Tailor your intervention to the individual case.
25. Seek greater understanding of play therapy change processes.
26. Become more culturally competent.
27. Expand your play therapy repertoire.
28. Stay in touch with your playful inner child.
29. Dialogue with play therapists with different orientations.
30. Deepen your self-knowledge.

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