



VOLUME 22, Number 5, October 2011



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President's Message

Annette Markowitz, MFT, RPT



Greetings Fellow Play Therapists,

Like Disney figures and other toys? Want to add some to your collection for \$1.00? Stop by the CALAPT booth at the 28th Annual Play Therapy Conference which is being held in Sacramento and enter our raffle for two baskets overflowing with items such as a certificate for a CALAPT sponsored workshop or regional conference and great Disney toys and other goodies.

Important Information!

CALAPT's 7th Annual Southern California Regional Play Therapy Conference has a new location! Please mark your calendars for May 4 & 5, 2012 at Argosy University, Orange County campus in Orange, CA. Information regarding the Northern California Regional Play Therapy Conference will be available at a later date.

Thank you, thank you, thank you to CALAPT's volunteers at the state board level, chapter leadership level, and all volunteers who have given valuable time to our association's activities. We continue to grow and rely on our wonderful volunteers to be successful. Remember, many hands lighten the load and your dedication, generosity, and willingness to serve is greatly appreciated.

In particular, I would like to thank Camille Holmes, Ph.D, the APA Oversight who has served multiple terms for CALAPT, Reena Patel, and Myrsha Rosa, MSW, who are Members-At-Large responsible for ensuring that we meet all document requirements so that we may provide CEs to attendees. Anna Loza, MSW, LCSW, and Ann Marie Washington, MSW, LCSW, for organizing and leading our regional play therapy conferences. Thank you to CALAPT Today's newsletter contributors and workshop/training presenters for sharing your talents and expertise with our readers and the play therapy community.

As this is my last newsletter as CALAPT President, I would like to thank you for this opportunity to serve. Thank you to Kim Vander Dussen, Psy.D., RPT-S, Mary Ruth Cross, MFT, RPT-S, Kristy Schadt, MFT, RPT-S and Katie Glickman, MFT, for serving with me on the CALAPT Executive Board. I cherish your time, energy, and boundless dedication. I personally and professionally give thanks to each of you and send warm gratitude to all who support the play therapy community.

In gratitude,
Annette Markowitz, MFT, RPT
CALAPT President, 2011

Neurosensory Play Interactions and State Regulation in Play Therapy

Ken Schwartzberger, LCSW, RPT-S

Play and State Regulation

Regulation of affect and behavior is the foundation that influences all domains of development and all learning and relationships (Lillas & Turnbull, 2009). The regulatory system is the most primitive of the four brain systems – these are the regulation (brainstem), sensory (diencephalon), relevance (limbic) and executive (neocortex) systems (Lillas & Turnbull, 2009, Perry, 2008).

The regulatory system controls arousal. The degree of sensory alertness, emotional reactivity, and motor activity defines the level of arousal (Pfaff 2006). States of arousal are located along a continuum from low to high energy (sleep – drowsy – hypoalert – hyperalert – flooded). Optimal regulation is the capacity to cycle between sleep and alert processing, smoothly transition from one state of arousal to another, adjust to subtle changes within states of arousal, and to manage an abrupt state change and recover back to baseline (stress recovery) (Lillas & Turnbull, 2009).

A child's play naturally includes a combination of alerting, organizing and calming activities. Alerting sensory activities include, crawling, jumping, and running, sliding, dancing, singing and marching. Organizing sensory activities include chewing, lifting, pushing, pulling, rolling and tumbling. Calming sensory activities (needed when child is in sensory overload) include music, sucking, rocking, cuddling, humming, swinging, reading, play dough, drawing, painting, water-sand play and touch (Kranowitz, 1998).

The ability to maintain an optimal calm and alert state and recover back to the alert processing state following a stress response is referred to as 'self-regulation'. Children learn to control and manage emotions and behaviors in early development and require assistance from their caregivers to learn to sustain optimal regulation. This is known as *interactive regulation* or 'mutual regulation' (Sameroff, 2004). As children grow and mature they develop the ability to self-regulate emotions with increased efficiency.

Interactive Regulation in Play

All behavior is influenced, in fact directed, by the sensory systems in the brain. Behavior is directly related to the integration of our sensory modalities (sight, sound, touch, taste and movement) and the internal processing within our sensory system. The ability to self-regulate affective states is shaped by the mutual interactions a child has with parents and caregivers. Sensorimotor play assists children in practicing self-regulation skills taught by the parents.

A child's sensations are shifting in direct relationship to the parents facial and vocal and movement expressions. Infants show a strong interest in face to face social-emotional interactions and have a capacity for neurobehavioral self-organization (Tronick 2007). They develop the ability to use attachment relationships to regulate feelings and behavior through dyadic mutual regulation. Therefore, the child-parent relationship is used for communication and interactive regulation.

The parents may initiate the interaction with facial expressions, sounds and language or play action with toys and objects. These interactions are often equally initiated and directed by the child and become a

meaningful sequence of reciprocal exchanges that match the child's level of development (Bricker 1998). Therefore, a child can also affect the caregiver's regulatory capacities.

Responses to stress can take the form of hypoalert, hyperalert, or flooded responses during the awake state for the child and are also referred to as 'load conditions'. The goal of interactive regulation is to use the child's sensory preference in play to enhance feelings of safety and control, to soothe the child, and to decrease sensory triggers that produce stress responses. Children can help identify their own sensory preferences by making a list of soothing and pleasurable activities they enjoy (visual, touch, sounds, smells, tastes and movement activities) as well as a list of sensory stressors, the things they do not like to do (visual, touch, sounds, smells, tastes and movement activities).

Play activities that match or counter the child's aroused state regulation can be used to assist the child in attaining state regulation. The therapist or parent may start by matching the sensory input energy with the same intensity and rhythm of the child's stress response. The therapist then may need to alternately adjust the play activity energy in the opposite direction, increasing the intensity and rhythm of the sensory input or reducing the intensity and rhythm of the play activities.

Neurosensory Play in the Treatment of Trauma

Children exposed to chaotic and traumatizing experiences during early sensitive times in the child's development result in chaotic, developmentally delayed, dysfunctional brain organization (Perry, 2008). All threatening sensory signals initiate a cascade of processes in the brain that alter neurochemistry and ultimately brain structure and function.

However, research is showing that neural systems can change with dedicated amounts of focused and repeated neurosensory interaction experiences. Hours of developmentally sensitive play activities are necessary in the trauma care of neglected and maltreated children and should extend to every caregiver the child encounters, with multiple positive healthy adults and peers (Perry, 2008). Patterned, repetitive, sensory activities with trusted caregivers, teachers and peers provide the lower brain areas patterned neural activation necessary for reorganization and the formation of new neural systems. The construction of new neural networks have been shown to more effectively repair trauma than verbal models of therapy based on cognitive-behavioral awareness (Levine & Kline, 2007).

The therapist and parent can assist the child in stress recovery through interactive regulation in play. *Sensory play strategies* can be introduced; utilizing the child's identified sensory preferences (favorite fun, calming and soothing visual, auditory, tactile and movement activities). *Interactive stress recovery* play activities may include initiating a game of hide and seek, using play dough or clay to shape something together, playing in the sand or water, bouncing a ball, singing and rhyming, laughing, moving around, tapping/drumming, dancing or marching to music. Sensory play activities for the child must be provided in an appropriate sequence and matched to the child's level of neurodevelopment.

Therapists and parents can use *activity-based play interventions* to assist children in growth and development as well as to teach self-regulation skills. Treatment goals can be embedded in play activities and play interactions to provide multiple and varied opportunities for children to acquire, practice and generalize developmental skills (Bricker, 1998).

Summary

Some neglected and traumatized children may not respond immediately to therapeutic relationships until their brainstem is regulated by safe, predictable, repetitive sensory input through play interactions. Once

the brainstem is desensitized and “load condition” is modulated, the child is more capable of reaching a calm state of regulation and the therapeutic work can move to more traditional play and art therapies.

About the Author:

Ken Schwartzenberger is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and a Registered Play Therapist Supervisor with the Association for Play Therapy. He is an instructor in the Play Therapy Professional Certification program at the University of California San Diego. He presents at national and international conferences. He is a clinical supervisor at The Guidance Center in Long Beach, California, and the founder and Education Director for Play Therapy Seminars.

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SANDPLAY THERAPY

'A Sad Little Boy'

Ken Schwartzenberger, LCSW, RPT-S



A little boy entered the playroom at The Guidance Center and looked around at all of the toys and spotted the tray of sand in the corner of the room. He went directly to the sand, scooping it up with both hands. Raising his hands high in the air he slowly poured the sand back into the tray, watching it splash onto the smooth surface and then turned to look at me with a big smile on his face. I invited him to select some miniature toys from the shelves and use them to make a picture in the sand. I told him it was up to him to decide what to do. He eyed the small toy sailboat and a clay figurine of a sad little boy in a sitting position with his head down. He picked them off the shelf and went to work on sculpting and shaping the surface of the sand in the sand tray. He started by digging in the sand until he uncovered the blue bottom of the tray and he called it a lake with a river. He then placed a seagull and a piece of driftwood along the shore, added some smooth flat rocks and sea shells, and carefully placed a bridge over the river. Then he stopped for a moment, seemingly in deep thought. He went searching for one last thing he needed in his picture and returned with a tiny green frog. He placed the frog on the water's edge directly facing the little boy on the top of the hill. He turned to me and told me he was finished and then stood there, sadly staring at the picture.

I waited for a few minutes and then asked him if there is a "story" that he wanted to tell me about his picture. He looked up at me with sad eyes as if he did not understand my question and asked what I meant by that. I asked if there was anything that he wanted to tell me about his picture, such as what was happening in the picture. He took a deep breath and said, "This is a sad little boy sitting by the lake all alone". He stated that the little boy was crying because his dad left and he really missed him a lot, and that he had to cross the bridge to get to his 'quiet place'. I asked him to tell me about the frog and he explained that the little boy and the frog are friends. He told me that the frog 'listens' to the little boy, and that the little boy sometimes tells the frog about his worries and problems. I asked him about the seagull and he said that it would swoop down and land on the shore, so the little boy feel wouldn't feel so alone. He added, "Sometimes the little boy wishes he could just float away on the sailboat to a safe place where there are no problems". I asked him what the little boy in the picture was worried about today.

He told me that he was afraid that his dad would not come by and take him to the park like he promised. I thanked him for telling me the story about his picture, and just before he left the playroom he turned to me with a smile on his face and said that the little boy would be okay because his mom was taking him to the park anyway.

Children often have difficulty expressing their feelings and experiences in words. A child's natural way of communicating is through play. Play is critical for brain development, attachment and healthy growth and is often used in counseling children. Play therapy gives children a natural means for self-expression. Play allows them to express feelings that might otherwise be overwhelming.

Children are drawn to playing in the sand because it is a soothing sensory experience and it stimulates fantasy and imaginative play. Children have always delighted in playing in the sand, bringing their inner and outer worlds together through imagination. Sandplay therapy is a non-verbal method of counseling that is used with children that has been shown to help children share experiences and feelings that have been frightening or hurtful and too difficult to put into words. It combines play, art and sensory activities. Sandplay therapy is a simple and effective play therapy that can be used with all age groups of children. Children who have difficulty drawing may be more comfortable with making a picture with toys.

Sandplay provides the children 'distance' from their feelings and allows them to express their feelings through the toys. In other words, children use play to safely disguise their own feelings. The counselor is trained to understand the metaphorical and symbolic meaning of the sandplay picture and relate it directly to children's feelings and experiences. The counselor acts as a guide in providing a safe and empowering way for children to share feelings, gain self-control, and to resolve troublesome issues in their lives. It has been called the 'wonderful therapy'.

Chapter Leadership and Updates

Central Coast Chapter Leadership and Update

(The Central Coast Chapter includes the areas of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara)

President

Dana Francis, MA, PPS, MFT-I
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Kayla Monson,
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President-Elect

Cheri Love
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Immediate Past President

Colleen Sebastian, LMFT

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Secretary

The Central Coast Chapter is resting up after an outstanding 6 CE presentation by Sueann Kenney-Noziska, LCSW, RPT-S. On July 23rd, we were joined by professionals from Canada, the Central Valley and Northern and Southern California to learn play therapy techniques for use in assessment

through termination. If you joined us this summer we hope to connect again in October at the 28th Annual Play Therapy Association Conference in Sacramento. Be sure and say hello!

On October 1st we will host our final 1.5 CE workshop for 2011 and continue to expand our membership. We have been in e-mail contact with colleagues in Santa Barbara and were fortunate to have them publicize our July 23rd workshop in their Santa Barbara CAMFT newsletter. Thank you Santa Barbara CAMFT! Perhaps other CALAPT chapters have considered “getting the word out” about play therapy by connecting with local CAMFT members.

After we return from the APT Conference in Sacramento, I will be passing the baton /magic wand to our incoming officers for 2012. I will proudly step aside and remain loyally available to our incoming President, Cheri Love. She is sure to lead our chapter into new growth and more play therapy experiences. She will do so with the support and energy of incoming President Elect, Jennifer Blomfield and the continued support and expertise of secretary, Kayla Monson. 2012 will prove to be a very good year.

Central Valley Chapter Leadership and Update

(The Central Valley Chapter includes the areas of San Joaquin County and Modesto)

President

Vacant

Secretary

Vacant

President-Elect

Vacant

Immediate Past President

Raman Dhaliwal, MFT Intern
rdhaliwal@svcfs.org

The Central Valley Chapter is currently without leadership and we need your help. We are looking for members who are interested in joining the leadership team and promoting play therapy around the Central Valley! If you are interested in leadership opportunities, please contact CALAPT's President-Elect, maryruthcross@comcast.net.

Los Angeles Chapter Leadership and Update

(The Los Angeles Chapter includes the areas of Los Angeles, Ventura, & the San Fernando Valley)

President

Aseye Allah, ASW, MSW
Arkaa3@yahoo.com

Secretary

Georgie Wisen
gawisen@hotmail.com

President-Elect

Laia Vincens-Fuste, ASW, MSW
laiavicensfuste@hotmail.com

The Los Angeles Chapter would like to thank all those who attended our trainings this past year. We have had some great presenters with interesting topics, and are excited to continue providing training to the Los Angeles area. Please look forward to flyers about our last training of the year, which will be held on November 19, 2011. Our presenter will be Rie Rogers, PhD, RPT-S and she will be addressing how to understand and analyze sand tray. Our membership continues to grow in numbers and we would love to provide interested members with more information.

For additional information about the Los Angeles Chapter, please contact the Chapter President, Aseye Allah at (949)294-7886 or contact the Chapter Secretary at lacalapt@calplaytherapy.org

Orange County Chapter Leadership and Update

(The Orange County Chapter includes all geographic regions of Orange County)

President

Nubia B. Echavarria, Psy.D.
nubia_b_e@yahoo.com

Secretary

Danielle Haener, Psy.D. Student
Occalapt@ocplaytherapy.org

President-Elect

Nancy James, Psy.D.
nsgjames@yahoo.com

Immediate Past President

Valerie Wilson-Lindberg, LCSW, RPT
vlindberg@earthlink.net

Kim Vander Dussen, PsyD, RPT-S presented a 1.5 workshop on August 13, 2011 on how to effectively incorporate parents in the play therapy treatment of their children. We had a great turnout as she is a well-established play therapist in Orange County.

Thank you to the officers for your commitment to this chapter and the organization. As a new team of officers we built such a great working relationship and have learned how to run this chapter together.

For additional information on upcoming workshops or becoming an officer, please contact Nubia Echavarria, PsyD, Chapter President, at nubia_b_e@yahoo.com.

Riverside Chapter Leadership and Update

(The Riverside Chapter includes all geographic areas of Riverside County)

President

Vacant

Secretary

Vacant

President-Elect

Vacant

The Riverside Chapter is currently without leadership and we need your help. We are looking for members who are interested in joining the leadership team and promoting play therapy around Riverside County! The chapter serves cities such as Riverside, Corona, Temecula, Banning, and Blythe. If you are interested in leadership opportunities, please contact CALAPT's President-Elect, maryruthcross@comcast.net.

Sacramento Chapter Leadership and Update

(The Sacramento Chapter includes Sacramento and outlying areas including Elk Grove, Folsom, El Dorado Hills, Roseville and Auburn and Davis, Yolo Co.)

President

Lyla Tyler, LMFT, RPT-S
mslylat@comcast.net

Secretary

Sidonie Smith-Dustman, MFT
sasdustman@yahoo.com

President-Elect

Ann Burke, MFT, RPT
ann_burke@mindspring.com

In September we held our first full day workshop with our distinguished presenter, Linda Chapman, MA, ATR-BC. The presentation called **Applied Neurobiology in the Play Therapy Setting**, was a huge success! It was well attended and Linda taught us up to date information on brain development, attachment theory and their relationship to psychotherapy and play therapy. I don't know how we'll ever top this workshop in years to come!

Our next meeting will be held at Alliant International University on Saturday, November 5 from 10-1pm. It will be an opportunity for members to play and learn some new play interventions from local play therapists. We will also have a potluck and white elephant toy, game or book exchange. No CE's will be offered but it will be lots of fun!

We are so pleased to have a CALAPT chapter in Sacramento. New officers are in place for next year and we are already planning our meetings and workshop. We hope to see you all at the APT conference in our hometown in October! Let us be your tour guides and show you around our beautiful city!

For additional information on the Sacramento Chapter, please contact Chapter President, Lyla Tyler at mshlylat@comcast.net.

San Bernardino Chapter Leadership and Update

(The San Bernardino Chapter includes all geographic areas of San Bernardino County)

President

Christy Livingston, MS
christy.livingston@yahoo.com

Secretary

La Quenta Long, MS
qsjknt@msn.com

President-Elect

Angela Talbot
angelatalbot22@gmail.com

Immediate Past President

Yvonne Quesada, MSW
bonnieq21@hotmail.com

The San Bernardino CALAPT chapter is going strong! Our last 1.5 CE training on September 12th, incorporated Soul Collage and play therapy and was presented by Maxine McCleery Bowden, LMFT, RPT. Save the date for our final FREE 1.5 CE training on November 14th at the Rancho Cucamonga Community Center. We hope to see you!

If you are interested in becoming an officer for the San Bernardino CALAPT Chapter, please contact our current Chapter President Christy Livingston at (714) 334-9657. We are always interested in finding new presenters who utilize play in their practice - if you would like more information on how to present for the chapter, please contact us.

San Francisco Bay Area Chapter Leadership and Update

(The San Francisco Chapter includes all geographic areas of San Francisco Bay)

President

Jennifer Wentz, MA, LMFT
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President Elect

Michael Sanders
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Secretary

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Immediate Past President

Karen Pernet LCSW, RPT-S
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The San Francisco Bay Area Chapter held our last meeting of the year on September 23rd with a CE presentation entitled *Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy: How Play Therapy Emerges in a Herd of Horses!* We learned all about the therapeutic value of horses and how this type of therapy can be used in a playful way. We look forward to the International APT Conference in Sacramento and the coming year of increasing our play therapy knowledge and networking with others that love to play!

2011 California Association for Play Therapy Board of Directors

Executive Board

President

Annette Markowitz, MFT, RPT
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President-Elect

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MAL E / Northern CA Conference Coordinator

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APA Oversight

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CALAPT CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 2011

- **October 1st** – Central Coast Chapter 1.5 CE Meeting
- **October 8th** – Orange County Chapter 1.5 CE Meeting
- **October 11th through 16th** – 28th Annual International Play Therapy Conference, Sacramento, CA

November 2011

- **November 5th** – Sacramento Chapter 1.5 CE Meeting
- **November 14th** – San Bernardino Chapter 1.5 CE Meeting

December 2011

Happy Holidays and Happy New Year! See you in 2012

For more upcoming CALAPT events visit our website at www.calplaytherapy.org

CALAPT LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES!

Interested in networking, expanding your resume and attending FREE play therapy trainings? If so, then CALAPT leadership may be for you!

Benefits of service as a CALAPT officer include:

- Free attendance at all CALAPT Chapter Workshops throughout the state
- Free continuing education credits specific to play therapy for the BBS, APA, and APT
- Leadership experience to add to your resume
- Opportunities to network & strengthen your professional career while serving the play therapy community

Leadership opportunities are available at the local chapter level as well as the executive board level. Contact President-Elect Mary Ruth Cross at maryruthcross@comcast.net for more information.



California Association for Play Therapy Newsletter Ad Order Form



Name:

Email Address:

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Newsletter: January April June August October

Text Ad: FREE 30 Word Text Ad (CALAPT member) 30 Word Text Ad (non-member) \$20

Additional Words at 25 cents each

Display Ad: \$50 per 1/8 page 4 inches wide x 3 inches tall

\$65 per 1/4 page 4 inches wide x 5 inches tall

\$115 per 1/2 page 8 inches wide x 5 inches tall

\$165 per full page 8 inches wide x 7 inches tall

- The CALAPT newsletter is a web publication that is distributed 5 times per year - the first of January, April, June, August, and October.
- Deadlines for newsletter submissions are 60 days prior to these dates.
- For best results, please submit ads created in graphics programs and saved as JPG or PDF files. Ads in other formats may be submitted, however please be aware they may not convert legibly to a web layout.
- Text ads may be submitted in either a Word document or within the body of an email.
- Minimum font size is 12pt bold.
- Please submit ads to CALAPT President Annette Markowitz at annetteim@hotmail.com. You will receive a confirmation that your ad was received.
- Following receipt of your confirmation, please complete this form on the computer, print, and mail to the CALAPT Treasurer along with payment to the address below.

Total Enclosed: \$ Today's Date:

Check/Money Order for \$ payable to CALAPT enclosed

Charge my Visa / MasterCard (please circle one) \$ (amount)

Name on Credit Card:

Card#: Expiration Date:

V-Code (three digit number on back of credit card):

Credit Card Billing Address:

Signature: _____

Mail completed form with payment to:

Kristy Schadt, MFT, RPT-S
CALAPT Treasurer
1633 Erringer Road, Suite 207
Simi Valley, CA 93065

Being an APT member means you are also

a CALAPT member

Take advantage of all your dual

membership has to offer!

Check out the websites:

Do you see a need for increased representation

and trainings closer to home in your area?

To start a chapter in your area or

to find out about chapters in the process

of forming please contact:

We encourage all play therapists and CALAPT members to seek formal credentialing with the Association for Play Therapy. For More

Information, go to www.a4pt.org or Contact Carol Guerrero, (559) 252-2278 x 1

DISCLAIMER: The aim of the CALAPT Newsletter is to provide a forum for discussion of a wide range of articles representing various theoretical models, treatment approaches, concerns and activities in play therapy. Inclusion of a specific article does not reflect CALAPT official position or endorsement unless otherwise stated. The data and statements herein are the sole responsibility of the authors concerned.