

USING PLAY THERAPY TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

By Jeanie So



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Sally, aged six

- Sally and her mom are sitting in a café
- Her mom are talking to her friends about her anger towards her ex-husband.
- Sally is making circles in the sugar and getting her dolly to talk to the little pots of jam.
- The adults are in the realm of thinking and feeling, and little Sally is in the realm of imagining and feeling.





Conversation between mommy and Sally

- Mommy: “Now I want to explain to you why biting Sophie is wrong.”
- Sally: “Look at that little jam-pot, Mommy, it’s got all yukky yuck on the side!”
- Mommy: “No, this is serious, Sally. Now listen to me (holds Sally’s arm firmly), when you bite, it hurts.”
- Sally: “I’m having a big red balloon for my birthday, and one on my cake too!”
- Mommy: “So do you understand Sally?”

Response and Outcome

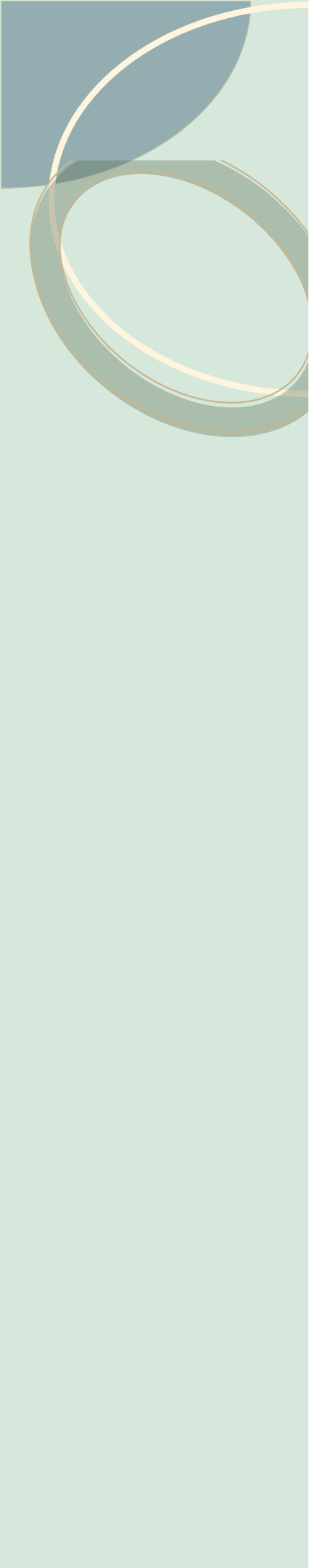
- Sally says nothing, nods half-heartedly but when mommy lets her go, she continues in her fantasy world of magic glow-worm homes.
- Next day, Sally bites Sophie again.





Why did the mother fail to connect to Sally?

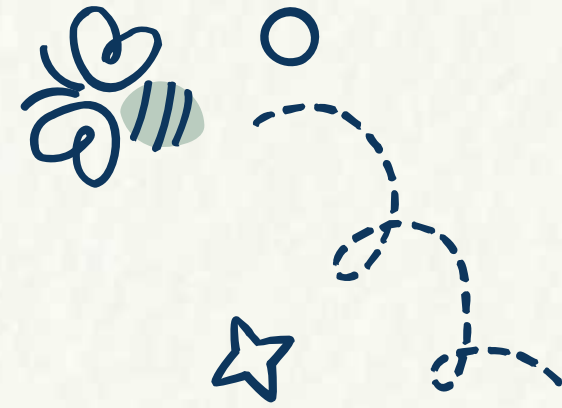
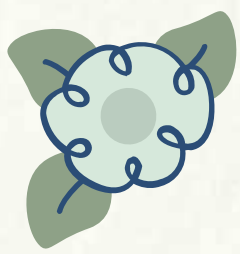
- She is talking to Sally in the wrong language.
- She has not tried to understand why Sally bites Sophie.
- She has not given Sally another way of managing the feelings that made her bite Sophie in the first place.



- Everyday language is not the natural language feeling for children. Their natural language of feeling is that of image and metaphor, as in stories and dreams. (Using Story Telling as a Therapeutic Tool – by Margot Sunderland P.2)

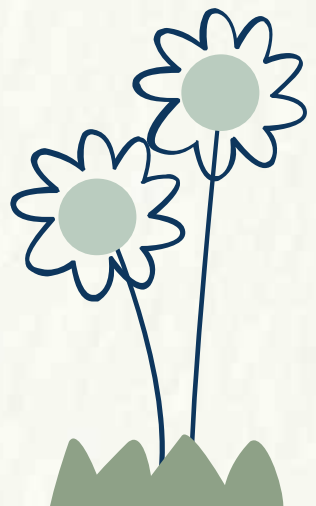


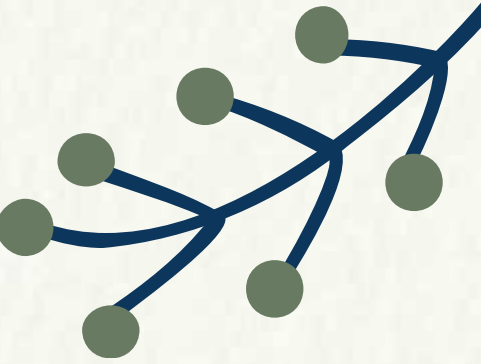
- “Play is the child’s natural medium for self experience.” -
Virginia Axline



Definition of Play Therapy

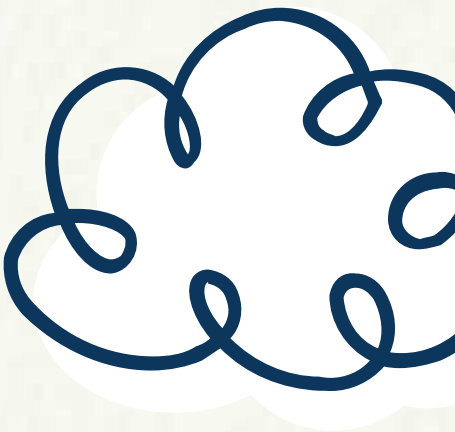
1. Play Therapy is a type of therapy where play and art materials are used as the main way for people to express themselves. (Play Therapy United Kingdom - PTUK)
2. Play Therapy is based upon the fact that play is the child's natural medium of self-expression. It is an opportunity which is given to the child to "play out" his feelings and problems just as, in certain types of adult therapy, an individual "talks out" his difficulties. (Axline, Play Therapy)





What Is Therapeutic Play ?

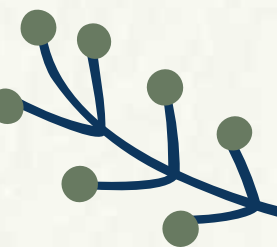
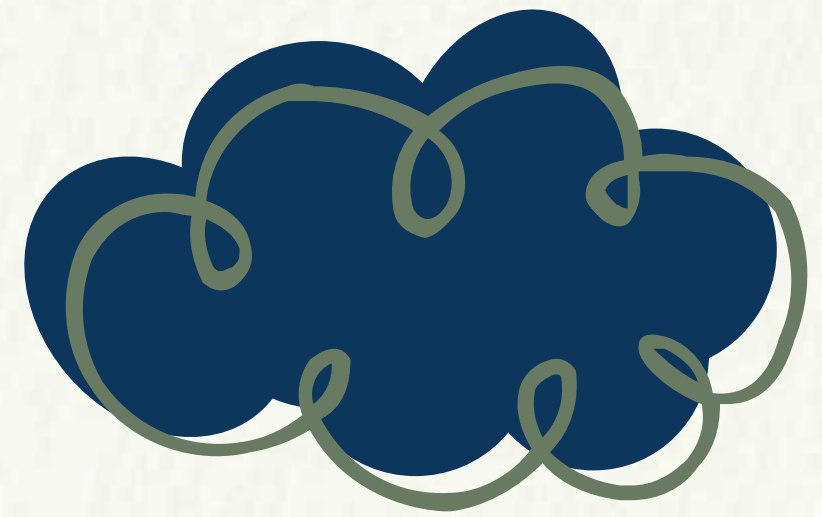
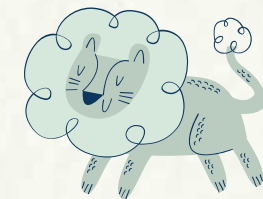
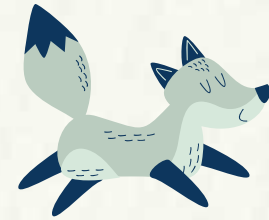
- A method of helping children with emotional, social and behavioral problems *to help themselves*
- Opportunity to 'play out ' their feelings and problems
- With a therapeutic objective



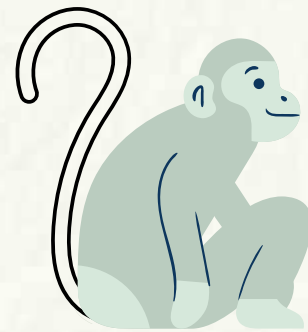
Play Therapy Approaches

Directive

**Non-
directive**



Difference between play therapy and talking therapy



P L A Y

Using play, arts materials, sandtray or other creative ways to help clients express their thoughts and feelings



T A L K I N G

Talking to a trained psychologist or counsellor who can use different therapy models or questions to help clients express their thoughts and feelings in words

Play Therapy vs Talk Therapy

(Dr Brenna Hicks – Play Therapy Parenting Podcast)



Spaghetti

- Children are not rational and cognitive, all emotions come at one time
- Play therapy addresses all issues at the same time

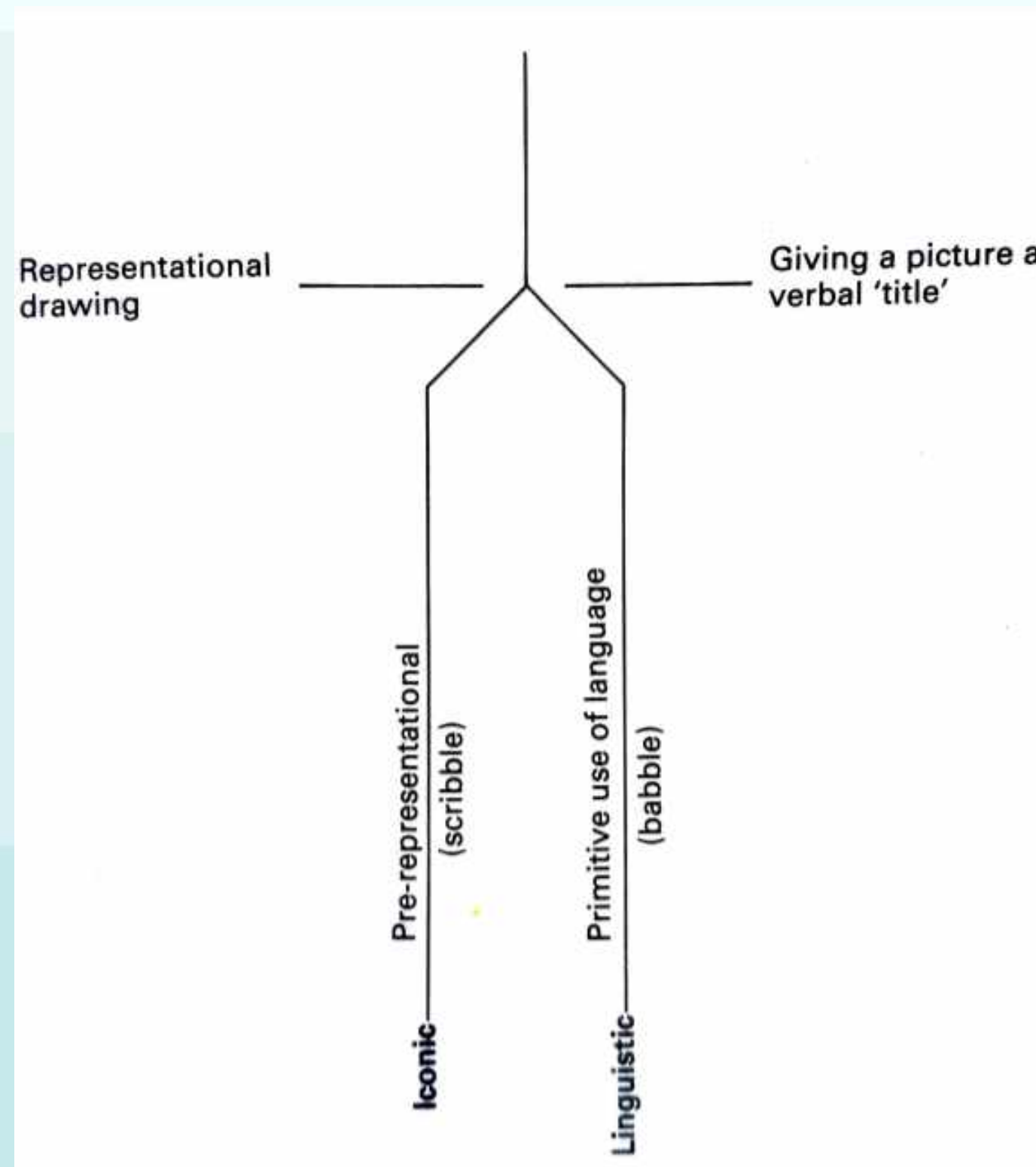


Waffles

- Adults can compartmentalize things in boxes but children cannot.
- Talk therapy works well for adults because they can talk one things without touching other topics.

Working with Children in Art Therapy

(Caroline Case and Tessa Dalley)



Iconic mode has a line of development that is distinct from the linguistic during early stage of development.

Later, when the child develops representational drawing skills, he can marry the 'representational drawing' to the linguistic classifications.

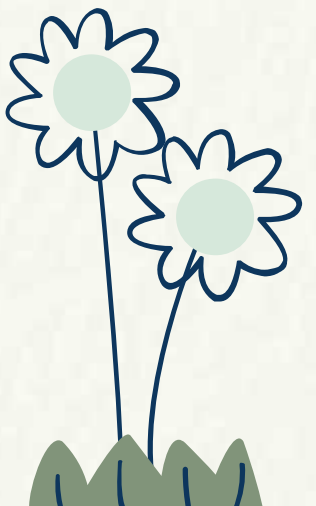
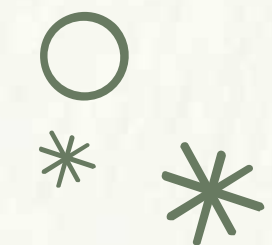
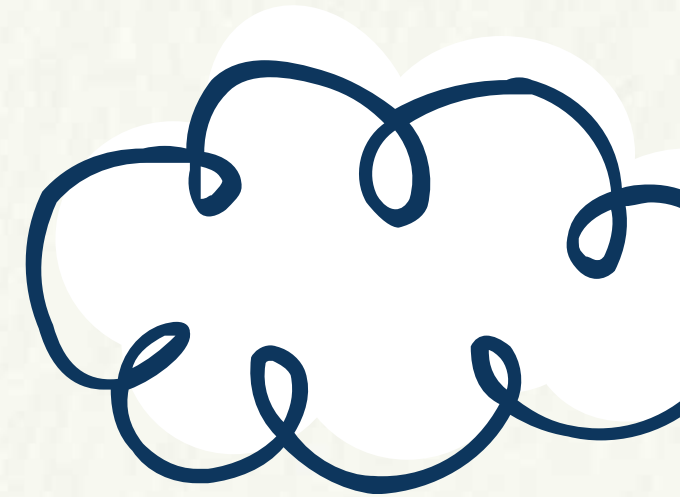


Wooden Shape Sorter Toy



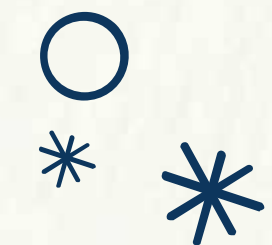
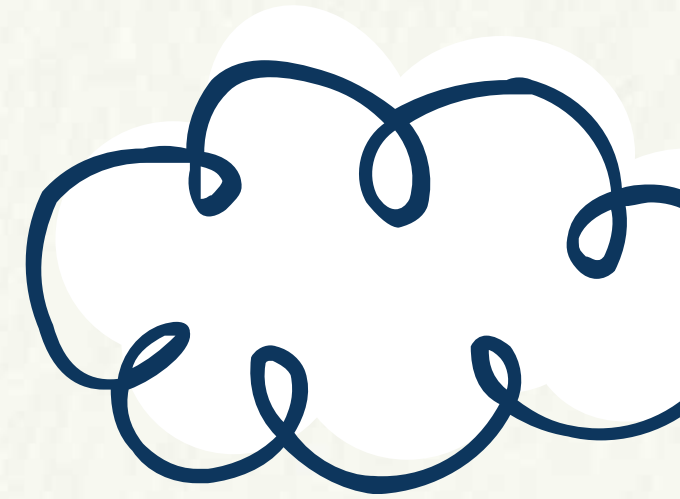
Who Is Play Therapy Intended For?

- Bereavement / Loss
- Separated/Divorced Parents
- Under Performing:
 - Academic
 - Social
 - Cultural
 - Physical
- Behavioural Problems
- Communication Problems
- Autistic Spectrum
- Withdrawn
- Trauma
- Abuse
- Nightmares
- Delayed Development
- Unauthorised Absences
- Social Exclusion
- Bullied/Bullies



The Benefits of Play Therapy

- Play therapy is essential for children to develop physically, emotionally and socially.
- It fosters imagination and creativity.
- Encourages confidence and concentration.
- It helps children to make friends and learn about their ever expanding world.



The Benefits of Play Therapy

- It allows them to learn from mistakes safely.
- Play can be used to establish a relationship.
- It is used when 'talking therapy' doesn't work (very often with children)



Directive Play Therapy – Happy Thought Pot



Toolkits of play therapy for non-directive play therapy

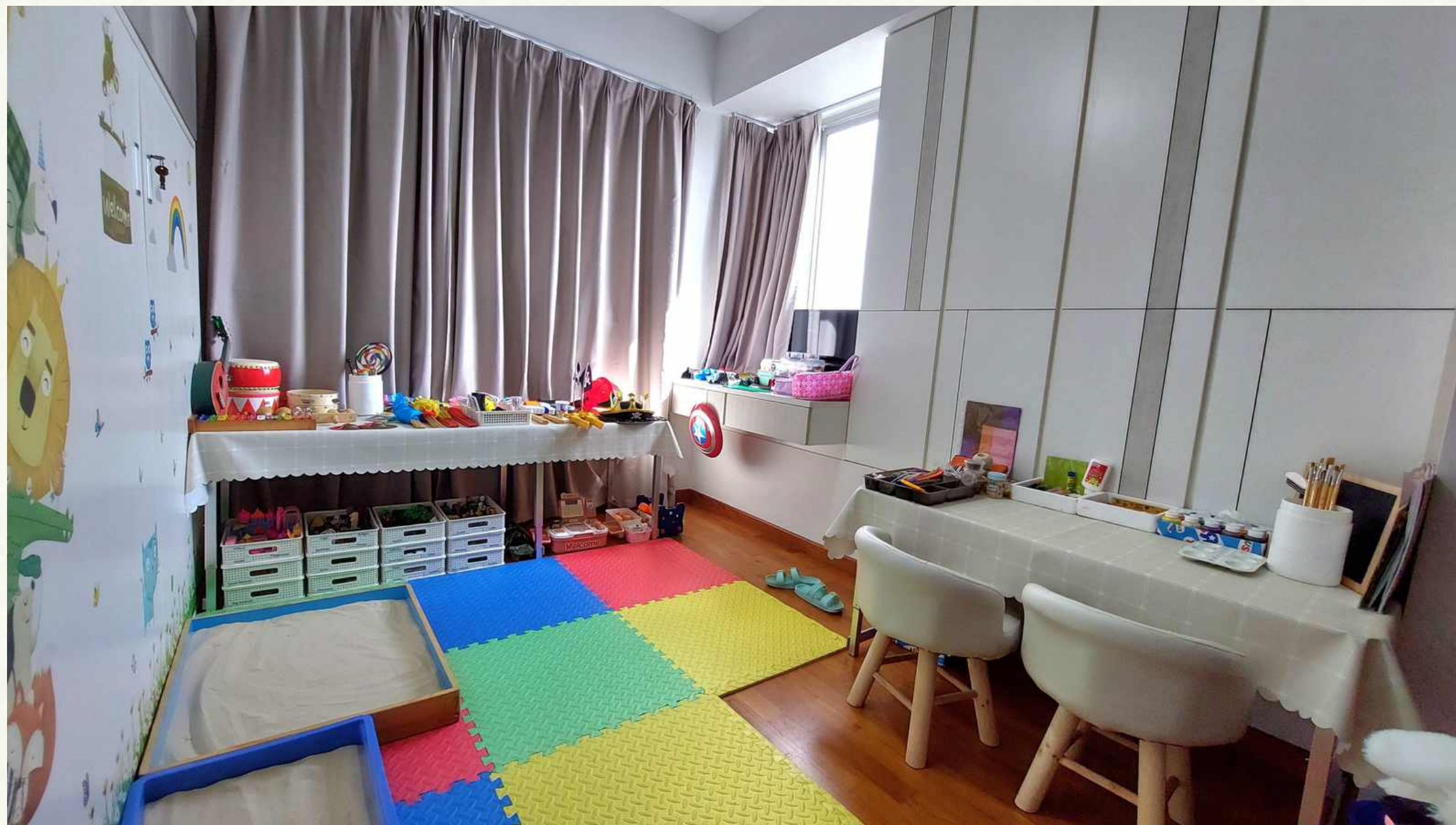
- Creative Visualisation/ Guided imagery
- Dance and Movement
- Sandtray
- Art
- Clay
- Storytelling
- Music
- Puppets
- Role Play



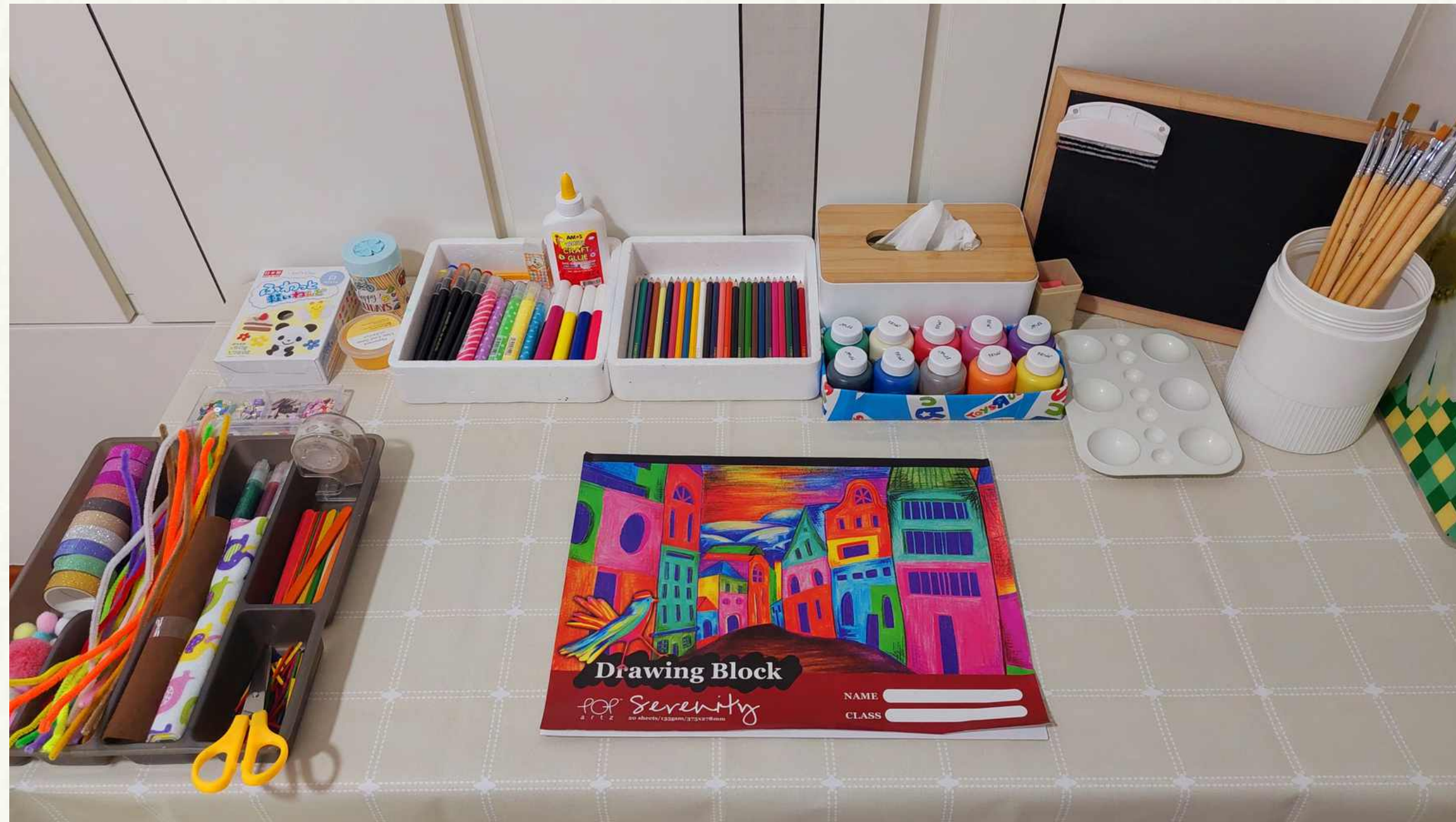
My current play therapy room



My current play therapy room



Art and craft materials



Musical Instruments/ Dance & Movement



A collection of various toys and accessories arranged on a white surface. In the upper right, there is a red fire helmet and a black pirate hat with a skull and crossbones. Below the pirate hat are two gold-colored toy guns. To the left of the guns are two long, thin, orange-colored objects. In the center, there is a small container of red beads. To the left of the beads is a yellow emoji mask with a sad face, a smartphone, and a pair of sunglasses. In the upper left, there is a colorful, multi-colored object that looks like a small umbrella or a fan.

Dress-up Costumes



Dollhouse



Lego



Masks



Baby Doll and Medical Kit

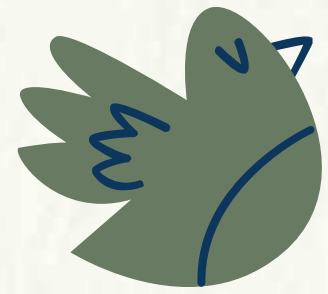
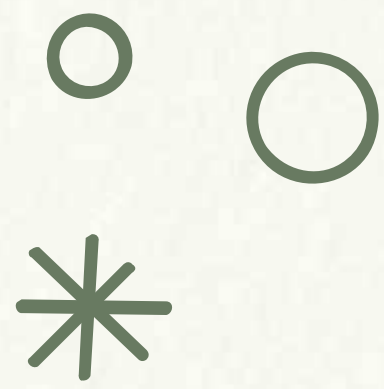


Shopping Toys

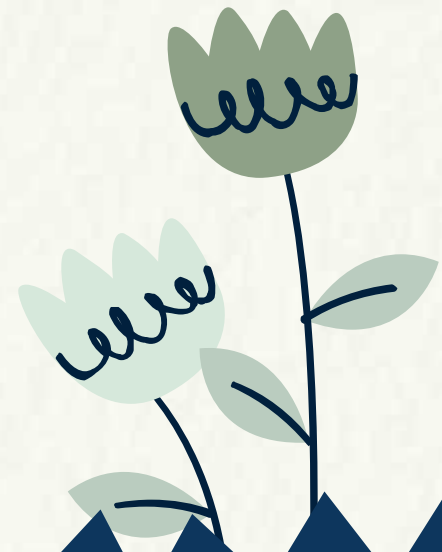
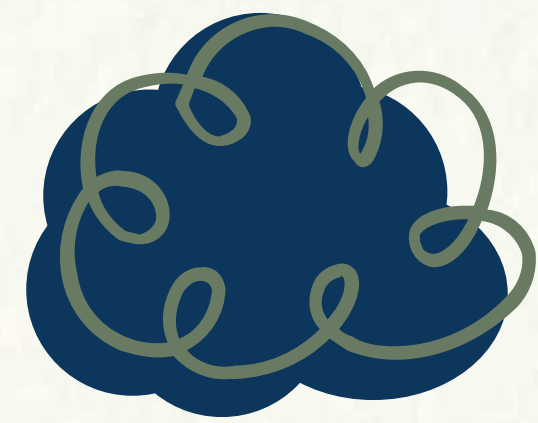
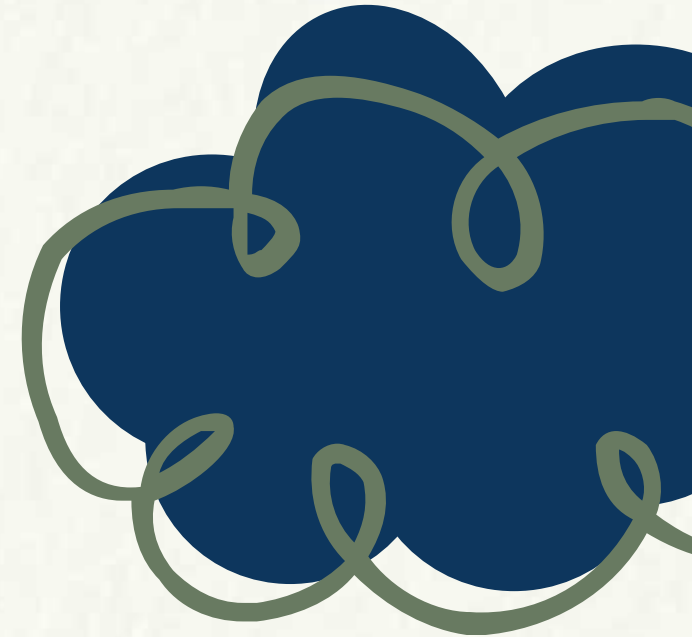


Puppets



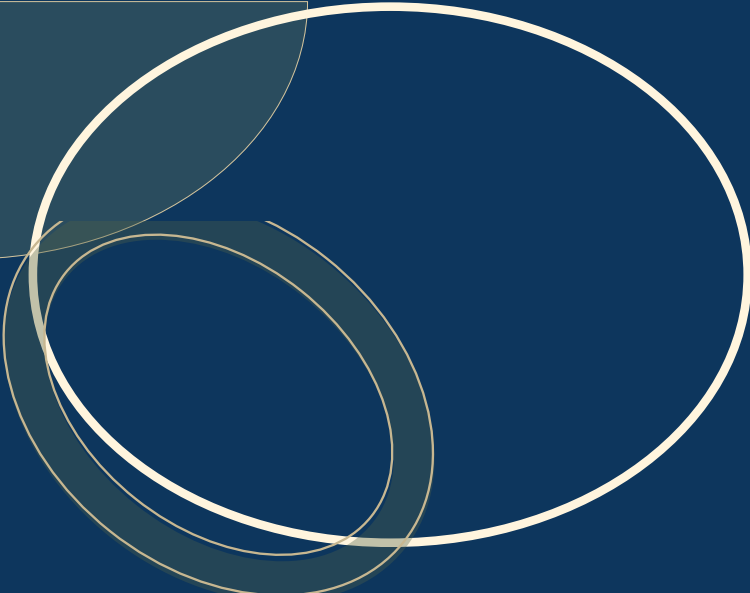


Activity Time



Think of a person



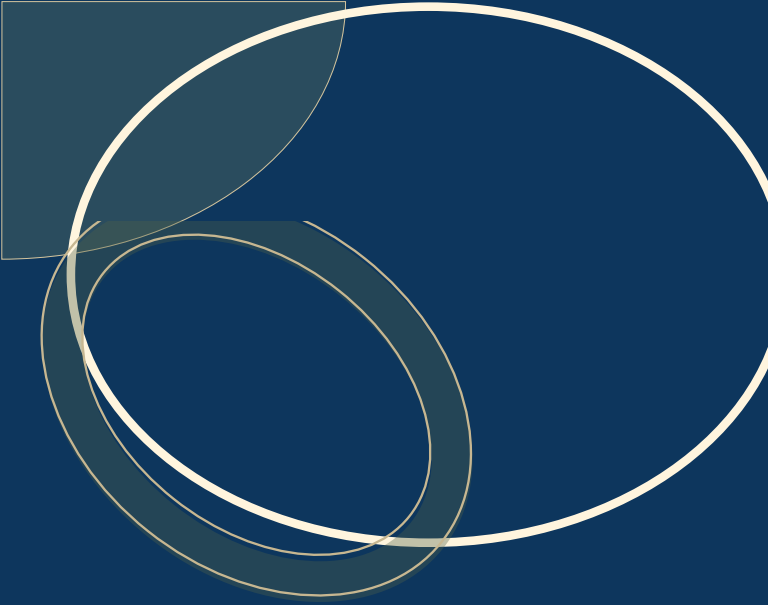


Think of a message



Think of an emotion





Symbols/Metaphor

- A symbol/ metaphor has a depth beyond its external form
- More than a sign
- A powerful symbol/ metaphor may lead to many thought paths.
- Provides the means for a child to look at his powerful feelings from a “safe distance”
- Whereas metaphors allow people to shift their perspective and unlock old ways of thinking that do not work.

Drawing Activity



★ Drawing monster



Therapist says, “Imagine you have drunk a magic potion and your body is changing into a monster. Imagine that it is happening to you. Draw what you look like?”



A monster made by a child

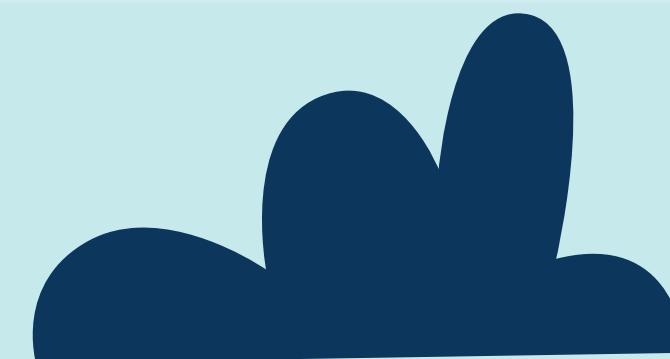


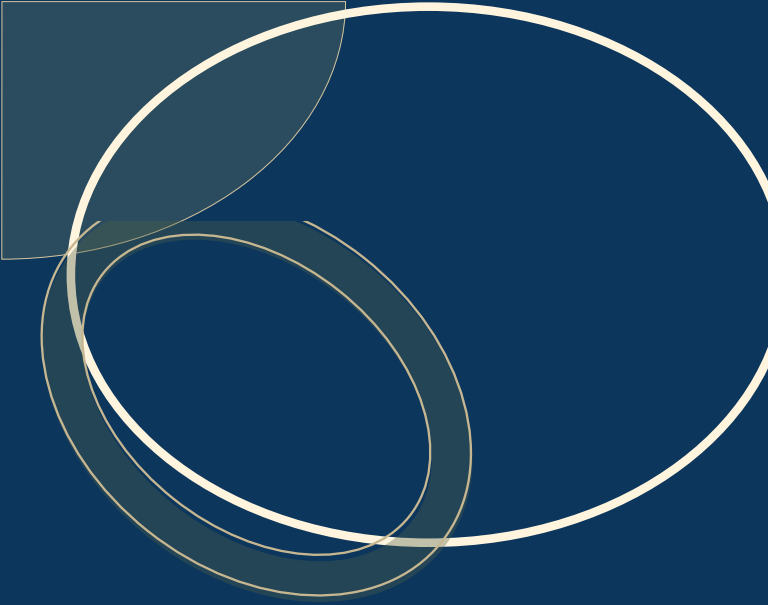
Jungian concept of the Shadow





Beauty and the Beast





Background information

- Child is 7 years old.
- Presenting issue: Child is emotionally dysregulated
- Background:
 - Child has witnessed her father to pound the wall with his fist when he was upset with the child.
 - Child was aggressive towards her younger sibling.

Any Questions?

