

# COMMON THEMES IN PLAY THERAPY

1

## ANGER

Seen when a character is frustrated by an action from another character.

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## CHAOS

Exhibited when children create a mess in the playroom.

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## CONFUSION

An example of this is when a child expresses misunderstanding of an event in their life (i.e. divorce of parents)

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## CONNECTION

Connection can be seen in child therapy when the child says "Look!" or "Watch this!" within the play therapy session.

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## FEAR

Fear in the playroom can be represented by the child shrieking and backing away from pretend spiders and snakes.

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## GRIEF AND LOSS

An example is a child reenacting the funeral of a loved one

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## GUILT

Guilt may come up in play through a child repeatedly saying "sorry" to a mistake they have made

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## LIMITS AND BOUNDARIES

When a child does not respect the limits set by the play therapist

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## NURTURANCE

Child feeding a baby doll with a bottle

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## PERFECTION

When a child is focused on organizing the furniture in the doll house to be "just right"

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## POWER AND CONTROL

When a child decides what toy to play with during the session or tells the therapist what to do in the play

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## PROTECTION AND SAFETY

This theme can be demonstrated in play by the child using a net or prison to contain the characters

13

## REGRESSION

Regression can be observed the in play therapy when a child is using "baby talk," crawling like a baby, and using a bottle like a baby

14

## SELF-ESTEEM

The child being proud of something they created or accomplished within the session

15

## TRUST AND BETRAYAL

When the child does not feel comfortable telling the therapist a secret