

Digital Play Therapy



Digital play therapy refers to a set of therapeutic tools that use video games, the Internet, and other digital technologies to assist in the psychotherapeutic process with children. Digital play therapists utilize technologies to assist in three components of counseling with children and their families. These include:

- skill development
- insight-oriented therapy
- psychoeducation

Skill development refers to the use of digital technologies to help children develop critical-thinking, problem-solving, and self-management skills. An example of this in digital play therapy would be to utilize a child's video game play as an opportunity to practice and then generalize planning or organizational skills from the game to the real world. Skill development is guided by a set of teaching curricula that connects the use of digital technologies to real-world thinking and psychological skills.

Digital technologies can also be very helpful in the process of psychotherapy. Parallel to traditional play therapy, video games may provide an opportunity for exploring important themes in a child's life. Digital play therapy may also facilitate new opportunities for discussion, for example, looking at one's house on Google Earth as an impetus to

explore one's home, neighborhood, and relationships.

Digital play therapy also uses digital technologies to enhance communication and provide psychoeducational strategies that may help children with attention, learning, and behavioral difficulties. This might include electronic links to information or downloadable charts to help in managing your child's behavior. It also includes assisting parents and teachers in understanding how digital technologies may support a child who is experiencing learning and emotional issues in school, for example, providing training for parents on the use of keyboarding, word processing, and online editing skills to assist children who struggle with processing and writing issues at school.

Currently, we are using the techniques of digital play therapy in our LearningWorks Live program. These online group tutoring and coaching sessions teach children how to use games and apps to improve executive functions, social emotional learning skills , and study skills.

Digital play therapy is a new technique and offers a great deal of promise in the field of child psychotherapy. The clinicians at South County Child and Family Consultants are among the leaders in the United States in developing these strategies. For further information about digital play therapy, contact Dr. Randy Kulman at 401-789-1553 or email him at randy@learningworksforkids.com.