

learning and playing in kindergarten and other early-childhood educational settings. Because it does so, I think we have a better chance to escape the vicious choice that has been forced on education between academics and play. At last, this book positions us for real progress.

Reading this book reinforces my belief that play can serve as a leading banner in a march we must join. We need to support the paradigm shift away from an undue emphasis on the goal of academic achievement for some to a proper focus on the goal of human development for all. As Miller and Almon remind us at one point in this book, the very survival of our third rock from the sun may depend in no small way on play and the adaptations and innovations spawned by play.

—Jim Johnson, *The Pennsylvania State University, State College, PA*

Play Therapy with Kids & Canines: Benefits for Children's Developmental and Psychosocial Health

Risë VanFleet

Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Press, 2008. Appendices, references. 138 pp. \$16.95 paper. ISBN: 9781568871127

I had extremely high hopes and many expectations when my wife and I purchased our first Labrador retriever puppy in 2006. Romantic notions of training our Lab pup to be an empathic and obedient play-therapy dog danced through my head. Cotton, as he was soon to be named, was neither obedient nor empathic upon arrival at our home. In fact, he was stubborn, excitable,

hyperactive, and occasionally naughty. There was a fleeting moment in those early days when my heart sank at the thought that Cotton might not be the therapy dog that I dreamed of.

Fast forward three years to the present day, and Cotton has just celebrated his third birthday. He is truly my best friend and simply one of the best dogs a person could have. In many ways, he is still a puppy with boundless energy and a deep-down-in-his-soul desire to play at any available moment. Cotton and I have attended several training classes together, and we are in the process of starting Canine Good Citizen training so that he can ultimately be my cotherapist in the playroom. Needless to say, life with Cotton has been quite an emotional, educational, and self-reflective journey thus far; however, as I read VanFleet's book, I found myself wishing that this book had been available years ago.

Risë VanFleet's *Play Therapy with Kids & Canines: Benefits for Children's Developmental and Psychosocial Health* is a well-researched, comprehensive, yet concise text for all of us who are interested in both animal-assisted therapy and play therapy. This monograph covers both the theoretical and practical elements of animal-assisted play therapy (AAPT) in a clear, coherent, and organized manner. The book begins with a brief statement on animal emotions and a scientific review of the importance of the human-animal bond. It is clear that this bond is at the very center of animal-assisted therapy, and VanFleet demonstrates through the review of several studies that animals are particularly useful in a wide range of settings including psychotherapy. Furthermore, the text moves to more specific

examination of child and animal play to provide evidence of the developmental and social benefits of play for both children and animals. This leads the reader to see clearly the important role that animals, specifically dogs, can have in play therapy.

It may be safe to say that there are others like me who initially had romantic notions about utilizing a dog in play therapy. As a first-time dog owner, I was unaware of what dog ownership entailed and the intense level of commitment that it required. VanFleet's clear dedication to ethical practice, respect for dogs, and respect for children is a true strength of this book. She diligently and clearly challenges the reader to consider how using a dog in play therapy will best serve the needs of the child. Most importantly, she stresses the idea that good therapy dogs are not born instantly but rather these dogs need proper socialization, training, human interaction, and structure. Above all, VanFleet communicates the deep sense of commitment to animals and children that one must assume in order to do this work.

While this text does not provide the reader with in-depth detail regarding the theoretical underpinnings of play therapy, VanFleet does provide useful and practical thoughts about how to incorporate dogs within both nondirective and directive models of play therapy. In addition, VanFleet applies AAPT to several clinical issues including anxiety, grief and loss, attachment building, attention and behavioral difficulties, and communication issues. This section is strengthened by case examples and stories from the playroom that lend a real-world sense to the topic.

This book is a valuable resource for both students and experienced play thera-

pists. VanFleet's writing is highly accessible, interesting, and thought provoking. She manages to provide both conceptual and practical information in a way that serves as a primer for those interested in animal-assisted play therapy.

—Stephen Demanchick, *Nazareth College, Rochester, NY*

Are We There Yet? The Golden Age of American Family Vacations

Susan Sessions Rugh

Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2008. Photographs, notes, bibliography, index. 240 pp. \$29.95 cloth. ISBN: 9780700615889

Historians are, in general, uneasy about claims of a "golden age." The phrase suggests nostalgia for a simpler, more pleasurable time. When dealing with childhood memories—and certainly family vacations produce formative memories—the tendency to identify a golden age is even more powerful. Susan Sessions Rugh manages largely, although not entirely, to avoid the pitfalls of oversimplification and romanticization that seem so inherent to such narratives, although she does identify postwar America—from the late 1940s to the early 1970s—as the golden age of family vacations.

These years were a time when unprecedented numbers of American families navigated newly built highways inside the "cocoon of domestic space" (p. 5) that was the family car. They traveled to historic sites and natural landmarks in search of civic lessons and consumer pleasures. This