

Given Cooper's analysis of Paley's work, a conflict continues between proponents of play-based learning and NCLB supporters of standards-based education. As Cooper sees it, sweeping educational reform, that include rigorous demands for skills-based instruction, high-stakes testing preparation, a reduction in playtime, and longer school days have replaced traditional early-childhood curricula. These controversial changes lead many early-childhood professionals to query: Based on what we know to be best practice, where is the balance between these two approaches? And, how can we continue to instill a joy of learning in our young charges while adequately preparing them to meet state requirements? *The Classrooms All Young Children Need* may hold answers to such questions.

*The Classrooms All Young Children Need* offers a thought-provoking and timely resource that will be valued by teachers, teacher-education communities, and individuals who are passionate about play and early-childhood education.

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—Christine J. Ferguson, *Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC*

## **Play Therapy for Preschool Children**

Charles E. Schaefer, ed.

Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2009. References, photographs, tables, index. 333 pp. \$69.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781433805660

In *Play Therapy for Preschool Children*, Charles Schaefer again brings together a collection of mental-health practitioners

with expertise in areas of play therapy. A long-time advocate for play therapy, Schaefer specifically addresses working with this young population. When it comes to mental-health issues, early intervention is vital. Studies that Schaefer cites indicate that 50 percent of preschool children with serious internalizing and externalizing problems will take these issues with them into elementary school and beyond. This volume addresses many of these critical mental-health problems.

The book's four sections cover play-based prevention programs and play interventions for internalizing disorders, externalizing behaviors, and developmental disorders. Most chapters follow a format that includes the theory that informs the intervention, a clearly written overview of the specific protocol or programs, a case study, and a review of applicable research. Other chapters simply whet the reader's appetite for a topic. In any case, to apply many of the interventions suggested here, further training and supervision would be needed.

In the first chapter, Schaefer and Julie Blundon Nash provide a thoughtful context for play therapy with preschool children that includes psychopathology and developmental issues. A section on developing therapeutic relationships with preschool children seems especially helpful for those who may not be experienced in working with very young children. Schaefer titles his next chapter "Evidence Supporting the Benefit of Play for Mild to Moderate Behavior Problems of Preschool Children." In the current mental-health climate, the need to identify evidence-based interventions is critical. Schaefer organizes such research by problem, or diagnostic categories, including anxiety

disorders, fears and phobias, and nightmares. In the final chapter in the first section, Helen Benedict and Diana Schofield discuss a program for insecurely attached children. Well grounded in attachment theory and developmental issues, Benedict and Schofield offer specific play intervention procedures.

The second part of the book focuses on internalizing behaviors that respond well to play interventions. Four of its five chapters focus on using the parent-child dyad as the primary means to facilitate change. This focus on the importance of parents (or parent-surrogates) for young children is crucial, given the well-documented fact that prognosis is much more successful when parents are involved. Janine Shelby, Claudia Avina, and Heather Warnick provide an overview of a parent-child dyadic treatment for posttraumatic adjustment. Fully researched and theory-based, their posttraumatic parenting offers specific interventions for the nonoffending parent and child. Hilda Glazer provides information on working with grieving preschool children in filial therapy. Like Shelby, Avina, and Warnick, Glazer uses the parent-child dyad, for her filial therapy, giving the parent the key role in the intervention. Glazer tenders a useful, comprehensive perspective of death and loss for the preschool child. In "Strategic Play Therapy Techniques for Anxious Preschoolers," Paris Goodyear-Brown also includes a strong parent component. She advocates that parents supply the therapy in learning to soothe their child. This can be applicable to many other childhood issues, not just the child anxiety she discusses. Goodyear-Brown also describes using play sessions to help the child externalize anxiety by using child-selected toys for symbolic

play. Marcia Diaz and Alicia Lieberman examine parent-child psychotherapy with preschoolers traumatized by domestic violence. Parent-child play develops a joint narrative to cope with the traumatizing experience and restores a sense of safety to the child. The final chapter in part 2, regarding internalizing behavior specifically with preschoolers, does not add as much to the discussion. Susan Knell and Meena Dasari identify cognitive behavioral play therapy (CBPT) as best used with children aged three to eight, but they offer little research supporting its use with the internalizing behaviors of preschoolers. They do provide, however, an effective overview of CBPT. Their case study of toileting problems with a five-year-old provides the reader with a useful application.

The third section of the book contains four chapters about externalizing behaviors. Children who act out behavior are most likely to grab the attention of parents and other care givers. Schaefer and Nash discuss early in the book that only 19 percent of parents of young children seek help for their preschoolers. Yet we also know that such behaviors, if unresolved, become increasingly difficult to treat successfully as children enter school and adolescence. Katherine Gioia and Renée Tobin describe how sociodramatic play can be used by parents and play therapists to promote self-regulation. They emphasize that understanding the role of make-believe play as the beginning of self-regulation helps. Their discussion of the importance of peers in sociodramatic play for three-year-olds offers insights for parents, teachers, and therapists alike. "Parent-Child Interaction Therapy," by Corissa Callahan, Monica Stevens, and

Sheila Eyberg, provides the format for this behavioral approach to making changes in parenting. The evidence-based treatment they describe deals with the problematic interaction patterns in the parent-child relationship often revealed by a child's acting out. Eric Green and Kristi Gibbs discuss sand play—the use of sand-filled trays with a collection of miniature toys—as an intervention with acting-out children. They give a detailed case study from a Jungian perspective of sand-play therapy as a modality of play therapy, one which includes the coordination of multidisciplinary services such as filial therapy with the child and mother. They indicate the need for research into sand play and sand-tray therapy. Lastly, Carolyn Webster-Stratton and M. Jamila Reid's description of the use of child-directed play therapy (not to be confused with child-centered play therapy) concludes this section of the book. Their research-based intervention has three components: parent training, teacher training, and child training. They offer an interesting collection of coaching skills, such as descriptive commenting and persistence coaching, which are insightful ways of interacting with children and can be applied elsewhere as well. The authors indicate that their protocol has produced promising research results.

The final section of the book comprises two chapters on developmental issues. In the first, David Neufeld and Pamela Wolfberg discuss the use of the integrated play group. These are adult-facilitated groups of children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASP) and normally developing children. Bringing them together allows children with ASP to learn from both the adult leader and the other children. In the final chapter of the book, Johnny Matson

and Jill Fodstad present a review of the use of play with developmentally delayed children, especially those with intellectual delays and with autism. They also call for the inclusion of siblings in the play sessions, where they prove to be important assets.

*Play Therapy for Preschool Children* is both valuable to the novice play therapist and informative for the experienced professional. The volume will broaden the scope of understanding play interventions with preschoolers.

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**Play for a Change: Play, Policy and Practice: A Review of Contemporary Perspectives**

*Stuart Lester and Wendy Russell*  
London, United Kingdom: National Children's Bureau, 2008. References, photographs, tables, 270 pp. \$49.95 cloth. ISBN: 9781905818396

This book is written by two lecturers in playwork from the United Kingdom who have both academic and practitioner experience. These authors have reviewed “the research and literature on children's play, with a focus on evidence-based research that can inform policy” (p. 11). The book has a number of positive features.

First, the book is quite wide ranging in its coverage and referencing. Although I had myself written *Children at Play* (2009), I nevertheless found a considerable number of references I had not previously come across. These included a good number from sociological and educational sources.