

burdened by traumatic experiences.

In my experience as a play therapist, I have found that gaining in-depth knowledge of a family is crucial for the therapy. Higgins-Klein approaches this important part of play therapy with a four-stage model of the intake process that incorporates parent meetings, full-family meetings, an introduction to play therapy for the child, and a comprehensive family history meeting. One of the strengths of Higgins-Klein's book lies in that she does not simply describe the intake process for the reader. Instead, she reveals the questions she asks and the techniques she employs during the process (e.g. the use of genograms or a pictorial display of the client's family relationships and medical history). She further helps the reader by including a full Developmental and Social History Questionnaire in the appendix.

The use of a delineated, theoretically integrated, "Talk Time" for children and parents prior to play therapy sessions allows families to openly share thoughts and feelings about a current concern. Interestingly, the author suggests that the use of "Talk Time" may help prepare a child for "deeper imaginative play" and help develop neural integration. The idea of deep imaginative or pretend play seems to be at the heart of this model as Higgins-Klein equates play therapy to mindfulness meditation. As she notes, "Once involved in the play, his mind, like the meditator's mind, is free to let go and be" (p. 86). There is an underlying appreciation of child-centered play therapy and deep respect for a child in the author's model; however, the mindful therapist may be more apt to recognize a child's needs and communication

in a play therapy session. As Higgins-Klein notes, "Many children using various play therapy modalities, naturally create play in the imaginary realm without the intrusion of reality, especially when the therapist is a mindful witness" (p. 89). For a clinical supervisor cultivating a mindful play therapy student and developing a student's "in-the-moment attention," instilling the ability to focus on a child's pretend play and self trust becomes a priority. So many times, students seem to be caught up in "out-of-the-moment awareness" that detracts from their work in the playroom.

This book is a must read for practitioners and students who appreciate the empathic and respectful heart of child-centered play therapy and Rogerian theory but also want to push themselves to incorporate current understandings of neurobiology, family therapy, mindfulness, and the integration of directive and nondirective play therapy strategies. Higgins-Klein has written a straightforward, accessible, and comprehensive text grounded in theory and rich clinical experience.

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

When Play Isn't Fun: Helping Children Resolve Play Conflicts

Sandra Heidemann and Deborah Hewitt
St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2014.

Worksheets, diagrams, charts. 87 pp.
\$12.95 paper. ISBN: 9781605543055

When Play Isn't Easy: Helping Children Enter and Sustain Play

Sandra Heidemann and Deborah Hewitt
 St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press, 2014.
 Worksheets, diagrams, charts. 88 pp.
 \$12.95 paper. ISBN: 9781605543079

When Play Isn't Fun: Helping Children Resolve Play Conflicts and *When Play Isn't Easy: Helping Children Enter and Sustain Play* by Sandra Heidemann and Deborah Hewitt are companion workbooks for their book *Play: The Pathway from Theory to Practice* (2009). Both workbooks begin with a self-assessment relating to the workbook's respective emphases. Both highlight numerous quotes from the authors' family, friends, and colleagues collected from a play survey. They also include "Time to Reflect" boxes on the topics discussed in each chapter, a particular strength of the workbooks. Given the informal style of the writing, the content of each workbook, and the presentation of the material, I believe the most appropriate audience for these workbooks would be early-childhood educators and care givers in training. People seeking information or a good read about play as pleasurable self-directed experiences without extrinsic controls would most likely be disappointed with these reads. They are intervention texts.

There are few of the rhetorics expounded upon by Brian Sutton-Smith in his well-known 1997 book *The Ambiguity of Play* in these workbooks, excepting the rhetoric of play as progress toward what the child should become. In *When Play Isn't Fun*, for example, the authors state, "All the different ways a child is developing during this period of rapid growth are expressed during play" (p. 21). This workbook also focuses on Mildred Parten's stages of play as set forth in her seminal work "Social

Participation among Preschool Children," which appeared in the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* (1932). Heidemann and Hewitt outline how to support play to help children move through these play stages. The authors frame how to set up a room for themes, which I found a bit passé unless the teacher gives relevance to the classroom design through the lenses of the children. Basic suggestions are made for providing props for literacy and mathematics play in dramatic play centers like pizza shops, doctor's offices, and shoe stores. These approaches to classroom arrangements have been used for many years, but current approaches are more project based, less thematic and not such impositions on children. I was pleased to see, however, that the authors advocated for the use of authentic and varied objects, open-ended materials and for extended time for imaginative play. They assert researchers have determined that children need thirty to forty minutes of extended time to fully develop a play scenario (p. 36), but they did not cite those researchers. I found this frustrating because the statement made me curious. In fact, it was a problem for me because the authors wrote from a common-knowledge point of view throughout the workbooks. I assume their 2009 textbook references research since these workbooks specifically suggest reading chapters in that book.

As Heidemann and Hewitt transition in the workbook from classroom design to problematic play, they focus on behaviors such as children getting stuck in a play theme, persisting in repetitive play patterns, and engaging in violent play. They provide strategies to move children forward, primarily through setting rules,

helping children become interested in various types of play, and redirecting children when they become involved in “silly roughhousing behavior” (p. 80). Many of the suggested strategies are valid and address challenging social play issues in the classroom, but every child with behavioral or developmental concerns must have individually designed interventions. So, although the back jacket review states that “this book has the answers,” I disagree.

Chapter 1 of *When Play Isn't Easy* begins with a list of the social and academic skills—such as taking turns, communicating, taking risks, making friends, mathematics, and literacy—that children learn through play (p. 10). Heidemann and Hewitt emphasize the importance of knowing this information to connect learning standards to play and for educating parents about the significant connection between play and learning. The authors make a huge assumption about the familiarity of their readers with child development, particularly in their opening discussions about how childhood trauma, developmental delays, cultural, gender, and temperament affect group play. Experienced master teachers would understand the theoretical child development underpinnings of these beginning chapters, but if a reader does not have a thorough grasp of typical child development, the explanations may foster misconceptions and stereotypes about children with varying temperaments, who are abused, or have special needs. I believe this is also true with regard to children from diverse cul-

tural and socioeconomic families.

On the other hand, this workbook contains numerous suggested strategies for engaging children in sustained play in one helpful chart (p. 69) that summarizes the information shared in its companion workbook. It also contains diagrams for intervention planning based on a play checklist developed by the authors. The play checklist has hierarchical categories for pretending with objects, role playing, verbalizations about the play scenario, persistence in play entrance into a play group, turn taking, and more. Teachers are encouraged to hone observation skills and write objective anecdotal notes to complete the checklist for children in their care. This, in turn, will provide information about how to intentionally plan to intervene during play.

As the faculty director of one of the oldest lab preschools in the country and a former special-education teacher, I did not find these workbooks as stand-alone companion texts new or particularly salient for early-childhood care and education, interventions, or play. Nevertheless, aspects of these workbooks would be useful for teacher support if used as intended—as interactive workbooks to encourage thought, reflection, and discussion. The discussion leader, however, would need to have expertise in child development, preschool education, and play theory to optimize participants' learning.

—Victoria Carr, *University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH*