



## **COUN 589: Independent Study Introduction to Play Therapy** Fall 2024

### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

**Instructor:** Audrey Robinson, PhD, LPC-S, RPT-S, Certified-CCPT, CSC

**Office Location:** Virtual

**Office Hours:** By appointment

**University Email Address:** [audrey.robinson@tamuc.edu](mailto:audrey.robinson@tamuc.edu)

**Phone:** 972-365-8109 (cell)

**Preferred Method of Communication:** Email

**Communication Response Time:** 24 hours in most cases, excluding weekends

**Mode of instruction and course access:** This course meets face-to-face with assignments and supplemental materials assigned online through D2L.

### **COURSE INFORMATION**

#### **Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings**

**Required Textbooks:**

Axline, V. (1964). *Dibs: In search of self*. New York: Ballantine.

Landreth, G. (2012). *Play therapy: The art of the relationship* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed). New York: Routledge.

Ray, D. C. (Ed.). (2016). *A therapist's guide to child development: The extraordinarily normal years*. Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.



**Supplemental Reading:**

- Allan, J. (1988). *Inscapes of the child's world: Jungian counseling in schools and clinics*. Dallas, TX: Spring Publications.
- Armstrong, S. A. (2008). *Sandtray therapy: A humanistic approach*. Dallas, TX: Ludic Press.
- Garza, Y., Kinsworthy, S., & Bennett, M. M. (2014). Supervision in Group Play Therapy: A Skills Checklist. *The Journal of Individual Psychology (1998)*, 70(1), 31–44.  
<https://doi.org/10.1353/jip.2014.0008>
- Homeyer, L., & Sweeney, D. (2011). *Sandtray therapy: A practical manual* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Mullen, J.A. and Rickli, J.M. (2014). *Child-Centered Play Therapy Workbook*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.
- Nelsen, J. (1996). *Positive discipline*. New York: Ballantine.
- Oaklander, V. (1985). *Windows to our children*. Highland, NY: Gestalt Journal Press.
- Ray, D. C., Armstrong, S. A., Balkin, R. S., & Jayne, K. M. (2015). Child centered play therapy in the schools: Review and meta-analysis. *Psychology in the Schools*, 52(2), 107-123, DOI: 10.1002/pits.21798
- Sweeney, D., & Homeyer, L. (1999). *The handbook of group play therapy*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to (1) assist those who work with children in understanding the fundamental tenets of play therapy, (2) help participants develop an effective philosophy of and approach to play therapy, (3) increase participants' understanding of the inner world and behavior of children, (4) help students connect with children on a feeling level, (5) promote self-awareness and self-understanding, (6) increase participants' understanding of child development, particularly with children ages three to nine, (7) enhance participants' sensitivity to and acceptance of others, and (8) equip students with beginning-level play therapy skills.

Course Procedures: Involvement and learning in the course will be facilitated by means of:

- Lecture
- Exploratory papers
- Small group activities and discussion
- Assigned readings and class discussion
- Role-play with toys, demonstrations, and other hands-on activities
- Video/film analysis and practicum experience

## CORE CURRICULAR EXPERIENCES COVERED

Social and Cultural Diversity	CACREP Standard	Curriculum/Evaluation Outcomes
1. Multicultural and pluralistic characteristics within and among diverse groups nationally and internationally	2.F.2.a	Assigned Reading/Lecture/Exam
2. The impact of heritage, attitudes, beliefs, understandings, and acculturative experiences on an individual's views of others	2.F.2.d.	Assigned Reading/Lecture/Exam
Human Growth and Development	CACREP Standard	Curriculum/Evaluation Outcomes
1. Biological, neurological, and physiological factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior	2.F.3.e	Assigned Reading/Lecture
2. Systemic and environmental factors that affect human development, functioning, and behavior	2.F.3.f.	Assigned Reading/Lecture
3. Effects of crisis, disasters, and trauma on diverse individuals across the lifespan	2.F.3.g.	Assigned Reading/Lecture
4. Ethical and culturally relevant strategies for promoting resilience and optimum development and wellness across the lifespan	2.F.3.i	Assigned Reading/Lecture
Counseling and Helping Relationships	CACREP Standard	Curriculum/Evaluation Outcomes
1. Counselor characteristics and behaviors that influence the counseling process	2.F.5.f	Lecture/Practice/Session/Exam
2. Evidence-based counseling strategies and techniques for prevention and intervention	2.F.5.j.	Observations/Session

3. Crisis intervention, trauma-informed, and community-based strategies, such as Psychological First Aid	2.F.5.m	Assigned Reading/Lecture
		Lecture
4. Processes for aiding students in developing a personal model of counseling	2.F.5.n	Assigned Reading/Lecture/Observations/Sessions
<b>Clinical Mental Health Counseling</b>		<b>CACREP Standard Curriculum/Evaluation Outcomes</b>
1. Cultural factors relevant to clinical mental health counseling	CMHC C.2.j	Lecture/Exam
2. Intake interview, mental status evaluation, biopsychosocial history, mental health history, and psychological assessment for treatment planning and caseload management	CMHC C.3.a	Assigned Reading/Lecture/Exam
<b>School Counseling</b>		<b>CACREP Standard Curriculum/Evaluation Outcomes</b>
1. School counselor roles in consultation with families, P-12 and postsecondary school personnel, and community agencies	SC G.2.b	Lecture/Assigned Reading
2. Techniques of personal/social counseling in school settings	SC G.3.f	Observations/Sessions

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a step in the process of developing one's own approach to working with children in a play therapy relationship, each student will develop an integrated understanding of children's developmental needs and will acquire the necessary play therapy skills to facilitate children's expression, self-understanding, personal growth, and development. Specifically, this course is designed to help students:

1. Develop a philosophy of and approach to play therapy;
2. Develop an awareness of the child's world as viewed by the child;
3. Understand children's play and behavior;
4. Increase their sensitivity to and acceptance of children and their parents;
5. Understand the organizations that have shaped the history and profession of play therapy, to include a review of essential people, theorists and organizations;
6. Review developmental stages of children and children's play.
7. Review the most widely accepted theoretical models of play therapy and the formats in which they are most commonly offered (individual, group, etc.);
8. Be able to conceptualize a client's presenting clinical problem(s) developmentally and theoretically;
9. Identify developmentally appropriate play therapy toys and materials that can be incorporated into either a permanent or traveling play room for the purposes of both assessment and treatment;
10. Demonstrate an understanding of the role of the play therapist and the play therapy in the context of the client's broader clinical (medical/psychiatric treatment) and non-clinical system (family, school, community);
11. Identify elements of the play therapy relationship, from intake to termination;
12. Demonstrate basic play therapy skills, including tracking, reflection of feelings, returning responsibility to the child, responding to efforts, and setting limits;
13. Understand the person of the play therapist and how it impacts on the unfolding relationship with the client;
14. Appreciate the legal and ethical issues that are unique to play therapy;
15. Understand issues of diversity and how they impact every facet of play therapy, from choice of materials to the relationship with the client;
16. Review issues in child psychopathology.



## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Minimal Technical Skills Needed

In this class, you will utilize the Learning Management System (LMS) entitled D2L for portions of instructional and learning methods, submitting assignments, participating in online discussions, and completing quizzes. You will need to utilize other technologies such as Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, etc. If you have issues with this system, it is your responsibility to contact the help desk immediately.

### Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

As a student in this course, you are responsible for the active learning process. Expectations of this course include the following:

1. You are expected to display professionalism at all times. Be respectful of your professor and peers. Be open to feedback, as you will receive this throughout the program.
2. Prepare for classes. Complete any and all readings prior to class time.
3. Complete all assignments by the deadline.
4. Adhere to the university student code of conduct.
5. Participate. During face-to-face classes, you are expected to actively participate in all activities and discussion. In the online format, you are expected to participate in all online discussions/activities. This is crucial to your learning.  
Regularly check your TAMUC email. My suggestion is to check this at least once a day as your instructors and others from the department and University may contact you.
6. Begin your readings ASAP. Sometimes it may take more than one attempt to digest the material.
7. Deadlines are the last possible moment something is due—not the first moment to start. Work ahead. I realize this may not always be possible; however, when you can, do so.
8. Be open to the process. This degree takes time, work, effort, and growth.

### Attendance/Electronic Devices

**Attendance:** Due to the highly interactive nature of the class session, attendance is expected during our scheduled class periods. If you are unable to attend a class session you must contact me prior to the class period. Tardiness also delays class activities and is highly discouraged. Students should be in attendance for ALL class sessions. However, situations do arise, and it is understood that “life happens”. Students who miss more than one class will not be able to earn an A in the course. Students who miss more than two classes will not be able to earn a B in the course. Parts of classes are counted including arriving late to class will be considered missing part of a class.

**This class meets face-to-face from 7:20pm-10:10 pm every Tuesday. If you are unable to make it to class by 7:20pm each week, due to scheduling conflicts, you will need to re-evaluate taking the course. Attendance and being on-time are crucial to learning the materials and your success in this course.**

*The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.*



**Electronic Devices:** Due to the nature of material discussed in this class, voice recordings will not be allowed in this class or during supervision sessions. Cell phones should remain off or on vibrate if you need to be available to family during class. I ask that you do not use a laptop or tablet unless needed for accommodations. This is a group process class and as such active participation is required.

## **Course Assignments and Exams**

*Students are expected to participate in all areas of the course. Students must show some level of knowledge of the material in class discussions, assignments, and activities.*

**Course Requirements and Grading:** Grades earned will be dependent upon the total points earned reflecting the activities as listed below. Assignments must be completed in a timely fashion in order to maximize the most amounts of points. Assignments will not be accepted via email unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. All assignments must be turned in by the designated due date. Late assignments WILL NOT be accepted. Assignments will not be accepted by email. ***In effort to reduce difficulties, technical or otherwise, students should not wait until the last minute to complete assignments.***

**Class Participation:** Students are expected to be prepared to discuss reading assignments and other learning activities. Failing to prepare as evidenced by nonparticipation may result in a decrease in grade.

**Reading the Text:** It is extremely important it is to keep up with assigned reading in the text. This material is different from other material that you have read. Play therapy is a unique specialty that is very different from mainstream counseling. The first half of the class requires reading the text and a variety of other resources to aid in attaining the basking knowledge and skills of play therapy. The second half of the class is mostly experiential.

**Exams:** There will be one exam administered towards the end of the semester, online, via the D2L student platform. NO LATE EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN.

**Portable Play Therapy Bag/Box:** This class is based on the concept that play therapy can be delivered in most any setting. Hence, you will need to create/develop your own bag/box of portable play therapy materials. It must include 4 or 5 toys representative of each of Landreth's 3 categories. Students will bring their portable play therapy bag/box to class. Students will then set up their kit and will need to be able to identify each category his or her individual toys represent according to Landreth's categories. The chapter readings will suggest how categories may be modified to be responsive to culture and environment of differencing populations. Adapt your tote-bag for culture and be able to discuss your choices. Your bag/box should be designed to meet the needs of your expected population.

**Play session:** Arrange two 20 - 30-minute play sessions with a 4 to 8 year old child, other than your own, at your home, a class room, or other setting with toys (**not in the child's bedroom**). Either use your toy bag or use toys that are consistent with appropriate toys in the playroom. Do not conduct home play sessions until after the limit setting class. Students must videotape the session (with a view of you and the child if at all possible).

**Reflection/Critique Format:** You will submit a brief reflection regarding your experience for each session. Your reflection papers must follow the format below and will be submitted through D2L by the designated date. The format for your reflection papers are as follows: (3-4 pages for each session, double-spaced) using the following subheadings:

- Title Page (APA 7<sup>th</sup> format) – not included in page length
- Child's Age
- Overview of the session (setting, happenings, etc.)
- My feelings about the session (write in detail-give examples of thoughts/insights)
- Child's feelings (your best guess or hunch if you're not sure-provide examples/indicators)
- My strengths
- Returning responsibility to the child (Provide specific examples)
- **Corrected Response (very important)**  
(Select four responses you would like to correct and show how you would change the response using the following format:
  - Child – (said or did... Give child's verbal response or action)
  - Your original response
  - Corrected Response
  - Reason for Change

Please see **Appendix A** for parental consent form that **MUST BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO PLAY SESSIONS**. Grading for the first session and reflection will be based on completion of the session and reflection paper. Grading will be dependent on student effort and level of self and other awareness in reflection paper. Grading for second session and reflection will be based on completion of assignment, awareness level reflected in paper, and improvement demonstrated since last session.

Videos of your sessions must be brought to class and will be critiqued in group sharing sessions. Ensure that you watch each tape in its entirety before you complete and submit your reflection papers.

\*Note: (**For doctoral students only**)

If you are currently a doctoral student in our program, you will be required to submit an additional research paper, completed in APA 7<sup>th</sup> ed.) regarding play therapy. The topic for your paper must be approved by the instructor.



## GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

90%-100%	A
80%-89%	B
70%-79%	C
60%-69%	D
< 59%	F

### Grading:

Attendance and class activities/discussions	40 pts.
Home play sessions/critiques	160 pts.
Portable bag/box	20 pts.
Exam	80 pts.
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Total	300 pts.

Total points possible = 300. Your Final Grade is determined adding the point values earned from each assignment and dividing by 300. The resulting value is multiplied by 100 to yield a percentage. For example:  $(240 \text{ [points earned]}/300) \times 100 = 80\%$

## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

### Browser support

D2L is committed to performing key application testing when new browser versions are released. New and updated functionality is also tested against the latest version of supported browsers. However, due to the frequency of some browser releases, D2L cannot guarantee that each browser version will perform as expected. If you encounter any issues with any of the browser versions listed in the tables below, contact D2L Support, who will determine the best course of action for resolution. Reported issues are prioritized by supported browsers and then maintenance browsers.

Supported browsers are the latest or most recent browser versions that are tested against new versions of D2L products. Customers can report problems and receive support for issues. For an optimal experience, D2L recommends using supported browsers with D2L products.

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Maintenance browsers are older browser versions that are not tested extensively against new versions of D2L products. Customers can still report problems and receive support for critical issues; however, D2L does not guarantee all issues will be addressed. A maintenance browser becomes officially unsupported after one year.

Note the following:

- Ensure that your browser has JavaScript and Cookies enabled.
- For desktop systems, you must have Adobe Flash Player 10.1 or greater.
- The Brightspace Support features are now optimized for production environments when using the Google Chrome browser, Apple Safari browser, Microsoft Edge browser, Microsoft Internet Explorer browser, and Mozilla Firefox browsers.

### Desktop Support

Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)	Maintenance Browser Version(s)
Microsoft® Edge	Latest	N/A
Microsoft® Internet Explorer®	N/A	11
Mozilla® Firefox®	Latest, ESR	N/A
Google® Chrome™	Latest	N/A
Apple® Safari®	Latest	N/A

### Tablet and Mobile Support

Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
Android™	Android 4.4+	Chrome	Latest
Apple	iOS®	Safari, Chrome	The current major version of iOS (the latest minor or <b>point</b> release of that major version) and the previous major version of iOS (the latest minor or <b>point</b> release of that major version). For example, as of June 7, 2017, D2L supports iOS 10.3.2 and iOS 9.3.5, but not iOS 10.2.1, 9.0.2, or any other version.

Device	Operating System	Browser	Supported Browser Version(s)
			Chrome: Latest version for the iOS browser.
Windows	Windows 10	Edge, Chrome, Firefox	Latest of all browsers, and Firefox ESR.

- You will need regular access to a computer with a broadband Internet connection. The minimum computer requirements are:
  - 512 MB of RAM, 1 GB or more preferred
  - Broadband connection required courses are heavily video intensive
  - Video display capable of high-color 16-bit display 1024 x 768 or higher resolution
- For YouSeeU Sync Meeting sessions 8 Mbps is required.** Additional system requirements found here: <https://support.youseeu.com/hc/en-us/articles/115007031107-Basic-System-Requirements>
- You must have a:
  - Sound card, which is usually integrated into your desktop or laptop computer
  - Speakers or headphones.
  - \*For courses utilizing video-conferencing tools and/or an online proctoring solution, a webcam and microphone are required.
- Both versions of Java (32 bit and 64 bit) must be installed and up to date on your machine. At a minimum Java 7, update 51, is required to support the learning management system. The most current version of Java can be downloaded at: [JAVA web site](http://www.java.com/en/download/manual.jsp)
- Current anti-virus software must be installed and kept up to date.

Running the browser check will ensure your internet browser is supported.

Pop-ups are allowed.

JavaScript is enabled.

Cookies are enabled.

- You will need some additional free software (plug-ins) for enhanced web browsing. Ensure that you download the free versions of the following software:
  - [Adobe Reader](https://get.adobe.com/reader/)

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- [Adobe Flash Player \(version 17 or later\)](https://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/)
- [Adobe Shockwave Player](https://get.adobe.com/shockwave/)
- [Apple Quick Time](http://www.apple.com/quicktime/download/)
- At a minimum, you must have Microsoft Office 2013, 2010, 2007 or Open Office. Microsoft Office is the standard office productivity software utilized by faculty, students, and staff. Microsoft Word is the standard word processing software, Microsoft Excel is the standard spreadsheet software, and Microsoft PowerPoint is the standard presentation software. Copying and pasting, along with attaching/uploading documents for assignment submission, will also be required. If you do not have Microsoft Office, you can check with the bookstore to see if they have any student copies.

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

## COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

### Brightspace Support

#### Need Help?

#### Student Support

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your instructor.

### Technical Support

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778 or click on the **Live Chat** or click on the words “click here” to submit an issue via email.



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## **System Maintenance**

Please note that on the 4th Sunday of each month there will be System Maintenance which means the system will not be available 12 pm-6 am CST.

## **Interaction with Instructor Statement**

Communication with your professors is key to your professional growth. I am here to support and guide you along your academic journey. With that being said, I cannot help you if you do not communicate with me. Please make an appointment if you have any concerns or questions. Because I teach in different locations, email is the best way to reach me. I will attempt to answer all emails within 24 hours, Monday-Friday, but at times will need up to 72 hours to do so. When emailing, please use your university email and address me with courtesy and respect.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Course Specific Procedures/Policies**

Written assignments are due on the day noted in the syllabus. Late assignments will not be accepted.

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance and published in the D2L course platform.

### **University Specific Procedures**

#### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum: [Netiquette](#)

<http://www.albion.com/netiquette/corerules.html>

#### **TAMUC Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

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<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.10](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/graduate/13.99.99.R0.10GraduateStudentAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

### **ADA Statement**

#### **Students with Disabilities**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

#### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library- Room 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

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### **Nondiscrimination Notice**

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

### **Counseling Student Resources**

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel).

### **Mental Health and Well-Being**

**The university aims to provide students with essential knowledge and tools to understand and support mental health. As part of our commitment to your well-being, we offer access to Telus Health, a service available 24/7/365 via chat, phone, or webinar. Scan the QR code to download the app and explore the resources available to you for guidance and support whenever you need it.**



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**Web addresses for Play Therapy information**

**Center for Play Therapy:** <http://www.coe.unt.edu/cpt/>

**Association for Play Therapy:** <http://www.a4pt.org>

**Texas Association for Play Therapy:** <http://www.txapt.org>

**Central Texas Play Therapy Association:** <http://centraltexasplaytherapy.org>