



Texas Association for Play Therapy

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# Newsletter

## txapt

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TWO GREAT MINDS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS, DR. DANIEL SWEENEY AND DR. GARRY LANDRETH SPEAK AT TAPT 2010 CONFERENCE IN HOUSTON, TX...

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*This year the Texas Association for Play Therapy was awarded the prestigious Gold Branch designation, an indication of the outstanding job we do in promoting play therapy, promoting the professionalism of play therapy, and the number of Registered Play Therapists we have in this great state!*

Read full article below

## What has APT done for me?

This is a question I frequently get as President of the Texas Association for Play Therapy. The cost of professional memberships in organizations is high and one may often wonder why membership in so many is needed. Let me share with you some of the exciting things that are happening at the national, state and local levels of the Association for Play Therapy.

I just returned from the International conference in Atlanta, Georgia and learned about the many interesting ways our professional organization is working for us. Getting play therapy recognized as an evidence-based treatment is the primary focus of the national association at this time. APT has granted two \$20,000 grants to assist in supporting researchers to reach this gold standard of evidence-based. Sue Bratton, Dee Ray, and Natalya Edwards and their team at the University of North Texas

are researching disruptive behaviors of early elementary school-aged children comparing directive and non-directive play therapy interventions. April Shottelkorb, Diana Dumas, and Kenneth Coll at Bosque State University are comparing Child-Centered Play Therapy and Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy with traumatized refugee children.

The APT research committee is working very closely with other researchers who review National Institutes of Health (NIH) grants to provide play therapy researchers with mentoring and help in applying for larger NIH grants. An NIH funded study would provide play therapy with the recognition it deserves as an effective treatment for children.

While we know the effectiveness of play therapy and see it everyday in our offices, without the recognition as an evidence-based treatment we will continue to fight with other providers, supervisors, and administrators to be able to provide play therapy for the clients we know need it most. Once play therapy achieves the level of

evidence-based many doors will be opened and our impact will significantly increase!

At the national, state and local level of the Association for Play Therapy we focus on the professionalism of play therapists and the importance of the Registered Play Therapist credential. At the state and local level we provide connection with other play therapists, networking, consultation, and solid play therapy training through conferences and workshops. This year the Texas Association for Play Therapy was awarded the prestigious Gold Branch designation, an indication of the outstanding job we do in promoting play therapy, promoting the professionalism of play therapy, and the number of Registered Play Therapists we have in this great state!

Please join me in continuing the outstanding tradition we have in Texas of promoting play therapy as an effective intervention for children. The local chapters have a full calendar of events planned this year and we have the annual Texas Association for Play Therapy Conference March 26-28th in Houston with Daniel Sweeney and Garry Landreth as our speakers! ■

See you in Houston!

Mary Morrison,  
Ph.D., LPC-S, NCC, RPT-S



## THE TAPT LONE STAR AWARD

Winners of the Lone Star Award will be: Recognized at the TAPT conference, Featured in the TAPT Newsletter, Able to use the Lone Star Award Logo on their websites, Given a Free TAPT conference registration to raffle off at their Local Chapter...

Read full article page 5





# North Texas Chapter of the Texas Association for Play Therapy

*The North Texas Chapter of the Texas Association for Play Therapy is expecting....*

*Read full article below*

**November 14, 2009**  
 "Play Therapy with Adults"  
*by Dr. Lila Morrisee*

**December 12, 2009**  
 "Parental Consultations in the Play Therapy Process"  
*by Kara Holt*

**February 6, 2010**  
 Six hour workshop titled "Effective Courtroom Testimony for Play Therapists"  
*presented by Dianna Lynn Rumsey*

**April 10, 2010**  
 "Developing a Successful Play Therapy Practice"  
*by Dan Kirkland*

**May 8, 2010**  
 "Using Expressive Arts in Play Therapy"  
*by Dr. Shelley Jackson*

A general meeting is held 10:00 to 10:30 AM. Speakers are scheduled to present on play therapy topics from 10:30 to 12:30.

Lillian Hellman was quoted as saying "People change and forget to tell each other." The North Texas Chapter of the Association of Play Therapy is expecting wonderful changes as we enter a new year and wants everyone to know about it! Connie Moulden has pulled together fabulous educational opportunities for us with the presenters she has scheduled.

Presentations will be given on the following Saturdays from 10:30am to 12:30pm on:

**August 8, 2009**  
 "Group Play Skills: An Adlerian Perspective"  
*by Dr. Yvonne Garza*

Peer consultation and case reviews are on the agenda every other month.

The February 6 workshop will be held at Sterling Center in Keller from 8:30-4:00. A fee will be charged for this workshop. We are an approved provider of CEU's for APT, LPC.

We normally meet in an upstairs room at:

Coppell YMCA  
 146 Town Center Blvd.  
 Coppell, Tx. 75019

-Individual Professional dues are \$35.  
 -Retiree dues are \$35.  
 -Student dues are \$25.

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# Sam Houston Chapter of the Texas Association for Play Therapy



**November 7**  
 Various presenters  
 Garage Sale Finds for Playroom  
 Hosted at two locations in Houston with lunch at local restaurant following

**January 8**  
 TBA  
 Play Therapy with Grieving Children  
 Hosted at Bo's Place "Where Children are Heard and Hearts are Healed"

**January 30**  
 Mary Morrison, PhD.  
 Annual Winter Workshop  
 Hosted at Houston First Baptist Church

**April 16**  
 Mary Ellen Sherrill  
 Play Therapy/Traumatized Children  
 Hosted at Children's Assessment Center

SHAPT is off to a great start this year. This year we are hosting our meetings in a variety of locations around Houston in an effort to bring quality play therapy training to communities in the metropolitan area. Here is a list of the meetings for the 2009-2010 membership year. Come and play with us!

**August 27**  
 Cheryl Schindler, Past President  
 Aggression Issues in Playroom  
 Hosted at Guadalajara Mexican Restaurant

**September 24**  
 Cindy Hammonds  
 Theraplay Techniques  
 Hosted at Annaloni's Pizzeria




# Dan E. Homeyer Play Therapy Research Award

Abstracts/Articles from recipients of the Dan E. Homeyer Play Therapy Research Award...

[Read full article below](#)

*The impact of child centered play therapy on academic achievement, self-concept, and teacher-child relationship stress.*



 **Pedro Blanco,**  
Ph.D., LPC, RPT

This study examined the effectiveness of child centered play therapy (CCPT) with academically at-risk 1st graders. Twenty-one 1st grade students were assigned to the experimental group and 20 students were assigned to the no treatment control group, for this quasi-experimental design. The children in the experimental group received two 30 minute play therapy sessions per week for the duration of eight weeks.

Three hypotheses were analyzed. A two-factor repeated measures analysis of variances (SPANOVA) were performed on each dependent variable to determine if the experimental group performed differently from the control group across time according to the pretest and posttest results of the Young Child's Achievement Test (YCAT), the Pictorial Scale of Perceived Competence and Social Acceptance for Young Children (PSPCSAYC), and the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS).

Overall findings indicated that academically at-risk 1st graders who participated in CCPT scored statistically significant higher on academic achievement. Specifically, children assigned to the experimental group demonstrated a statistically significant increase in Early Achievement Composite ( $p = .03$ ) when compared to children assigned to the no treatment control group. No statistical significant results were found on Self-Concept and Student-Teacher Relationship Stress.

*Effects of Group Expressive Play Therapy as a Culturally-Responsive Intervention for East-Asian International College Students Referred for Adjustment and Language Difficulties*

 **Eunah Lee,**  
Ph.D., LPC-S, RPT-S &  
 **Sue Bratton,**  
Ph.D., LPC, RPT-S

A pre-test/posttest control group research design was used to investigate the effects of three interventions (group expressive play therapy, group speech therapy, and an interdisciplinary group expressive play therapy/speech therapy intervention) with 54 international college students referred for adjustment and language difficulties, when

compared to a no treatment control. Treatment effects on the 3 dependent variables (total problems, internalizing problems, and communication competence) were statistically analyzed using a two-way repeated measures split plot analysis of variance to determine whether the four treatment groups behaved differently across time. Results indicated that students in all three treatment groups demonstrated statistically significant improvements in total behavior problems at the .025 alpha level, with the two interventions that used expressive play therapy showing the largest treatment effects. The two expressive play therapy interventions also demonstrated large treatment effects on internalizing behavior problems, with the interdisciplinary play therapy/speech therapy group showing the largest treatment effects.



*Family System Dynamics and a Parent's Play Interactions with a Young Child*

 **Molly Kuzmich,**  
Ph.D., LPC-S, LMFT, RPT

Molly Kuzmich, Ph. D. is a visiting professor in the Department of Graduate Counsel-

ing at Texas Wesleyan University. She is a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed professional counselor supervisor, and a registered play therapist in private practice in Flower Mound, Texas. This article is a summary of dissertation research done by Dr. Kuzmich. Correspondence can be sent to: Dr. Molly Kuzmich, 6021 Morriss Road, Suite 109A, Flower Mound, Texas 75028.

*Family System Dynamics and a Parent's Play Interactions with a Young Child*


Learning the most productive skills for parenting is an accomplishment, but an even greater accomplishment is being able to implement those skills when anxieties are high. This is particularly true for parents of preschool-aged children, for children at this age need supervision and structure, yet demand sensitivity and independence. Some advocate that it is not creativity, but a solid sense of self that equips a parent with such capacities.

*Differentiation of Self*

Bowen family systems theory (Kerr & Bowen, 1988) is based on the concept of differentiation of self within an individual and from the family of origin. An adult's level of differentiation is directly related to his or her emotional separation from, or fusion with, significant members of the family-of-origin. Bowen's theoretical differentiation of self scale measures an individual's adaptiveness to stress (Kerr & Bowen, 1988). In well differentiated families, there is low emotional intensity, low pressure for togetherness, and children are permitted to think, feel, and act for themselves. In poorly differentiated families, there is high emotional intensity, high pressure for togetherness, and children are not allowed to think, feel, or act for themselves. Family members emotionally react to each other rather than rationally choosing behaviors (Kerr & Bowen, 1988).

*Child Emotion Regulation and Anxiety*

Literature reviews of emotion regulation research (Calkins, 1994; Field, 1994) have indicated that primary caregivers of infants and young children have a crucial impact on a child's ability to regulate emotion. In a literature review on the topic of childhood anxiety and parenting (Wood, McLeod, Sigman, Hwang, & Chu, 2003), the authors reported a consistent finding that observed parental control is linked to child anxiety and shyness. In observed parent-child interactions, parents of anxious children displayed less warmth (Moore, Whaley, & Sigman, 2004), less granting of autonomy (Moore, Whaley, & Sigman, 2004; Siqueland, Kendall, & Steinberg, 1996), less positive task assistance and less support, more conversation and directive gestures, and more arousal and control (Sallinen, 2005).

Cont... 



# Dan E. Homeyer Play Therapy Research Award

Cont.

## *Play: Anxiety Reduction and Relationship Enhancement*

Play, in its many forms, is a natural antidote for anxiety. It provides relaxation, emotional release, pleasure, and healing for children and adults. According to Gilbert (1999), play provides the anxiety release that creates balance in life. Within the context of a relationship, play contributes to a shared emotional and pleasurable experience. Additionally, a parent who enlists humor and a playful attitude makes parenting more enjoyable and presents a more authentic self (Elkind, 2007). Because play is the natural mode of expression for children (Axline, 1947; Landreth, 1991), and because they have not yet achieved the cognitive and verbal skills of adults (Piaget, 1962), it is clear that by utilizing play, a parent can enter a child's symbolic world to help create greater intimacy and shared meaning within the parent-child relationship.

## *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a relationship between a parent's level of differentiation of self and his or her interactive style within a play setting with a preschool-aged child. In this study, each parent's level of differentiation was measured using the Personal Authority in the Family System Questionnaire, Version A (Bray, 1991). A parent's interactive style was measured quantitatively by utilizing the Maternal Behavior Rating Scale-Revised (Mahoney, 1992).

## **Results and Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there is a relationship between a parent's level of differentiation of self and his or her interactive style within a play setting with a preschool-aged child. Several statistically significant findings in this study point to the parent possessing intergenerational qualities which are related to the parent-child relationship in play.

## *Highly Responsive Parents*

According to Mahoney (1992), a highly responsive parent is one who is more sensitive to his or her child's interests, more appropriate in responding to the child, and more effective in engaging the child in a play session. In consolidating the data from this study, it was determined that fathers who report less triangulation with their own parents tend to display more responsive/child-oriented behaviors in an observed free play session.

## *Highly Affective and Animated Parents*

A parent who scores high in affect and animation displays more acceptance, more enjoyment, more emotional expressiveness, more inventive stimulation, and more warmth toward his or her child in play (Mahoney, 1992). By merging the data regarding this kind of parent in this study, it can be concluded that a parent who fears disapproval from his or her own parents (intergenerational intimidation), displays more affect and animation in an observed play session with his or her child.



## *Highly Achievement-Oriented Parents*

A parent who displays very high encouragement and very high praise "exerts much pressure on the child to achieve," and elicits praise more so than would an average parent (Mahoney, 1992). Quantitative data from this study suggest that parents who display these behaviors in an observed play session significantly fear disapproval from their own parents and feel pulled into their own parents' marital relationship. Statistical significance was also found for highly achievement-oriented mothers who reported high triangulation in their relationships with their parents.

## *Highly Directive Parents*

Mahoney (1992) describes a highly directive parent as one who tries to continually direct the child's play, and his or her rate of behavior is very fast. According to the data examined in this study a highly directive parent reports being highly triangulated with his or her own parents.

## **Implications**

Most pointedly, the results from this study support the contention that parent-child relationships do matter even when the child is very young. Navigating these relationships can be challenging, even for parents

who are more "equipped" with desirable parenting skills. The results from this study support systemic intergenerational theory, and point to the fact that emotionality has as much, if not more, influence on the parent-child relationship than do behavioral parenting skills and discipline.

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## The Texas Association for Play Therapy -Lone Star Award-

The Lone Star Award is given to local chapters exhibiting outstanding service to membership and to the promotion of play therapy and the credentialing of Registered Play Therapists. The award is given to chapters at the Annual TAPT conference to chapters who meet the following criteria:

- 1) 3/4 of Local Chapter Members are also current members of APT/TAPT.
- 2) 2% of Local Chapter membership are RPT/S. (Chapters must submit their local member chapter with APT/TAPT & RPT/S members noted).
- 3) All Board members of the local chapter are members of APT/TAPT
- 4) Local Chapter provides at least 6 hours of APT Approved CE's to membership each year.
- 5) Local Chapter posts all CE workshops on the APT website
- 6) Local Chapter has at least once promoted the value of play and play therapy to the general public, segments thereof, e.g. other mental health professionals, the medical or legal professions, the insurance industry, schools and universities.

Supporting documents of the criteria are due to the TAPT President on Feb 15th.

### Winners of the Lone Star Award will be:

- Recognized at the TAPT conference
- Featured in the TAPT Newsletter
- Able to use the Lone Star Award Logo on their websites
- Given a Free TAPT conference registration to raffle off at their Local Chapter

## Playfully Yours 2010 Conference

My favorite time of the year is any time the seasons change. As I write this article, a powerful rainstorm has swept through Houston. It brought with it a crisp wind and the feeling of fall. This weather makes me crave a cup of hot joe and great conversations with friends! It was most likely on a "season changing" day that the theme for this year's annual conference popped into my head. I knew that Dr. Daniel Sweeney was our Friday speaker and Dr. Garry Landreth was our Saturday speaker. Two great minds from the state of Texas! I began to think about what it must have been like for Dr. Sweeney to have done his training at UNT, where the concept of play therapy as a recognized modality with children began.

Texas is so fortunate to have Dr. Landreth as part of our play therapy landscape. That thought trickled down to all the fabulous people that have mentored me in the field of play therapy. That thought trickled down into how

we pass things on from one generation to another. Voila! From that, the theme of "Playfully Yours," was created! I love people sharing things with me in person, in letters and in emails. Thus, I started thinking about how creative people can be when writing a salutation in a letter. "Playfully Yours," is basically the salutation to the end of what I hope to be a fabulous conference.

My desire is that you will come to a city that I love, have your mind and soul refreshed and be inspired with the words of wisdom passed down by both Daniel and Garry. In between all of the words of wisdom from our speakers and breakout presenters, we will throw in a splash of fun! *The TAPT conference will be March 26 – 28th in Houston, TX* at the Omni Hotel in the Galleria. Be sure to save the date because TAPT can't wait to see you!

Playfully yours,  
Mary Engle, MA, LPC



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