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The KTP-NUCMI is the paediatric arm of the National University Hospital and comprises the Departments of Paediatrics, Paediatric Surgery and Neonatology. We provide comprehensive and specialised medical and surgical services for newborns, children and adolescents, and are the only public hospital in Singapore that offers paediatric kidney and liver transplant programmes. Through a generous gift from the Estate of Khoo Teck Puat, we have set up an integrated outpatient facility with medical, diagnostic and rehabilitation services.

Contact Us

Location: NUH Main Building, Zone F, Level 1
General Enquiry: +65 6772 5000

Location: NUH Main Building, Zone E, Level 2
(Accessible via Kent Ridge Wing, Zone C, Level 2, Lift Lobby C)

Location: NUH Medical Centre, Zone B, Level 9
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Information is correct at the time of printing (Oct 2020) and subject to revision without prior notice.

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What is play therapy?

Play therapy is a psychotherapeutic intervention where children use play as a medium to express themselves.

Using a child-centred approach based on non-directive principles, our play therapist provides a safe and non-judgmental environment for your child to understand and process muddled feelings as well as upsetting events. The play offers your child a safe psychological distance from his or her problems and allows the expression of thoughts and feelings.

Play therapy can be adapted to suit different developmental levels and is appropriate for children of all ages, especially those between three and 12 years old.

Why does my child need play therapy?

Children experience many adjustments and transitions developmentally, socially and emotionally throughout their childhood. How your child copes with these adjustments or transitions is influenced by his or her relationships, life experiences and environment.

Some reasons that your child may need therapy for, but not limited to, are:

- Anxiety
- Behavioural difficulties
- Bereavement and loss
- Childhood illness
- Difficulties with sleeping or having nightmares
- Family breakdown or divorce
- Low self-esteem
- Neglect
- Non-medical problems with bowel or bladder control
- Problem adjusting to new situations such as a new baby in the family or starting a new school
- Sexual or physical abuse
- Social and emotional difficulties

- Suppressed emotions
- Trauma

When your child has difficulty making sense of his/her feelings, his/her brain finds ways to help cope with and communicate the feelings of uncertainty, insecurity and fear. Parents and caregivers may look out for certain behaviours that suggest the child needs help from a professionally-trained therapist such as:

- Externalising behaviours (aggressive, disruptive, oppositional behaviours)
- Internalising behaviours (withdrawal, anxiety, depression, physical symptoms)

How can play therapy help my child?

Play therapy is a non-threatening way that can help your child to explore, understand and resolve any muddled feelings. He/she is not required to reach any expectations, perform or achieve.

The most important aspect of play therapy is the therapeutic relationship between our therapist and your child. It is non-judgmental, secure and trusting which allows your child to express all feelings, unconscious thoughts, worries and wishes in a safe environment.

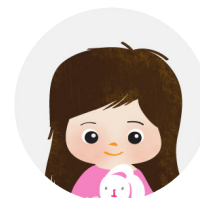
What can I expect for the play therapy sessions?

We will have a one-hour session with you during the first appointment to better understand your concerns and establish general treatment goals. Your child need not attend this session with you.

Each subsequent therapy session with your child will take 45 minutes. The sessions will take place on a weekly basis for a minimum of eight sessions unless otherwise advised by our play therapist. Our play therapist will meet you after six sessions to discuss your child's progress as well as any changes or developments you have witnessed or experienced. However, we will not disclose specific details of what your child has played. This is important to maintain your child's trust and feelings of safety with our therapist.

There will be two closing sessions prior to ending the therapy sessions.

We have available a large selection of play materials from which your child may choose to play with, such as art and craft materials, sand, water, clay, puppets, musical instruments, dress up material and books. Our play therapist will enable your child to use these resources to express himself/herself without having to provide verbal explanations.



How can I help my child to prepare for play therapy?

- Explain to your child that play therapy is a special time and space where he/she can express his/her feelings by playing.
- Set expectations when it comes to the play therapy session, including:
 - Your child will attend the session alone, while you wait outside at the waiting area.
 - In play therapy, your child can do or say whatever he/she needs to help figure out the underlying issues. It is his/her private space.
- Avoid telling your child to 'have fun' or 'be good' during the session as we will be dealing with underlying worries, sadness or anger.
- Play can be messy – you may consider having your child wear older clothes or packing a change of clothes for him/her.

Important information for parents or caregivers

- You play an important role, especially when it comes to supporting your child through the process.
- Be consistent. Encourage your child to attend the play therapy sessions as scheduled.
- Do listen to your child if he/she chooses to tell you about the therapy session. However, it is very important that parents or caregivers do not question the child about what happens in play therapy.
- During therapeutic interventions, behaviour may appear to get worse before it gets better. Please speak to your child's play therapist if you have any concerns.
- Information that you share about your child and family will be kept confidential. Our play therapist may share the information with other colleagues and professionals for the benefit of your child with your permission.

Contact Us

Appointment is by referral only and will be seen at Level 4, Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children's Medical Institute. If you would like your child to be referred for play therapy, please discuss with your paediatrician or child psychiatrist who will assess your child's suitability.

