



Mining Report – August 2021

Which *change drivers* might rock the play therapy world? APT *mines* recent mental health *intelligence* (i.e. publications) and disseminates quarterly Mining Reports with cutting-edge trends, emerging wisdom, and other information to play therapy practitioners, instructors, and supervisors. Consult the publications or links displayed for answers to the questions.

Intelligence

1. Why do children fall through the gap of mental health services?

“Our findings confirm that young people fall through the mental health service gap due to a lack of available and appropriate care” (Appleton et al., p. 412).

- Conducted thematic analysis after interviewing children and parents about care needs and limitations.
- Identified systemic barriers to continuity of care and problems with the quality of care received.
- Described effects on children and parents.

Appleton, R., Elahi, F., Tuomainen, H., Canaway, A., & Singh, S. P. (2021). “I’m just a long history of people rejecting referrals” experiences of young people who fell through the gap between child and adult mental health services. *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 30, 401–413.
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s00787-020-01526-3>

Contributor: Alyssa Swan, PhD, LCPC, RPT, NCC, Bloomington, IL

2. Does parental stress impact substance use in adolescent adoptees?

“Using a prospective, longitudinal design in a unique sample of children adopted from foster care, the present study examined the main and interactive effects of preadoption cumulative risk and postadoption stress in adoptive parents on later substance use among adoptees in adolescence and young adulthood” (Blake et al., 2021, p. 656).

- Measured substance use, background risk, parenting stress, child temperament, and postadoption stressors.
- Reported adoptive parent stress, and not preadoption risk, was more correlated with substance use in adolescents.
- Highlighted the importance of intervention at the family-level rather than just the adoptee level.

Blake, A. J., Waterman, J. M., Kiff, C. J., Guzman, J., & Langley, A. K. (2021). Cumulative risk and substance use in adoptees: Moderation by adoptive parent stress. *Family Relations*, 70(2), 653–669.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12522>

Contributor: Crystal Amundson, MS, LCPC, RPT-S, Billings, MT

3. Do play-based interventions increase language development of young children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder [ASD]?

“The purpose of this dissertation study is to analyze existing research examining the impact of play therapy on the development of language skills in young children with ASD and to determine whether play-based interventions should be considered as effective means of increasing language development in young children with ASD” (Boergio, 2021, p. 51).

- Conducted a metaanalysis using data extraction software.

- Sought to identify moderators including gender, age, race, setting, outcome measure, frequency, type and duration of sessions.
- Suggested that play-based interventions were effective in supporting language development in young children with autism.

Boerio, G. V. (2021). *Measuring the effectiveness of play as an intervention to support language development in young children with autism spectrum disorder: A hierarchically-modeled meta-analysis* [Doctoral dissertation, Youngstown State University]. <https://etd.ohiolink.edu/>

Contributor: Anissa Howard, PhD, LPC, LMFT, ACS, RPT-S, Warner Robins, GA

4. How does infant gut microbiome affect later fear behavior and neurocircuitry development in children?

"In this pilot study of 34 infants, we find that 1-year gut microbiome composition... is significantly associated with fear behavior during a non-social fear paradigm" (Carlson, Xia, Azcarate-Peril, Rosin, Fine, Mu, Zopp, Kimmel, Styner, Thompson, Propper, and Knickmeyer, 2021, p.1).

- Examined the relationship between gut microbiome, fear behavior, and relationship with fear-related brain structures.
- Conducted a longitudinal study of 34 infants with data collection at ages 1 month and 1 year.
- Hypothesized infants with greater specific microbiota would demonstrate lowered social and non-social fear responses.

Carlson, A.L., Xia, K., Azcarate-Peril, M.A., Rosin, S. P., Fine, J. P., Mu, W., Zopp, J. B., Kimmel, M. C., Styner, M. A., Thompson, A. L., Propper, C. B., & Knickmeyer, R. C. (2021). Infant gut microbiome composition is associated with non-social fear behavior in a pilot study. *Nature Communications*, 12, 3294. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41467-021-23281-y>

Contributor: Cathi Spooner, LCSW, RPT-S, CTS, Mesquite, NV

5. What are adolescents who are exposed to domestic violence (DV) telling themselves about their experiences?

"Children who witness DV at an early age might struggle to develop good attachment relationships, appropriate self-regulation, and to develop social and peer competencies, with each of these areas having an impact on the development of the next competence" (Chester, & Joscelyne, 2021, p. 5254).

- Reported external behaviors may decrease but negative internalizations can increase and may be largely out of adult's awareness.
- Offered qualitative data to support themes based on phenomenological responses from adolescents who had witnessed violence in their homes.
- Suggested that professionals in the mental health field use a more holistic approach when working with children or adolescents who had been exposed to DV.

Chester, J., & Joscelyne, T. (2021). "I thought it was normal": Adolescents' attempts to make sense of their experiences of domestic violence in their families. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(11-12), 5250-5276. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0886260518802847>

Contributor: Kenisha Gordon, PhD, NCC, LPC-S, ACS, RPT-S, Clinton, MS

6. Is child-teacher relationship training (CTRT) an effective intervention in Head Start programs?

"The findings indicate that CTRT positively influences children's problem behaviors" (Coggins & Carnes-Holt, 2021, p. 112).

- Implemented a randomized repeated-measured design to explore the impact of CTRT in rural preschools.
- Reported children in the experiential group demonstrated significant decreases in total problem behaviors compared to those in an active control group.
- Indicated statistical, practical and clinical significance of findings.

Coggins, K. & Carnes-Holt, K. (2021). The efficacy of child-teacher relationship training as an early childhood mental health intervention in head start programs. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 30(2), 112-124. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pla0000154>

Contributor: Vanessa Gaona, MEd, NCC, LPC-S, RPT-S, Sugar Land, TX

7. How might play therapy address pre- and perinatal birth trauma and the accompanying perturbations in parent-child attachment?

"...we are now more aware how syndromes and behaviors diagnosed early as emotional disturbances can and do cover emotional and relational problems with early roots in prenatal or perinatal experiences" (Cotigă & Stulz-Koller, 2021, p. 71).

- Explored the impact of pre- and perinatal birth trauma on the implicit memories and attachment responses for parents and children.
- Reported use of creative therapy methods, such as play therapy, provides opportunities for parents and children to process pre-verbal birth trauma and to repair attachment disruptions.
- Provided two detailed case studies illustrating trauma play therapy interventions with parent-child dyads.

Cotigă, A. C., & Stulz-Koller, A. (2021). Early traumatic events & implications for the development of emotional connection: Two case studies using trauma play therapy with children. *Journal of Prenatal and Perinatal Psychology and Health*, 35(1), 58-76.

Contributor: Laura Tejada, PhD, LMFT, LCPC, RPT-S, Chicago, IL

8. How might the Crucial Cs of Adlerian Individual Psychology be applied in Adlerian Play Therapy?

"The Crucial Cs of connect, capable, count, and courage are a mainstay of Adlerian play therapy conceptualization and treatment planning" (Dickenson & Kottman, 2021, p. 163).

- Identified Crucial Cs as a framework for boosting protective factors to promote resilience.
- Described concepts as central throughout the entire treatment process, from initial assessment to evaluation of client treatment outcomes.
- Provided concrete examples of integrating the Crucial Cs into a variety of play therapy interventions and activities.

Dickenson, R., & Kottman, T. (2021). Using the crucial cs in Adlerian play therapy. *The Journal of Individual Psychology*, 77(2), 154-164. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jip.2021.0011>

Contributor: Laura Tejada, PhD, LMFT, LCPC, RPT-S, Chicago, IL
Elizabeth Taylor, PhD, LPC-S, LMFT, RPT-S, Fort Worth, TX

9. How does a pretend play intervention impact school-aged children with high-functioning Autism Spectrum Disorder?

"The present pilot study implemented an in-person pretend play intervention to school-aged children (ages 6 to 9 years, intervention group=18, control group=7) diagnosed with high-functioning ASD (HF-ASD), to increase children's cognitive and affective play skills, and emotional understanding abilities. The intervention consisted of 5 weekly sessions, 15–20 minutes each" (Doernberg et al., 2021, p. 576).

- Reported intervention group significantly increased imagination and play skills, which led to increased skills in emotional understanding.
- Indicated even short play interventions had a positive impact for school-aged children with HF-ASD.
- Concluded play can have a meaningful impact on children's ability to increase both cognitive and behavioral flexibility.

Doernberg, E. A., Russ, S. W., & Dimitropoulos, A. (2021). Believing in make-believe: Efficacy of a pretend play intervention for school-aged children with high-functioning autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 51(2), 576–588. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04547-8>

Contributor: Rebekah Byrd PhD, LPC (TN), LCMHC (NC), NCC, RPT-S, Fairfield, CT
Stephanie Pratola, PhD, LCP, RPT-S, Salem, VA

10. How important are protective factors in children's mental health?

"To better inform intervention content, it is important that researchers work towards improving the understanding of the relationship between protective factors and child and adolescent mental health outcomes..." (Dray, 2021, p. 13).

- Outlined internal and external protective factors connected to mental health outcomes.
- Provided a conceptual analysis of resilience research to generate avenues for future research.
- Recommended analysis of protective factors that mediate treatment effects.

Dray, J. (2021). Child and adolescent mental health and resilience-focused interventions: A conceptual analysis to inform Future Research. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(14), 7315. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18147315>

Contributor: Alyssa Swan, PhD, LCPC, RPT, NCC, Bloomington, IL

11. Is non-directive play therapy an effective treatment for young children with anxiety disorders in Iran?

"The results showed that non-directive play therapy was an effective ...for a range of anxiety disorders including GAD, agoraphobia, social anxiety, separation anxiety and physical injury fear.a reduction in symptoms of insecure attachment. ...Moreover... findings report a negative relationship between reducing OCD symptoms and nondirective play therapy" (Hateli, 2021, p.1).

- Administered Spence Children's Anxiety Scales to 20 children aged 7-10 years at pre and post-test.
- Found significance reduction in anxiety scale scores among the experimental group.
- Suggested the intervention may be suitable for parent-child relationships and called for further examination.

Hateli, B. (2021). The effect of non-directive play therapy on reduction of anxiety disorders in young children. *Counseling & Psychotherapy Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/capr.12420>

Contributor: Stephanie Pratola, PhD, LCP, RPT-S, Salem, VA
Anissa Howard, PhD, LPC, LMFT, ACS, RPT-S, Warner Robins, GA

12. Can we decrease interpersonal difficulties by building compassion?

"The rationale for a 'Compassionate Kitbag' as opposed to a 'toolkit' or 'first aid kit' is an important distinction: A toolkit implies something is broken and needs to be fixed, and a first aid kit equally implies injury and something you only use in an emergency. A kitbag however, as the concept is derived from and used within the context of mountaineering, is something which contains the necessary and essential items to nourish and sustain along the journey" (Lucre & Clapton, 2021, p. 503).

- Reported individuals with ruptures in attachment require a multi-sensory approach.
- Reported affect regulation is central to Compassion Focused Therapy.
- Described contents as including compassionate smells, music, imagery, and tactile stimuli.

Lucre, K., & Clapton, N. (2021). The compassionate kitbag: A creative and integrative approach to compassion-focused therapy. *Psychology and Psychotherapy*, 94, 497-516. <https://doi.org/10.1111/papt.12291>

Contributor: Tisha Way Gaynor, MSSA, LISW-S, RPT-S, Cincinnati, OH

13. Does child-centered play therapy (CCPT) have an impact on the academic achievement of at-risk elementary students?

"CCPT is an effective mental health program to be implemented in schools to positively impact student academic achievement" (Massengale & Perryman, 2021, p. 99).

- Discussed CCPT as an intervention for academic achievement for at-risk elementary students.
- Explored the correlation between emotional development and academic success.

Massengale, B. & Perryman, K. (2021). Child-centered play therapy's impact on academic achievement: A longitudinal examination in at-risk elementary school students. *International Journal of Play Therapy*, 30(2), 98-111. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pla0000129>

Contributor: Vanessa Gaona, MEd, NCC, LPC-S, RPT-S, Sugar Land, TX

14. How does social isolation and peer rejection impact children in later childhood?

"The present study sought to address this gap in the research by examining the extent to which two aspects of social marginalization, peer rejection and social network isolation, were differentially associated with trajectories of social and behavioral adjustment across two school years in early adolescence" (Milojevich, Dawes, Hamm, and Farmer, 2021, p. 1).

- Conducted a longitudinal study with children in grades 5-7.
- Found associations between social rejection and aggression and social isolation and internalizing behaviors.
- Reported rejection and isolation were positively associated with bullying by peers.

Norwalk, K.E., Milojevich, H.M., Dawes, M., Hamm, J. V., and Farmer, T. W. (2021). Heterogeneity of social marginalization in early adolescence: longitudinal associations with behavioral and social adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-021-01457-5>

Contributor: Cathi Spooner, LCSW, RPT-S, CTS, Mesquite, NV

15. How can we help Black girls accept the skin they are in?

"Darker-skinned Black girls experience more name-calling and teasing (even compared with darker-skinned boys), and Black girls' social status in school is heavily contingent upon these racialized and gendered beauty standards, such that lighter-skin girls are afforded higher social status and are more desirable as friends and leaders of groups" (Rosario, Minor, Rogers, 2021, p. 7).

- Explained the concepts of colorism, anti-Blackness, and intersectionality.
- Provides qualitative data related to themes around colorism.
- Emphasized that to better understand experiences of Black girls we need to increase our focus on intersectionality.

Rosario, R. J., Minor, I., & Rogers, L. O. (2021). "Oh, you're pretty for a dark-skinned girl": Black adolescent girls' identities and resistance to colorism. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 1, 1-35. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07435584211028218>

Contributor: Kenisha Gordon, PhD, NCC, LPC-S, ACS, RPT-S, Clinton, MS

16. How are adolescent parental attachment and intimate relationships in adulthood related?

"The study aimed to examine how parental attachment at adolescence was related to intimate relational outcomes among female adults, including relationship satisfaction, relationship commitment, and relationship status" (Shen et al., 2021, p.1).

- Examined child sexual abuse experienced on relationship between perceived parental attachment and relational outcomes (sample included 1201 female child sexual abuse (CSA) survivors and 6094 females without a history of CSA).
- Indicated that CSA was not a significant moderator of the relationship among adult intimate relational outcomes and perceived parental attachment during adolescence.
- Reported that those with no history of CSA reported a higher level of both maternal and paternal attachment, which was significantly linked to adult relational outcomes.

Shen, F., Soloski, K. & Lie, Y. (2021). Adolescent parental attachment and intimate relationship in adulthood: An investigation of contextual factors and long-term outcomes of child sexual abuse. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105869>

Contributor: Rebekah Byrd PhD, LPC (TN), LCMHC (NC), NCC, RPT-S, Fairfield, CT

17. What are the current trends in course offerings in play therapy in CACREP-accredited programs and how do they align with ASCA's professional standards?

"We suggest that the ideal play therapy course in a school counseling program be clearly defined, specific, and have course objectives aligned to the American School Counseling Professional Standards and Competencies" (Shin & Na, 2021, p. 7).

- Examined 27 syllabi from play therapy courses from CACREP accredited universities to determine what was emphasized and alignment with ASCA standards.
- Provided information on theoretical approaches taught, methods, instructor credentials, course objectives.
- Syllabi objectives broken down into five categories: counseling theories/techniques, legal/ethical issues, child development, multiculturalism, collaboration with parents.

Shin, S. M., & Na, G. (2021). Play therapy courses in school counseling training: A content analysis of syllabi from CACREP-accredited school counseling programs. *Professional School Counseling* 25(1), 1-9. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2156759X20985835>

Contributor: Elizabeth R Taylor, PhD, LPC-S, LMFT, RPT-S, Fort Worth, TX

18. How does the coronavirus pandemic affect American children's physical activities?

"Daily moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) is vital to the physical, mental, and social well-being of children. Early restrictions during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic included the closure of schools and physical activity (PA) amenities across the US" (Tulchin-Francis et al., 2021, p. 323).

- Surveyed 1,310 U.S. parents of children aged 3-18 about changes in their physical and play behavior.
- Reported child physical activity scores declined significantly during the pandemic.
- Found age-group differences and reported the lowest pandemic-related reduction in preschoolers; the highest in high schoolers.

Tulchin-Francis, K., Stevens, W., Jr, Gu, X., Zhang, T., Roberts, H., Keller, J., Dempsey, D., Borchard, J., Jeans, K., & VanPelt, J. (2021). The impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic on physical activity in U.S. children. *Journal of Sport and Health Science*, 10(3), 323–332. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jshs.2021.02.005>

Contributor: Yih-Jiun Shen, DEd, NCC, CSC, Edinburg, TX

19. Do children benefit academically if their single parent marries?

"In this study, we use the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Kindergarten Cohort (ECLS-K) of 1998 to examine the effect of experiencing a parental marriage on childhood educational outcomes and to explore this change from the perspective of a resource model or an instability–stress model to determine which model is more useful for explaining child outcomes after parental marriage" (Usevitch & Dufur, 2021, p. 1).

- Analyzed data with both a resource model and instability-stress model to identify particular reasons for academic performance.
- Included 612 children born into single parent families that later became married parent families.
- Reported gains in academic performance are primarily contributed to resources gained through a two-parent household.

Usevitch, M. T., & Dufur, M. J. (2021). When single parents marry: Do children benefit academically? *Family Relations*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12535>

Contributor: Crystal Amundson, MS, LCPC, RPT-S, Billings, MT

Authors

Clinical Editor:

Carol Quinn, MEd, LPC-Associate, Denton, TX, clquinn2013@gmail.com

Publisher:

CEO Kathryn Lebby, CAE, CMP, Association for Play Therapy, Clovis, CA, klebby@a4pt.org

Contributors:

- Crystal Amundson, MS, LCPC, RPT-S, Billings, MT
- Rebekah Byrd, PhD, LPC (TN), LCMHC (NC), NCC, RPT-S, Fairfield, CT
- Vanessa Gaona, MEd, NCC, LPC-S, RPT-S, Sugar Land, TX
- Tisha Way Gaynor, MSSA, LISW-S, RPT-S, Cincinnati, OH
- Kenisha Gordon, PhD, NCC, LPC-S, ACS, RPT-S, Clinton, MS
- Anissa Howard, PhD, LPC, LMFT, ACS, RPT-S, Warner Robins, GA
- Stephanie Pratola, PhD, LCP, RPT-S, Salem, VA
- Yih-Jiun Shen, DEd, NCC, CSC, Edinburg, TX
- Cathi Spooner, LCSW, RPT-S, CTS, Mesquite, NV
- Alyssa Swan, PhD, LCPC, RPT, NCC, Bloomington, IL
- Elizabeth R. Taylor, PhD, LPC-S, LMFT, RPT-S, Fort Worth, TX
- Laura Tejada, PhD, LMFT, LCPC, RPT-S, Chicago, IL

Reader feedback regarding how these Mining Reports might be improved and made more helpful for play therapy practitioners, instructors, and supervisors is welcomed. Mining Reports are archived in the Members Only section of the APT website (www.a4pt.org).