

CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED STUDIES: CHILD TRAUMA AND PLAY THERAPY
CHILD TRAUMA AND PLAY THERAPY
Instructor: Samantha Dunnum, MSS, LCSW

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an understanding of the environmental factors that contribute to and constitute adverse childhood experiences, and the effects on children's development and subsequent behavior. Particular attention will be paid to the importance of understanding children's play in both the assessment and treatment of post-traumatic symptoms. Discussion will include attachment theory and the influence of attachment on development, historical and contemporary research on adverse childhood experiences and subsequent mental health and illness, and an overview of prevention and intervention. Students will be introduced to the common structure of stage-based trauma treatment for children, explore the application of play therapy to trauma treatment, and consider the integration of playful interventions into evidence-based models of trauma therapy.

COURSE DETAILS (Fall 2026)

Thursday Evenings, 5:30-7:30 pm

Dates: 8/27, 9/3, 9/10, 9/17, 9/24, 10/1, 10/8, 10/15, 10/22, 10/29, 11/5, 11/12, 11/19, 12/3

This course will be held on onsite at Thomas Jefferson University

Course Length: 28 CONTACT Hours of Play Therapy Specific Education

REFERENCES

- Herce, N. B. et al. (2024). Sandtray and sandplay in the treatment of trauma with children and adolescents: A systematic review. *World Journal for Sand Therapy Practice*, 2(1).
- Ray, D.C et al. (2021). Child centered play therapy and adverse childhood experiences: A randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 100(2), 134-145.
- Rubinstein, D. et al. (2023). Fantastic reality: The role of imagination, playfulness, and creativity in healing trauma. *Traumatology*, 29(2), 102-111.



APT Approved Provider 20-608

Participants will be notified via e-mail of any changes to programming. In the event of cancellation, registration costs will be refunded in full.

Participants may cancel for a full refund up to 48 hours before the program start. Please contact Neil.Andress@jefferson.edu to notify of cancellation and request a refund.

Contact Katharine.Wenocur@jefferson.edu for more information about play therapy at Jefferson

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- **Define play therapy and related concepts**
- **Describe the history of play therapy and its role in the greater field of counseling**
- **Articulate the therapeutic powers of play**
- **Articulate applications of play therapy and other play-based interventions to the treatment of childhood traumatic stress**
- **Describe common elements of trauma treatment for children and how these elements apply to play therapy**
- **Identify three benefits of play therapy for children who have been exposed to trauma**
- **Describe how play therapy might support children with a wide range of trauma histories**
- **Articulate how to recognize and assess post-traumatic play**
- **Illustrate how to clinically respond to post- traumatic play**
- **Describe the basic tenets of sand tray as an intervention**
- **Prepare to integrate sand tray interventions into a variety of treatment settings**
- **Define historical trauma and explain how this might influence children's current functioning and play**
- **Explain how both children's lived experiences of trauma might manifest in their play**
- **Critique use of play therapy in several case studies of traumatized children**