

Client Comments:

*It is so rewarding for me to see her smile at me, trust me and relax*

*He has become much calmer and less reactive. He is able to concentrate more and think before acting most of the time.*

*The bond between child and practitioner has grown*

*It was lovely to see him playing in a positive way and being able to move between calming and exciting games*

*It has helped me to see how to voice his emotions for him which tells him I understand how he feels*

**For further information please contact:**

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**Interested in making a referral for Theraplay or any other Children's Centre service for families with children aged 0-5 years?**

Please see 'Theraplay' or 'Children's Centres' web pages

[www.bathnes.gov.uk/Theraplay](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/Theraplay) OR

[www.bathnes.gov.uk/childrens-centres](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/childrens-centres)

And complete a 'Request for Support' form;

Or Contact your local Children's Centre hub:

**Twerton, Bath West:** 01225 461970

**Radstock (Somer Valley):** 01225 396660

**Parkside, Bath East:** 01225 396662

**Keynsham (& Chew Valley):** 01225 395400

## Children's Centres

Working with families with young children,  
Early Years settings and Schools to  
support children using Theraplay®



**A Bath and North East Somerset  
Commissioned Service**

**&**

**Registered Provider with the Adoption Support**

Bath & North East  
Somerset Council



## What is Theraplay®?

Theraplay® is a type of therapeutic play that helps children and their carers to form positive, healthy and secure attachments. It is a structured form of play that is led and organised by the adult whilst being responsive to the child's specific needs.

Theraplay® uses activities that meet the 4 areas felt to be most important in healthy "good enough" child/parent relationships:

### **Structure, Engagement, Nurture and Challenge**

Theraplay® promotes the use of positive touch as a way of connecting with the child and supporting them to become better regulated. When a child is well regulated they can adapt their behaviour to different situations and can manage their emotions by verbalising them or learning to calm themselves when upset, angry or frustrated.

## Who can Theraplay help?

- Parents who are struggling to feel connected and attached to their child
- Children who struggle to make secure attachments to their parents/carers and their peers
- Children who have low self-esteem
- Children who find it difficult to let an adult be in charge, follow rules and boundaries and listen to direction
- Children who experience strong emotions and are unable to calm themselves eg. Very angry or anxious, hyperactive or withdrawn
- Children who struggle to manage their behaviour
- Children who lack joyfulness and playfulness
- Families who have experienced early trauma or loss eg. absence of parent/carers; postnatal depression; exposure to domestic violence; drug and/or alcohol misuse during pregnancy and/or early years
- Theraplay can be particularly helpful for adoptive families

## How does it differ from Play Therapy?

- Parents and caregivers get involved directly in the play sessions
- It focuses on having fun together and interacting together - not "talk therapy"
- Progress can be made quickly due to the intensity and the focus on the relationship
- It is based on attachment theory and focuses on strengthening the parent-child relationship
- It can be used with very young children, children with developmental delays and those on the Autistic Spectrum

## What do I need to know about the sessions?

Prior to the sessions starting, a detailed family history will be gathered.

If a Theraplay® intervention is appropriate, an assessment is carried out with the parent/carer and child together. This informs the Theraplay practitioner about the strengths and difficulties in the relationship. The assessment takes around 40-60 minutes and is followed by a feedback session with the parent/carer.

The assessment and Theraplay sessions are videoed, with your permission, and the videos are used to provide feedback and reflect on the interactions.

Each session lasts between 20-60 minutes and will have a familiar rhythm of interactive activities, exciting and calming play, a feeding activity and a goodbye activity.

Parents/carers/key person will observe for the first three sessions and then take an increasing role in playing the games.

Parents/carers/key person will be given specific games to practise each week between sessions.

Parents/carers need to be fully committed to Theraplay for it to work. As the parent/carers you are the 24hr caretakers and the ones who will make a real difference for your child.