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Idaho Association for Play Therapy Newsletter

May 2012

Hello to all the IDAPT Members!!!

We had a great annual conference this year. Later in the news letter you can see a print out of our expenses and income generated from the conference. The board is in the process of determining the next few years of conferences. Our goal is to increase the number of CE opportunities each year. Happily, I report this number rose this year from 17 hours in 2010-2011 to 28 hours in 2011-2012. I am not sure we will surpass 28 hours during the 2012-2013 fiscal year, but our goal is to increase trainings to at least two a year and hopefully more! We are also reviewing options for different locations for trainings around the state. We will be having our annual conference next April in the Idaho Falls area, but details are forthcoming. We hope to have additional trainings in the northern portion of the state as well. Please, please let me, Dan Bayly or any other board member know if you have a desire to attend (OR HELP with) a training in Moscow or Coeur d'Alene areas.

Check out the APT website at www.a4pt.org to review the Annual International Conference being held in Cleveland, Ohio in October. The convening dates are October 9th through October 14th. The conference will be held at the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel in Cleveland, Ohio. There are so many workshops being presented in one place, I encourage you all to check out the conference brochure and try to make this happen. You will not be sorry!! I have told people in the past, and I continue to hear similar feedback from others, your first APT International Conference will be the best conference you will ever attend! If you plan to attend, please let me know. It would be fun to get our chapter members together for nice evening out to play together!!!

Don't forget to continue to spread the word about membership to IDAPT!!! Our chapter is growing and we are very proud of this. I get super excited every time I hear new people tell me they want to build their skills in play and become registered in play therapy!! This week alone, I have talked to three different people about this!!!! Keep on talking, sharing and playing!

Playfully Yours,

Molly Gratton
Registered Play Therapist – Supervisor
IDAPT President

Announcing the 2012 International Association for Play Therapy Conference!

“Since its 1984 debut in New York, our conference has become a major international multi-disciplinary event for mental health professionals wishing to earn continuing education credit for licensure or credentialing, network with popular authors, speakers, and vendors, and enjoy extra-curricular activities with peers.” This year the conference will be held in Cleveland, Ohio on October 9 through 14th. Check out the brochure here: <http://www.a4pt.org/download.cfm?ID=29902>

Have you read Play Therapy Best Practices?

Best Practices in Play Therapy is a guideline for play therapists and play therapist supervisors. Sections include, The Therapeutic Relationship, Parents and Family, Confidentiality, Professional Responsibility, Relationships with Other Professionals, Evaluation, Assessment, and Interpretation, Teaching, Training, and Supervision, and Research and Publication. This is important reading for anyone practicing play therapy. Check it out at <http://www.a4pt.org/download.cfm?ID=28051>

Have you considered APT Leadership Academy?

“APT sponsors its Leadership Academy to orient play therapists about leadership attributes, the Policy Governance© Model, and how APT conducts its daily business. Graduation is held during its Annual Conference.” Complete the enrollment form on the APT website (under programs and publications) by August 31.

2012 Spring Conference Expenses and Profit

For those of you who joined us for our Annual Conference you know that it was a wonderful event. We like to share the expense and profit report with you to help you understand how the Idaho Association for Play Therapy works. The more income we have the more we are able to invite well known (and expensive) speakers to our area for future conferences. Please support IDAPT and plan on attending our next conference (details to follow in future issues of the newsletter).

Registrations \$10,790.39

Expenses:

Conference Space	\$650
Presenters Lodging Fee	\$279.39
Food: Breakfast and snacks	\$451.31
Speaker meals	\$31.28
Speaker Fee	\$ 3000
Copies	\$254.68
Speaker Travel Expense	\$583.12

Total Expenses \$5249.78

Net Profit\$ 5,540.61

Note* We have not received the bill from the printing company for all the brochures that went out to invite people to the conference.**

[CLINICAL CORNER](#)

Advocating for Play

Dan Bayly LCPC, LMHC

As therapists who use play, we likely all recognize play as having the potential to be corrective and healing. This corrective potential is highest when facilitated through a carefully planned environment and in the presence of a trained professional, as happens in play therapy. But, what about the inherent value of play outside of therapy? Do we advocate for play in schools? After school? In childcare? In our homes? What about for ourselves?

There is a plethora of research involving bears, rats, mice, cats, primates, otters, and other animals which indicates play has a positive effect on physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development. Within

species, animals that play more tend to put on healthy weight more easily (important in the wild), reproduce more frequently, have more surviving young, are better problem solvers, have more successful social interactions, are more likely to be leaders within their group, and live longer. In his book, *Play; How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*, Stuart Brown M.D., founder of the National Institute for Play, explains that this effect goes beyond the idea that play is simply a way that young animals practice skills for hunting and survival as it also remains true for adult animals, even though play seemingly takes away from the “more important” aspects of survival such as hunting and feeding. He explains that cats that do not have the opportunity to play fight and play hunt as kittens still learn to be proficient hunters and can still fight other cats. They cannot, however, differentiate between friend and enemy and do not socialize well with other cats, thereby decreasing their chances of survival. Jaak Panskeep, a well-known animal behaviorist and play researcher at Washington State University, has found the amount of play in rats to be correlated to the development of the brain’s frontal cortex (executive decisions), the amygdala (emotions), and the size and growth rate of the cerebellum (motor coordination, rhythm, language processing and attention). Other researchers have confirmed a link between the amount of time spent in play and over all brain size in 15 different species. Further research, by Panskeep, has indicated that abundant “rough and tumble” type play reduces much of the impulsivity and inappropriate hyper-playfulness seen in rats with damaged frontal lobes, which is thought to model human ADHD, and has proposed this natural and simple play as a possible intervention for helping children diagnosed with mild to moderate ADHD.

In spite of this information and additional human studies, as a society we just don’t seem to believe it. Available play areas across communities continue to decrease in both size and availability. Even though education textbooks, such as Doris Pronin Fromberg’s *Play and Meaning in Early Childhood* (2002), clearly identifies play as not only an important but a necessary component for maximal learning, schools continue to discourage play. Recesses have been shortened or eliminated. PE is largely gone. Children are admonished for not staying on task and being playful at the “wrong” times and not being “serious” enough. Worksheets and other more “measurable” means of “learning” dominate. Then, when children get home, we continue to value work over play.

The amount of time that children are allowed to spend in play of their own devising has steadily decreased as we enroll them in activities of our choosing; lessons, homework groups, tutoring, afterschool activities which are strictly managed and controlled by adults (remember that “pure” play is voluntary and children will consistently see as work anything that an adult chooses and anything that they choose as play) all with the hope of them continually learning and becoming successful. Alternatively, we rely on video games, TV, and computers to “entertain” so that we can cope with our busy schedules and life’s demands without interruption. We decide when it is OK to play, with whom it is OK to play, what type of play is acceptable (think rough and tumble), and with what it is OK to play (girl toys, boy toys, etc.). It comes from the best of intentions. We want our children to be safe, successful, and happy. However, when we make many of these choices for our children we do so out of fear that they won’t be safe, successful, and happy rather than a hope and belief that they can be and will be. This can change. We can begin to trust in the power of play to help our children become successful, safe, and happy.

First we must recognize the inherent value of pure play (pleasurable, valued by the participants, spontaneous and voluntary, offers a freedom from time, requires active engagement, improvisational potential, apparently purposeless, and a diminished consciousness of self) and then to find ways to promote it and advocate for these opportunities. At the community level this may come in the form of promoting parks and play areas or improving safety in neighborhoods to allow for play. In schools it may be pressing back against the current push for more academic and adult style learning, which often comes at the expense of play, encouraging more recess time, discouraging the practice of losing recess time as punishment, supporting adventure and project style learning and even outdoor classrooms. All of this will lead towards building an intrinsic motivation for learning rather than extrinsic motivators. For our own children it involves allowing them time for their own style of play and not letting fear discourage their exploration,

perhaps cutting back on the number of activities that we enroll them in, and reducing the time spent in front of screens and with gadgetry. For ourselves may involve taking a personal play inventory to find our own play styles, rediscovering our own playfulness, valuing play equally with work, and putting this into action. Professionally it means really understanding the preventative powers of play and the inherent value of play outside of our playrooms and finding new ways to advocate for our clients and all people.

We are qualified experts on play and in this role we can make a difference. We can educate and spread the word. We can influence policies. We can promote optimal growth and development. We can value play every day for our clients, our society, our own families, and ourselves. We need to do this because play is currently losing to work. We need to do this because it is important. We need to do this because, as Stuart Brown says, “When we stop playing, we start dying.”

Play on!

Further reading:

Louv, Richard. *Last Child in the Woods; Saving our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. New York: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 2005.

Brown, Stuart. *Play; How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*. New York: Penguin Group, 2009.

Fromberg, Doris Pronin. *Play and Meaning in Early Childhood Education*. Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon, 2002.

Share your knowledge and earn Idaho Spuds!

If you submit a literature review, clinical piece, or some other information for the newsletter that is published; IDAPT will give you a \$10 certificate (Idaho Spud) good for use at our annual conference! Each spud will decrease the cost of attending our annual conference by \$10! So get your submissions in now! Please e-mail your submissions to Molly Gratton at tvplaytherapy@live.com

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE AT: <http://www.idahoplaytherapy.org/>

Interested in running an ad in the IDAPT NEWSLETTER?

If you are interested in running an ad in the IDAPT newsletter,
please submit the copy to tvplaytherapy@live.com

2 X 2 - \$5.00

4 X 4 - \$10.00

half page - \$25.00

full page - \$50.00

Please contact an Executive Council member or Molly Gratton
at (208) 860-0790 about your interest in placing an advertisement.

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