



# Healing Hurting Children of Linn & Benton Counties

Using Play Therapy as a tool in the growth and development of  
children and adolescents

## The Importance of Play Therapy

Many of the children who come into our offices are broken and hurt, some even abused and mistreated. Because children are unable to understand and talk about their feelings the way adults can, play therapy can offer a way for children to find their voices and express their feelings.



Play therapy is a unique process that focuses on children's need to express themselves through the use of play and toys. It gives children an opportunity to "play out" their feelings and problems - their fears, loneliness and feelings of failure. The play therapy room is a safe and understanding environment. In the security of this room, the child is the most important person and is encouraged to play as he or she wishes with a trained play therapist. By playing out their feelings and bringing them to the surface, children learn how to face their feelings, control them or abandon them. In the comfort of this room they are accepted completely. Children are given the opportunity to express themselves through a variety of styles including art play, sand play, dramatic play and fantasy play.

## Plan of Action

Friends of the Family Ministries' counselor, Mary Aguilera, MA, uses play and sand play therapy in her work with children to help facilitate the counseling process. In the last 12 months, she has provided 225 counseling sessions to children and adolescents and that number continues to grow. Some of the issues she faces in her sessions include:



- Sexual, emotional and physical abuse
- Reactive detachment disorder
- Family issues and dealing with divorce and separation
- Parent/child adoption transitions
- Depression
- Trauma

To make an appointment with Mary Aguilera, please call our Corvallis office at (541) 757-1761 or our Albany office at (541) 917-8957.