

One Child, One Heart



At age seven, Pat, confused, depressed, and anorexic, was referred to Nana's Children. She had been the sole witness to her mother's suicide and left alone with the body for two days. Her estranged father had returned to remove her from foster care. Confusing the child even more, the father changed her name from Pat to Sandi, as Pat had also been her mother's name.

When Play Therapy first started, Sandi, didn't know how to describe in words what she felt or why. Children her age find it very difficult to verbalize their feelings of fear, anger, despair and grief. Sandi only knew that she was unhappy and wanted her life to be different.

During play therapy sessions, the therapist identified Sandi's physical and emotional issues. Because of the complexity of her case, Sandi was referred to the school pediatrician for a complete physical evaluation. Working together, Nana's Children and the medical clinic pediatrician developed a plan to provide a combination of antidepressants and food supplements administered twice daily.

Play therapy sessions continued and within two weeks, a remarkable change took place. When her teacher addressed her as "Sandi" she answered, "My name is Pat."

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Registered Play Therapist Supervisor

www.nanaschildren.org

6210 East Thomas Road, Suite 104

Scottsdale, Arizona 85251

Phone 480-946-6262 Fax 480-874-4167



Nana's Children

Mental Health Foundation, Inc.



*Play therapy is to children
what talk therapy is to adults.*

Why Play Therapy?

Nana's Children Mental Health Foundation recognizes the overwhelming need to address the mental health issues indicative of homeless and impoverished children.

Some of these issues include:

Low Self Esteem	Inattention
Depression	Hyper-vigilance
Anger	Aggression
Inappropriate attachments	

Along with these issues children feel:

Guilt	Hopeless
Tired	Fearful
Hungry	Distrustful
Unclean	Anxious
Invisible	



Within the safe and trusting environment of Nana's playroom, children have the opportunity, through the power of play, to express themselves freely and without fear of retribution. The therapeutic toys become the child's words, and the therapist can soon ascertain the child's life situations, and the issues that prevent the child from feeling whole and safe. As sessions of play therapy progress, research supports that these children become less anxious and depressed, are less aggressive, and become more focused in the classroom.

Nana's Mission & Vision



- ♣ To provide life-changing mental health support to homeless and impoverished children within the school setting;
- ♣ To provide a practicum site for masters and doctoral level psychology students in collaboration with local universities, fostering the development of future play therapists;
- ♣ To train educators in specific play therapy techniques to aid in the classroom; and
- ♣ To collect data to support the efficacy of play therapy

The Future

Nana's Children is nationally and internationally recognized as a state-of-the-art, model program which can be easily replicated in the school setting or similar environment. Homeless and poor children are the fastest growing population, and Nana's will expand its program to new schools to accommodate the need.

In 2004, Play Therapy International presented Nana's Children with the "International Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Play and Child Psychotherapy" It was the first time this honor had been bestowed upon an organization rather than an individual.

Our Extraordinary Team

ANA M SUTTON, MA, is the Founder and Director of Clinical Services for Nana's Children. Her vision of a program that would address the issues facing homeless children became a reality in February of 1999, when she and her family formed the Foundation. Ms. Sutton recognizes the importance of providing mental health services in the school setting where children spend most of their time, helping them become available to learn.

WILLIAM JENKINS, PH.D., RPT-S

(Registered Play Therapist Supervisor) is a licensed psychologist for over 27 years, has practiced as a play therapist and supervisor in Arizona for the last 19. He holds a Doctorate from Pennsylvania State University, has authored several articles, and has published in professional books and journals. Dr. Jenkins leads all research projects for Nana's Children while supervising and training the masters and doctoral level interns.



CYNTHIA BERRY, MC, LPC (Director of Program Services) for the past six years, has experience in bereavement, addictions, and group play therapy. As a mentor for the homeless children of the Arizona Mental Health Association, Cynthia experienced hands-on knowledge valuable to Nana's Children and its mission.