

Welcome to the world of sand play!

This leaflet aims to provide you with a basic understanding of this therapeutic intervention and how it can help support children or young people with their well-being.



What is sand play?

Sand play is a therapeutic technique on the play continuum. This non-verbal, therapeutic intervention allows your child to express their feelings and thoughts that might be difficult to communicate with words alone.

We know that anyone who has experienced specific stressful or traumatic events often does not have the words to express themselves, or are not consciously aware of the effect it is having on their wellbeing. Sand play can be used to help support building healthy attachments, and helps process trauma and improve emotional well-being.

How does sand play work?

In sand play, children are presented with a sand tray and a wide range of miniature figures to create their own 'world'. The process is entirely guided by the child's imagination and feelings. The child's interaction with the sand and figures, the scenes they create, and even the non-action in the sandbox, can reflect their inner experiences. This helps them to make sense of their own internal state.

The practitioner will observe the child's play and support them without judgement or interpretation. This creates a safe, protected space for the child or young person to express and resolve conflicts at their own pace, in a way that is safe and secure for them.

What to expect in a sand play session

A trained practitioner will deliver sand play for 30 minutes, once a week for a total of 12 sessions. During a sand play session, the child or young person will create their own story or sand world in the sand tray using different figures and toys available to them. The Practitioner will ask non-intrusive questions about the sand world, to help their imagination unfold.

After the 30 minutes the practitioner will take a picture of the “sand world” they have created, print a copy, and keep it for them in their own personal folder. Once they have completed the 12 sessions, their folder will be handed back to the child / young person to keep.

Benefits of sand play

sand play can:

- Encourage emotional expression and communication.
- Assist in resolving internal conflicts.
- Facilitate healing and personal development.
- Aid in building a stronger self-concept and self-understanding.
- Improve relationships with others.
- Increase capacity to cope with life stressors.