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Abstract

The research and literature regarding the benefits and value of play therapy is widely documented; it benefits children in a variety of environments to establish healthy and authentic responses to the suffering in their lives which they may not be able to recognize or articulate otherwise. In his work *Totality and Infinity,* Emmanuel Levinas provides a foundation for relating to children that can be used to enhance the benefit of play therapy. The therapeutic necessity for play therapy in Levinas’ understanding of the world is the commonplace violence - the domination of the Other by the same - that takes place towards children and the many ways in which they are related to unethically in their everyday life. Often times children have relationships with adults that do not promote autonomy, independence, or validation. This paper uses concepts from *Totality and Infinity* as a basis to explore what relating to children would be like if play therapists viewed them as Other and the implications this could have as children integrate their experience outside of the dyad into all relationships. I explore Levinas’ concepts of understanding - standing under - the Other, the Other’s ability to say ‘no’, the movement of labor, what is taken into the dwelling as possessions, as well as Levinas’ conceptualization of love and desire. I believe integrating these concepts into play therapy would allow children to become ethical human beings that can live in the prescriptive way Levinas urged us to strive towards.