



### The Effectiveness of Child-Centered Play Therapy on Reducing Internalizing Symptoms in Children and Reducing Parental Stress in Mothers

Elahe Aghayi<sup>1\*</sup>, Elnaz Pishghadam<sup>2</sup>, Maryam Bayat<sup>3</sup>, Ahmad Abedi<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Educational Psychology, Psychology Faculty, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Counseling, Psychology Faculty, Isfahan University, Isfahan, Iran.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Psychology, Psychology Faculty, Tarbiyat Modares University, Tehran, Iran.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Psychology of Children with Special Needs, Psychology Faculty, Isfahan University, Isfahan, Iran.

**Published: 1 Oct 2014**

#### Abstract

The aim of this study was assessing the effectiveness of child-centered play therapy (CCPT) on reducing internalizing symptoms in children and reduced parental stress in mothers. The method of this study was Quasi-experimental research study using a pretest-post-test along with the control group. A group of 20 children with 7 and 8 age in 2012-2013 school year ( $n=10$  experimental and  $n=10$  control group) with internalizing disorder (anxiety/depression and depression/isolation) selected through cluster sampling method. They were divided into two experimental and control groups. Children in the experimental group participated in CCPT in 15 session of one hour. Control group does not receive any *intervention*. Both groups were assessed at the pre-test and post-test questionnaires, using the Achenbach Child Behavior Checklist (2001) and parental stress (Abidin, 1990). Analysis of covariance was used. CCPT in the treatment group a significant reduction in symptoms of anxiety/depression in children at ( $P<0.05$ ) in *compared* with the control group. But this method has not significant impact on reducing symptoms of isolation/depression in children. In addition, reducing parental stress was not significant in any groups. CCPT can be an effective way to reduce the symptoms of anxiety/depression in children. However, an intervention to alleviate symptoms of isolation/depression in children and reduce parental stress requires further investigation.

**Keywords:** Child-Centered Play Therapy, Internalizing Symptoms, Parental Stress.

**\*Corresponding Author:** Elahe Aghayi

**Email:** [elahe\\_aghayi@yahoo.com](mailto:elahe_aghayi@yahoo.com)