

## SUMMER NEWSLETTER

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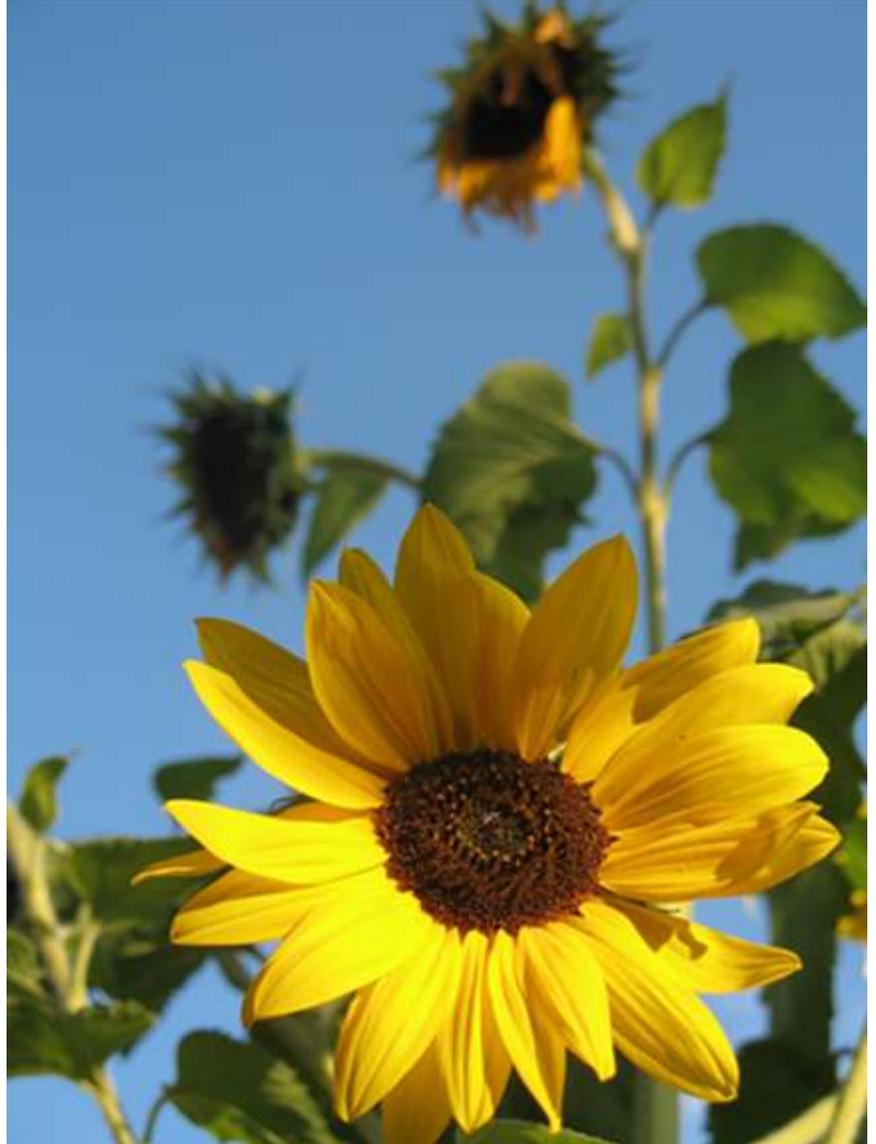
by Jennifer Montgomery, AMFT

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HEALTHY SNACKS, SELF-CARE IDEAS,  
SUGGESTED READING, FUN ACTIVITIES  
AND MORE!

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See the last page for office locations



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**A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**

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Long summer days are the perfect excuse to spend more time doing the things you love. Whether it's having fun in the sun, indulging in delicious treats or boosting your mood with simple self-care hacks, we have you covered! This edition of our SoulTenders newsletter features wise words on all those topics from our own SoulTenders providers, and some excellent information about the value of Play Therapy.

- Adriana Avila M.S., AMFT

# PLAY THERAPY – SOULTENDERS CHILD AND FAMILY CENTER

By Lauren Stockly, LCSW

Research teaches us that play is essential for children’s growth, and its importance can be translated to the therapy room where it can be a key element in increasing a child’s ability to express themselves.

The Souttenders Child and Family Center in South Pasadena is a specialized branch of Souttenders that primarily serves youth ages 0-25 (and their families) and offers services including Family/Art/Play and Group therapy. Our site director, Lauren Stockly, who is also an executive board member of the California Association for Play Therapy, provides more insight below.



Research supports the effectiveness of Play Therapy with children experiencing a wide range of social, emotional, behavioral, and learning problems (Lin & Bratton, 2015), and is included in the SAMHSA registry of Evidence-Based Practices.

Play Therapy helps children:

- ✓ Learn to experience and express emotion
- ✓ Become more responsible for behaviors and develop more successful strategies
- ✓ Develop new and creative solutions to problems
- ✓ Develop respect and acceptance of self and others
- ✓ Cultivate empathy and respect for thoughts and feelings of others
- ✓ Learn new social skills and relational skills with family
- ✓ Develop self-efficacy and thus a better assuredness about their abilities
- ✓ Work through trauma and psychosocial difficulties
- ✓ Foster healthy brain development

## What is Play Therapy?

Play Therapy is a therapeutic model that uses the power of play to resolve psychosocial difficulties by creating space for children to express feelings, develop problem-solving skills, modify behavior and learn new ways of coping and relating to others.



## Why Play Therapy?

Play is a child’s natural way of communicating. It expands self-expression, self-knowledge, self-actualization and self-efficacy. Play relieves feelings of stress, connects us to others, stimulates creative thinking and exploration, and regulates our emotions (Landreth, 2002).



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Did you know that Play Therapists receive hundreds of hours of post-graduate supervision, course work and continued training related to specializing in children? At Souttenders, a number of our clinicians utilize play in their work with children.

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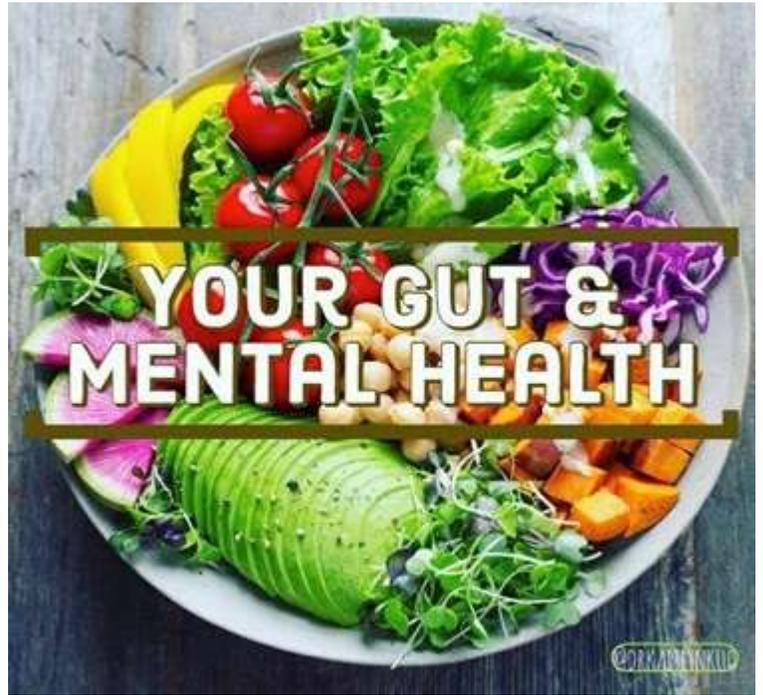
## GUT BRAIN HEALTH

By Kaitlyn Kuo, PsyD

Do you ever feel anxious or upset and then suddenly have an upset tummy? Or perhaps you notice you feel more anxious or depressed when you eat certain foods. This is because of the direct link between our brain and our gut, called the Gut Brain Axis, or GBA for short.

Most of our neurotransmitters (those little messengers that allow impulses to travel throughout our nervous system) are produced by our gut. Consequently, we are more likely to suffer from anxiety, depression and stress when we have an unhealthy gut!

The good news is that we can improve our gut health, which in turn improves our mood and overall mental health! Here are some things you can do to keep your gut AND your mind healthy.



-  **Eat Fiber.** Especially insoluble fiber! Use whole-grain flour instead of white, choose brown rice over white rice. Eat lentils, oats, popcorn and other fibrous foods to help keep digestive illnesses at bay.
-  **Try More Fermented Foods.** Naturally fermented foods, such as pickles, kimchi, tempeh, miso, and kombucha can help strengthen your gut microbiome.
-  **Add Greens!** A variety of greens daily is great, and cruciferous veggies, such as broccoli and brussel sprouts, are even better - they can help strengthen your immune system and fight inflammation.
-  **Eat Fruit Every Day.** Fruit boosts good gut bacteria and helps crowd out the bad.
-  **Don't be Afraid of Garlic and Onions.** They help create good gut microbes too!

My dear friends, take care of your gut. If you do, it will take care of you!

*Reference: Carabotti, M., Scirocco, A., Maselli, M. A., & Severi, C. (2015). The gut-brain axis: interactions between enteric microbiota, central and enteric nervous systems. Annals of gastroenterology, 28(2), 203-209.*

## HEALTHY SNACKS

**Summer Fun Fruit Smoothie** – make a cool and refreshing summer-treat by adding 1 to 1½ c milk (dairy free is fine!), ½ avocado, 1 c kale, 1 c frozen fruit or berries, ¼ tsp cinnamon and a few drops vanilla or almond extract to a blender. Blend until smooth and enjoy!

**Pumpkin Cheese Spread** – for a healthy spread full of probiotics, stir together 1 c Greek yogurt, 1 tsp maple syrup, ½ tsp cinnamon and 2 TB pumpkin puree. Spread on whole-grain bread, apples or celery.

**No-bake Energy Snacks**– these “prebiotic bites” are super easy to make! Mix 1 c rolled oats, ½ c ground flax seeds, ½ c coconut flakes, ½ c dark mini chocolate chips, ½ c organic nut butter and 1 tsp vanilla extract. Roll into balls and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes.

# SELF-CARE HACKS FOR BUSY PEOPLE

by Jennifer Stinson, Ph.D.

We hear a lot about the benefits of self-care. Good self-care can lower stress, increase resilience and have numerous other positive health benefits. But what IS self-care exactly?

The term “self-care” refers to activities and behaviors that increase our health and well-being while helping us cope with the stressors of daily life. Some people think of it as a day at the beach, a massage or a shopping spree. But it can also be the SMALL things – the acts of kindness and care we direct towards ourselves every day that can have a BIG impact!

Here are a few suggestions for self-care activities that cost zero dollars, take just TWO MINUTES, and can make you feel GREAT (or at least a little more prepared to take on the world).

- ◆ Spend an extra two minutes enjoying a warm shower or really savoring your morning coffee. If you usually rush through getting ready in the morning, just two minutes won't make you late for work or school, but it may help you approach the day more calmly.
- ◆ Adjust your posture. Studies show standing in a “power pose” for just two minutes has a positive impact on your confidence level. Try standing with your arms outstretched like you're flying, or on your hips like a superhero!
- ◆ Make your house (or office) smell good. Light a candle, bake cookies, steep some tea. Our sense of smell is connected to the deep centers of our brains so pleasant smells give us a positive boost.
- ◆ Listen to an upbeat song and sing along (bonus points for dancing)!
- ◆ Come up with your own personal motto, catch phrase or inspirational quote and repeat it for two minutes. It can be as simple as “I got this!”



## MORE SELF CARE IDEAS

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Anytime you take time for YOU, it's self-care! Here are a few other easy ways to recharge.

**Go for a Walk.** Get outside and go for a walk. Take a few moments to tune into all your senses and truly notice everything around you; the sounds you hear, the colors you see, the smells in the air.

**Create an “Already Done!” List.** Instead of focusing on your To-Do List, make a list of the things you've already done (e.g., made breakfast, responded to emails, did laundry, fed the dog, spent time with loved ones, etc.). You'll be surprised at all the “little” things you've already accomplished today!

**Make a Happiness Jar.** Write down five things you enjoy on single pieces of paper. For example, “listen to my favorite song” or “take a bubble bath”. Store them in a special jar. When you need a pick-me-up, select one and just do it!



## PREPPING FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS

*By Jennifer Montgomery, AMFT*

Now that we're in the middle of summer, it's a great time to reflect on the previous school year and prepare for the next! While we typically think about practical items such as school supplies and homework routines, it's also important to think about other areas that may impact your child's future success in the classroom.

Grades aren't just a reflection of how well your child has learned, they also provide insight into how your child feels in their learning environment. When kids feel anxious,

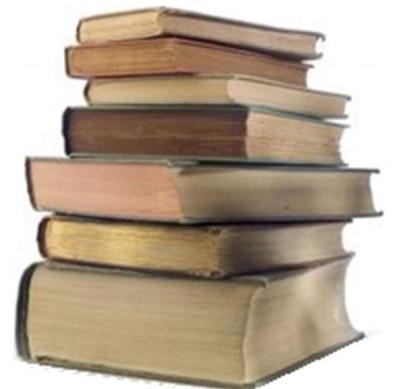
depressed or have social anxiety, they may be inhibited from reaching their full learning potential. If your child has experienced academic issues or other struggles in school, consider the following resources to help ensure they have the tools they need to succeed:

1. Check with your child's school to request assessments to identify academic and emotional needs. If your child meets eligibility requirements for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), work with the school to create one. Don't assume an IEP implies something is wrong or your child has difficulty learning, it can provide helpful accommodations to increase learning, such as extended test taking timelines or a less restrictive learning environment.
2. Speak with your child's physician about any symptoms that may make school more difficult, such as trouble sleeping, transitioning between activities, poor eating habits and physical or speech related difficulties. You may also want to address any specific emotional concerns and seek additional support from a therapist.
3. Contact your local Regional Center for information about developmental disabilities. They may be able to conduct assessments for difficulties with self-regulation, social skills, anxiety, depression, speech, motor skills and more. Visit [www.dds.ca.gov/RC/](http://www.dds.ca.gov/RC/) to locate the Regional Center serving your local area.

While you are preparing your child for the upcoming school year, don't forget to take care of yourself! Consult with your therapist for support and additional resources for you and your family.

## Suggested Reading

- ✓ The Whole Brain Child, by Dr. Dan Siegel. Check out his other books too! Including: No Drama Discipline, Brainstorm, Parenting from the Inside Out and The YES Brain  
[https://www.drdansiegel.com/resources/video\\_clips/parenting/](https://www.drdansiegel.com/resources/video_clips/parenting/)
- ✓ The Five Love Languages for Children, by Gary Chapman, Ph.D and Ross Campbell, MD  
<https://www.5lovelanguages.com/book/the-5-love-languages-of-children/>
- ✓ Even Fairies Fart, by Jennifer Stinson  
<https://www.harpercollins.com/9780062436238/even-fairies-fart/>



## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### ARCADIA (MAIN)

41 E. Foothill Blvd.  
Suite 102  
[\(626\) 701-4249](tel:6267014249)

### BURBANK

245 E. Olive Avenue  
Suite 400  
[\(818\) 823-6677](tel:8188236677)

### CERRITOS

17326 Edwards Road  
Suite A135  
[\(562\) 222-5258](tel:5622225258)

### CLAREMONT

250 W. First Street  
Suite 346  
[\(909\) 343-4550](tel:9093434550)

### MONROVIA

419 W. Foothill Blvd.  
[\(626\) 824-1123](tel:6268241123)

### PASADENA

482 N. Rosemead Blvd.  
Suite 103  
[\(626\) 372-1999](tel:6263721999)

### SAN MARINO

2600 Mission Street  
Suite 201  
[\(626\) 623-7478](tel:6266237478)

### SOUTH PASADENA CHILD AND FAMILY CENTER

1605 Hope Street  
Suite 350  
[\(626\) 414-5606](tel:6264145606)

### WHITTIER

7630 Painter Avenue  
Suite C  
[\(562\) 203-0177](tel:5622030177)

## SUMMER GROUPS

### 2019 Child and Adolescent Groups (South Pasadena)

Groups starting in June and July include Social Skills, Anxiety Management, Coping with Divorce, Self-Esteem, and LGBTQ+ (14-19). Space is limited and groups are offered based on availability and interest. Cost is \$25-30/session. For more information and to get on our "interest list" please email [andrea@souttenders.com](mailto:andrea@souttenders.com).

### LGBTQ Teen Group (South Pasadena)

A processing group with an opportunity to write as well.  
Held on Tuesdays: June 25, July 23, August 20 from 11am to 12:30pm.  
\$35 per group session or \$95 for all three sessions. Space is limited.  
For more information, please email [lily.ic@souttenders.com](mailto:lily.ic@souttenders.com).

## ACTIVITY TIME

Can you guess all the words in the summer-themed search below? Simply circle each word when you find it!



## Summer Time



A	I	C	E	C	R	E	A	M	B	A	B
S	O	U	T	S	I	D	E	W	S	U	A
U	J	U	K	O	U	B	E	A	C	H	L
N	F	R	I	E	N	D	P	R	A	J	L
N	H	O	D	P	H	S	O	M	M	U	K
Y	I	C	S	P	O	O	L	N	P	L	I
A	U	G	U	S	T	N	P	L	A	Y	N

Find these words in the puzzle. Words are hidden → and ↓.

AUGUST	CAMP	JULY	PLAY	ICE CREAM
BALL	FRIEND	KIDS	POOL	WARM
BEACH	HOT	OUTSIDE	SUNNY	