



## Donations for Play boxes

*“I really enjoy my sessions with [counsellor]. I loved playing games and explaining Minecraft to her. I felt better after my sessions. I knew I could talk to [counsellor] about my feelings and she would help me understand them.” – feedback from one of our children.*

Many of the families we work with have experienced multigenerational trauma and adversity and our aim is to stop the cycle of poor mental health being passed down from one generation to the next. We want to stop poor mental health becoming a life-long disability. We’ve remained open throughout the pandemic and demand for our service has grown by nearly 50% and expected to increase by a similar level again this year.

We use play therapy with children and sometimes young people, to help them understand difficult feelings and revisit upsetting events they’ve experienced in a safe way. Rather than talking through their situation, children make sense of this by playing it out at their own level and pace. This can help them cope better with challenges and learn to manage relationships and conflicts in more appropriate ways.

Prior to the pandemic each therapist had their own box of materials for play which was used with all clients. To ensure no cross contamination, we now create a separate named box for each child and young person we work with.

For each box we try and include– for young people and for children:

- The box itself
- Plastic wallet for paperwork
- Stationary items- Paper – white and coloured, Pencil case with coloured pens, colouring pencils, crayons, rubber, pencil sharpener, glue stick, ruler, scissors, Stickers.
- Pencil case with craft bits: things to stick on, paper puppets, lollypop sticks, fuzzy wire etc.
  
- A game – for example, Connect 4, UNO, Stacking Chairs, Dobble etc
- Small toys and games- A fidget toy, Pack of cards, Miniature toys/ puzzles, Finger puppets
- Other toys and play items- some nurturing things (dolls, baby bottle etc), Play food, Handcuffs, Sand and miniatures (animals, houses, people etc), Ambulance, Police car and Fire engines, Play food, Toy Mobile phone, Hospital/first aid kit, Snake

Some of the young people we work with prefer a plastic wallet, which typically contains:

- A fidget toy/several fidget toys
- Playing cards
- Paper – white and coloured
- A pencil case with stationery
- A pencil case with craft items



These boxes are very important for our clients as one of our counsellors explains:-

*“I have found that the children love having a box that they know is theirs - it gives them a sense of fulfilment (one child said 'what? This is actually just for me'). It also allows them the freedom to do what they want with the contents. The familiarity is a positive thing but adding a new item can also be exciting if I recognise something they are particularly interested in (eg dinosaurs)”.*

Our service is needed more than ever and we would welcome any support you are able to offer our charity to continue our work with families who are struggling with poor mental health. I would be very happy to meet with you individually, to share more about what we do and the impact we have. More specifically, if you have any items to donate which you think might be suitable for our play therapy boxes, including any old stock that you are unable to sell or which has slight damage, we would be very grateful for them.

If you would like to speak to someone about donating for playboxes please contact Emily at [emily.nicholas@platformforlife.org.uk](mailto:emily.nicholas@platformforlife.org.uk)