Life Encounter Counseling.
A safe place to be.

2026 CPRT Special PlayTime Toy Checklist

A Parent Guide for Child-Parent Relationship Therapy (CPRT)

Special PlayTime uses a small collection of carefully selected toys that allow children to express themselves through play - their natural language. Keep the toys together in a special container and reserve them primarily for parent-child Special PlayTime. Toys do not need to be new or expensive. Simple, sturdy, open-ended toys are best.

1. REAL-LIFE & NURTURING TOYS

For family relationships, caregiving, connection, safety, and everyday experiences.

- ■ Small baby doll
- ■ Baby bottle and small blanket
- ■ Family figures (adults and children)
- ■ Animal figures - gentle and wild
- ■ 2-3 small cars, trucks, or vehicles
- ■ Toy medical kit and adhesive bandages
- ■ Plastic dishes, cups, utensils, and pretend food
- ■ Toy or disconnected phone
- ■ Small dollhouse, cardboard house, or simple structure
- ■ A few pieces of dollhouse furniture
- ■ Play money
- ■ 2 puppets - one gentle and one potentially scary/aggressive
- ■ Scarf, bandana, or simple dress-up item
- ■ Small child-safe mirror

2. ACTING-OUT, POWER & AGGRESSIVE TOYS

For expressing anger, fear, conflict, power, protection, vulnerability, and control.

- ■ Aggressive animals and/or dinosaurs
- ■ 10-15 small people/action figures in two groups
- ■ Superhero and/or villain figures
- ■ Soft foam sword or flexible fantasy prop
- ■ Short piece of soft, thick rope
- ■ Several soft foam balls
- ■ Small target or basket for throwing balls
- ■ Inflatable bop bag or sturdy designated pillow
- ■ Simple mask
- ■ Easy-release toy handcuffs - no key required
- ■ Police, fire, ambulance, or rescue vehicle
- ■ Blocks, fences, or barriers for creating boundaries

3. CREATIVE & EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION TOYS

For creating, destroying, repairing, experimenting, problem-solving, and expressing feelings.

- ■ Play-Doh or modeling dough
- ■ Washable crayons and markers
- ■ Plain and construction paper
- ■ Child-safe scissors
- ■ Clear or masking tape
- ■ Craft sticks, pipe cleaners, and stickers
- ■ Large building blocks or simple construction toys
- ■ Disposable cardboard boxes, paper cups, or cardboard tubes
- ■ Inexpensive playing cards
- ■ Ring-toss or other simple skill toy
- ■ Child-safe shaker, tambourine, or small instrument
- ■ Magic wand or other open-ended fantasy object

KEEP IT SIMPLE & SAFE. Choose toys that allow **the child - not the toy - to create the story.** Avoid tablets, video games, talking/electronic toys, elaborate playsets, accessible button batteries, sharp objects, choking hazards, rigid weapons, projectile toys, or restraints that cannot immediately be released. Use age-appropriate toys and supervise Special PlayTime. A small tote with toys from **all three categories** is better than an overflowing toy box.

Source note: Adapted and modernized for 2026 from the traditional *Toy Checklist for Special PlayTime* used in Child-Parent Relationship Therapy (CPRT), associated with the Landreth/Bratton filial-therapy model. Modern substitutions emphasize accessibility, open-ended play, and current child-safety considerations.