



## A STUDY TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CLAY THERAPY ON SEPARATION ANXIETY AMONG PRESCHOOLERS IN SELECTED SCHOOLS AT COIMBATORE

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**ABSTRACT** Preschool children are the children those who are at the age of 3-6 years (Zapletal, A., & Chalupova, J, 2003). Anxiety disorders are one of the most common disorders seen among preschool children with overall prevalence rate of 8–10%. One in 10 preschool children found to be experiencing anxiety. In that 9.5% have in the form of separation anxiety, social anxiety, specific fears, and generalized anxiety. Clay therapy provides diversion and gives relaxation, feels more secure in a strange environment, reduces stress and decreases tension (Joseph, A. M., Ambika, K., & Williams, S. 2015). The main objective of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of clay therapy on separation anxiety among preschoolers in experimental group.

A quasi experimental, non-equivalent Pre and Post-test Control group design was chosen for this study without randomization and non-probability purposive sampling technique was used in this study. The sample size was 60 among these 30 samples for Experimental group and 30 samples for Control group from selected school schools at Coimbatore. Paul.W.Clement's Separation Anxiety questionnaire, was administered to the mothers of preschoolers. Clay Therapy was given as an intervention to Experimental group for 30 minutes per session twice a day for 10 days. The "t" value was 9.8421 it was significant at  $p < 0.05$  level. To conclude the clay therapy is very effective to treat and promote to overcome the separation anxiety among preschoolers.

**KEYWORDS :** Separation Anxiety, Clay Therapy, Effectiveness, Preschoolers.

### INTRODUCTION

The child is the most precious possession of mankind, most loved and perfect in its innocence. Preschool children are the children those who are at the age group of 3-6 years. The combined biological, psychosocial, cognitive, spiritual, and social achievements occur during the Preschool period. Preschoolers are the emerging creative persons who prepare their future role in the society. The parents are an integral part of their socialization. Some parents and children separate easily where others have a difficult time. Separation for short period may be tried initially if parents or child or both need reassurance. Abiding R.R et.al., (2008) reported that the prevalence rate of Separation Anxiety in India estimated as 34.4% and school refusal as 51.2%. Basel (2003) stated that Childhood prevalence of having Separation Anxiety in Tamilnadu showed that below 3 years estimates range from 2.2% to 8.6% and 3 – 6 years estimates range from 15.5% to 27.7%.

Separation Anxiety is normal in very young children (those between 8 and 14 months old). Kids often go through a phase when they are "clingy" and afraid of unfamiliar people and places. When this fear occurs in a child over age of 3 years, is excessive, and lasts longer than four weeks, the child may have Separation Anxiety.

Separation Anxiety is condition in which a child becomes fearful and nervous when away from home or separated from a loved one usually a parent or other care giver to whom the child is attached. Some children also develop physical symptoms such as headache, muscle ache, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, fever, dizziness or palpitation, the other symptoms are bedwetting, refusal to go to school, refusal to go to sleep without care giver, temper tantrum, separation related night mares and continuous crying in school. Play therapy is one of the important methods of prevention of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers. Creativity is developed through play. Play also has therapeutic and moral value. Clay therapy provides diversion and brings relaxation, feels more secure in a strange environment, lessens stress and provides a means of release tension (Caroly Pataki et.al 2009).

### OBJECTIVES

- To screen the moderate and severe level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers
- To assess the level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers in Experimental and Control group
- To Evaluate the Effectiveness of Clay Therapy on Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers in Experimental group.
- To find out the association between the level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers in Experimental and Control group with their selected Demographic Variables.

### HYPOTHESES

H<sub>1</sub>: There will be a significant difference between the mean Pre and

Post-test level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers in Experimental group.

H<sub>2</sub>: There will be a significant difference between the mean Post-test level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers in Experimental and Control group.

H<sub>3</sub>: There will be a significant association between the level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers in Experimental and Control group with their selected Demographic Variables.

### RESEARCH DESIGN

A quasi experimental, non-equivalent Pre and Post-test control group design was chosen for this study without randomization. Observations were made before and after administering the Clay Therapy. The samples were selected by purposive sampling technique, who fulfilled the inclusion criteria.

The diagrammatical representation of research design is given below

Group	Pre-test Day – 1	Clay therapy Day – 2	Post-test Day – 12
Experimental	O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>
Control	O <sub>1</sub>	***	O <sub>2</sub>

O<sub>1</sub> = Pre-test for Experimental and Control group.

X = Clay Therapy, intervention for Experimental group

\*\*\* = No intervention

O<sub>2</sub> = Post- test for Experimental and Control group .

### Clay Therapy Intervention

The investigator made intervention after reviewing literature and opinion from experts regarding Clay Therapy.

### CLAY THERAPY PROCEDURE

#### Pre requisites

- Explain the procedure to the children in a understandable language
- Get consent from the children
- Provide psychological support and win confidence from the child
- Advise the child to perform the Clay Therapy
- Advise the child to inform about any disturbance or problem

#### Steps

- Identify a Preschoolers who have Separation Anxiety might benefit from Clay Therapy.

2. Sit near the child during the class play period or recess.
3. Obtain materials for the session. Recommended items include:
  - manipulatives (e.g., clay, shapes like fruits, dolls, flowers and symbols)
4. Place the materials in specific places where they can be located for each session.
5. Meet the student and introduce him/her to the play area.
6. Inform the student of limitations and how long the session will last usually 30 minutes.
7. Allow the student to choose the materials with which to play.
8. Explain the technique to the children
  - Squeeze the Clay and make it to a round shape
  - Place the shapes over the Clay and press over it
  - Remove the extra Clay which is out of the shapes
  - And now the desired Clay shape is ready
9. As the end of the session nears, inform the student of that fact, stating the number of minutes left. This procedure helps with transition back to other activities.
10. Upon reaching the time limit, inform the student in a manner similar to the following: "Our time is up for today. We'll have to stop now and put the toys back where we found them."
11. Inform the student as to when the next session will be held.

**After care**

- Keep the model in a separate place
- Wash the hands thoroughly
- Interact with the child and allow to express their experience

**DESCRIPTION OF INSTRUMENT**

The instruments consist of two parts.

**Part I:** Consists of Demographic Variables of the Preschoolers with Separation Anxiety Age of the child, sex of the child, mother's education, mother's occupation, family monthly income, type of family, number of siblings, and the order of the child.

**Part II:** Consists of the Modified Paul.W.Clement's Separation Anxiety questionnaire to assess the level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers.

**PLAN FOR DATA ANALYSIS**

The Demographic Variables were analyzed by using descriptive measures (frequency and percentage). The effect of Clay Therapy on reduction of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers was analyzed by using paired 't' test. Association between the level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers with the selected Demographic Variables were analyzed by using chi square test.

**Section I:** Data On Assessment Of Pre And Post Test Level Of Separation Anxiety Among Preschoolers In Experimental And Control Group.

**Table: 1** Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Pre and Post-test level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers in Experimental and Control Group. N = 60

S. No.	Level of Separation Anxiety	Experimental Group				Control Group			
		Pre-test		Post-test		Pre-test		Post-test	
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	None (0%)	-	-	5	17	-	-	-	-
2	Mild (>33%)	-	-	18	60	-	-	-	-
3	Moderate(33-67%)	22	73	7	23	22	73	22	73
4	Severe (<68%)	8	27	-	-	8	27	8	27

Table:1 Reveals that Pre- test and Post- test level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers in Experimental and Control group.

Regarding the Pre- test level of Separation Anxiety in experimental group, none were under the Mild, 22(73%) were under Moderate and 8(27%) were under Severe. In Post-test level of Separation Anxiety 5(17%) were under no level of Separation Anxiety, 18(60%) were under Mild, 7(23%) were under Moderate and no were under severe level of Separation Anxiety.

Regarding, the Pre- test level of Separation Anxiety control group, none were under the Mild, 22(73%) were under Moderate and 8(27%) were under Severe, in Post-test level of Separation Anxiety none were under the Mild, 22(73%) were under Moderate and 8(27%) were under Severe.

**Section II:** Data On Effectiveness Of Clay Therapy On Separation Anxiety Among Preschoolers In Experimental Group.

**Table: 2**

Mean, Standard Deviation, Mean Difference and 't' Value of Pre and Post-test level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers in Experimental and Control Group. N = 60

Groups	Mean	S.D	M.D	t-value
Experimental Group				
Pre test	24.7	7	15.6	17.09*
Post test	9.1	6.3		
Control Group				
Pre test	25.3	6	0.1	1.36
Post test	25.2	5.9		

p<0.05 (significant) \*

**Table:2** Reveals that, In experimental group, the Pre-test mean was 24.7, standard deviation was 7, the Post-test mean was 9.1, standard deviation was 6.3, the mean difference was 15.6 and the "t" value is 17.09 which is significant to the p<0.05. In control group the Pre-test mean was 25.3, standard deviation was 6, the Post-test mean was 25.2, standard deviation was 5.9, the mean difference was 0.1 and the "t" value is 1.36 which is non significant to the p<0.05.

Hence, the hypothesis stated was accepted.

**Section III:** Data On The Mean Post Test Level Of Separation Anxiety Among Preschoolers In Experimental And Control Group.

**Table: 3**

Mean, Standard Deviation, Mean Difference and 't' Value of Post-test level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers in Experimental and Control Group. N = 60

Groups	Mean	S.D	M.D	t-value
Experimental Group				
Post test	9.1	6.3	16.1	9.8421*
Control Group				
Post test	25.2	5.9		

Table value = 1.96, p<0.05 (significant) \*

Table:3 reveals that, in experimental group, the Post-test mean was 9.1, standard deviation was 6.3, In control group the Post-test mean was 25.2, standard deviation was 5.9, the mean difference was 16.1 and the "t" value is 9.8421 which is significant to the p<0.05.

Hence, the hypothesis stated was accepted.

**DISCUSSION**

From this present study it showed that Clay Therapy was effective for the Preschoolers with Separation Anxiety. The investigator experienced in Presentation Convent matriculation higher secondary school the Preschoolers with Separation Anxiety was able to overcome it and there was a reduction in the level of Separation Anxiety. So the investigator suggests that all the other children to adopt this Clay Therapy for the reduction of Separation Anxiety.

These findings were supported by a study done by James Werner (2006) conducted a experimental study to evaluate the effectiveness of Clay Therapy on Separation Anxiety among (3-6 years) Preschoolers. The sample size was 120 were selected by purposive sampling technique. The tool used was Paul W Clement's Separation Anxiety questioners. The intervention was given for 10 days, the obtained "t" value was 18.29 to the p<0.01, the investigator concluded that Clay Therapy is effective in reducing the Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers.

**CONCLUSION**

The main conclusion from this present study is, there was a reduction in the Post-test level of Separation Anxiety in Experimental group after gave the Clay Therapy intervention. And there was no reduction in the Post- test level of Separation Anxiety in Control group. On assessment it showed an imperative need to understand the purpose of Clay Therapy regarding the reduction on level of Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers. Clay Therapy is very effective to treat and promote to overcome the Separation Anxiety among Preschoolers.