# Animal Assisted Play Therapy®



## Information for Schools

Heidi and Rolo have joined the Clear Sky team to work in Oxfordshire schools, helping vulnerable children and young people to work on whatever comes up for them - it could be anything from anxiety about peers to difficulties concentrating in school to worries in the home, or perhaps just feeling misunderstood. We're here to give children and young people a space to explore whatever is on their mind – and we do it playfully, so there's no pressure!

### Who is Animal Assisted Play Therapy® for?

Animal Assisted Play Therapy® is for children and young people aged 4+ who display emotional or behavioural difficulties. They might include:

- Anxiety
- Low self esteem
- Difficulties with regulation
- Peer Difficulties
- Lack of confidence
- Behavioural issues
- Challenges at home
- Feeling misunderstood

### What is Animal Assisted Play Therapy®?

Animal Assisted Play Therapy® is a goal directed intervention in which an animal, meeting specific criteria, is an integral part of the work. As the name implies, Animal Assisted Play Therapy® draws on play, incorporating an animal, as a way of connecting with and supporting children and young people.

AAPT is delivered by a trained mental health, allied health or education professional who is either a registered play therapist or has had core training in play therapy techniques.

Both the practitioner and the animal have undergone a rigorous certification process before being independently assessed by the AAPT International Certification Board.

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**Clear Sky Children's Charity**
www.clear-sky.org.uk | 01865 362789 | info@clear-sky.org.uk
Charity Number 1140441

## Who delivers Animal Assisted Play Therapy®?

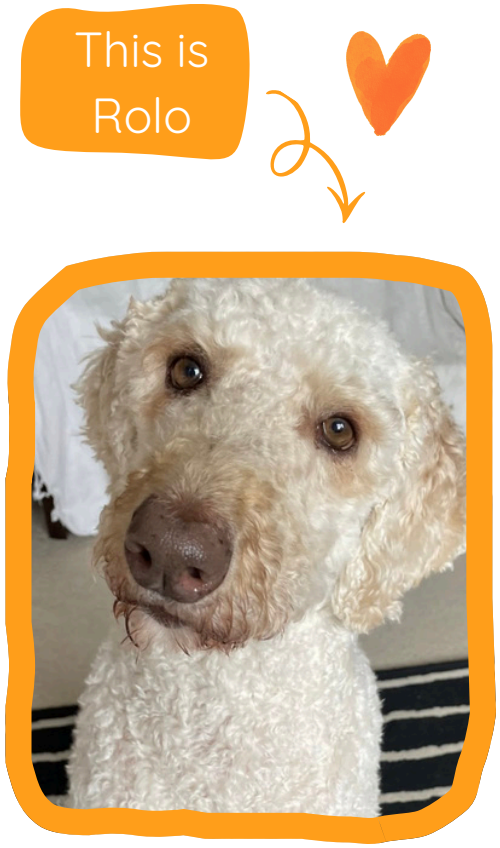
Hello, my name is Heidi and I am Certified Professional Practitioner of Animal Assisted Play Therapy®. I love working alongside my fabulous dog, Rolo!

Rolo is a big, friendly softie who loves meeting children and young people - he is also quite nosy!

Rolo and I offer play and creative arts sessions which can include:

- Scent trails
- Toy making
- Training Rolo to do a new trick
- Short walks with Rolo
- Taking care of Rolo
- Story telling
- All kinds of games: Ball games, puzzles, hide and seek games - you name it, we'll try it!
- New inventions!

In Animal Assisted Play Therapy® it's really important that everyone feels good in the session. So we want everyone, including Rolo, to enjoy the session. Everyone can decide whether they want to take part or not.




## Aims of Animal Assisted Play Therapy®

Animal Assisted Play Therapy® (AAPT) is a powerful and effective tool for mental health clinicians, educators, and allied health professionals to use to assist clients in achieving a wide range of individual, interpersonal, and family goals. The presence of an appropriately selected and trained animal can facilitate the relationship and working alliance between client and practitioner as they overcome problems and achieve therapeutic goals.

AAPT is grounded in well-established theories and practices in terms of child development, clinical intervention, play therapy, family therapy, and humane animal treatment. Adherence to these foundations and the other AAPT principles is designed to ensure a positive, relationship-oriented, best-practices approach to each client and each animal involved in the therapeutic process.

## What evidence is there that Animal Assisted Play Therapy® works?

AAPT is beneficial for psychotherapy and family therapy clients across the lifespan. The combination of animal therapy partners with the therapeutic use of humour and playfulness creates a unique therapeutic environment that reduces stress and builds connections. This approach is applicable to a wide range of psychosocial challenges. The principles and methods used in AAPT can readily be applied to other forms of Animal-Assisted Interventions, such as in educational settings, medical settings, and for allied health professionals as well as other forms of counseling/psychotherapy. The lightness and use of play and humour can also be relevant to Animal-Assisted Activities and various visitation and reading programmes.

## How long is an AAPT therapy intervention?

**Animal Assisted Play Therapy® delivered through Clear Sky is recommended for a minimum period of 8 weeks.**

AAPT is a process-oriented form of therapy. While sessions might focus on specific tasks or goals, such as teaching something new to the animal, the process of getting there is considered of much greater importance than achieving any single outcome. The practitioner knows how to facilitate and use the process to help clients overcome their difficulties or develop new skills. Unexpected events during interactions are woven into the texture of the session so that client and animal needs are met.

## How long do sessions last and when do they take place?

Sessions typically last for 40-50 minutes and may consist of indoor and outside activities where possible.

**We ask schools to provide a suitable space for sessions on a ground floor and if possible, close to access to the outside space for walks and exercise during the visit (same private room available at the same time each week).**

## What is the cost of Animal Assisted Play Therapy®?

Our fees are subsidised through our fundraising efforts as a charity to provide an affordable, accessible, and sustainable service for vulnerable children.

**One-to-one sessions start at £70 per child per session. Please contact us for more details.**

## Do you offer group Animal Assisted Play Therapy®?

Yes, our Animal Assisted Play Therapy® group sessions support up to 4 children over 12 sessions and can be suitable for some children, for other children 1:1 is more appropriate. Our Animal Assisted Play Therapy® practitioner will recommend which children would be suitable for group therapy.

**If you are interested in Heidi and Rolo supporting children in your Oxfordshire school please get in touch with us: info@clear-sky.org.uk**

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