



# Understanding Children's Drawings

*By Cathy A. Malchiodi PhD ATR-BC LPCC*



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This practical resource demonstrates how all clinicians can broaden and enhance their work with children by integrating drawing into therapy. The book enables therapists to address the multidimensional aspects of children's art without resorting to simplistic explanations. Approaching drawing as a springboard for communication and change, Malchiodi offers a wealth of guidelines for understanding the intricate messages embedded in children's drawings and in the art-making process itself. Topics covered include how to assist children in making art, what questions to ask and when, and how to motivate children who are initially resistant to drawing. Assimilating extensive research and clinical experience, the book includes over 100 examples of children's work.



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## **Editorial Review**

### **Review**

"This carefully crafted and sensitive book will undoubtedly become a standard text for all clinicians who work with children. A comprehensive range of timely issues is covered with a balanced, caring tone that only a highly respected and experienced teacher and therapist could produce. Malchiodi ably demonstrates the benefits of graphic expression for the assessment process and the therapeutic hour. Literature reviews and exquisitely presented case examples and illustrations provide an exciting platform for classroom discussion. This clearly written, state-of-the-art book is a welcome contribution to the child mental health field." -- Gerald D. Oster, PhD, Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry, University of Maryland Medical School; coauthor of *Clinical Uses of Drawings*

"This multidimensional approach to understanding children's drawings is rich in research, insight, and applications that will be of immense help to those working with traumatized children." --William Steele, MS, MSW, Director, Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children

"A wide variety of therapists who work with children, including myself, stock our therapy rooms with toys, art materials, sandtrays, and miniatures. It seems to me that when we do so we invite our child clients to engage with these materials. This invitation is an awesome opportunity to facilitate, enhance, and promote the child's therapy. Yet clinicians may not take full advantage of what they can learn from children's art....This book will greatly enhance your understanding." --From the Foreword by Eliana Gil, PhD, Starbright Training Institute for Child and Family Play Therapy, Rockville, MD

"Where children are concerned, art happens! Now, at long last, we have a clearly stated, commonsense guide to using art in therapy that will prove invaluable to all clinicians who see children in their practice. This book is refreshingly comprehensive, including state-of-the-art thinking on developmental, interpersonal, gender, somatic, spiritual, and ethical aspects of children's drawings. Richly illustrated and sensitively written with a child's best interests in mind, *Understanding Children's Drawings* is destined to become a classic." --Carol Thayer Cox, Assistant Director, Art Therapy Program of George Washington University, coauthor of *Telling Without Talking: Art as a Window into the World of Multiple Personality*

"Malchiodi writes in a clear, easy-to-comprehend style. She avoids the pitfalls of many other 'basic' texts that fail to address fundamental concepts or get bogged down in too much detail. Her book is also well referenced for any reader who wishes to pursue any of the material further....I believe most child and adolescent psychiatrists and psychiatric residents would benefit from reading this book, whether to use art therapy themselves or to learn about another treatment modality at our disposal in the effort to prevent, diagnose, and treat mental illness."

*(Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry)*

### **From the Back Cover**

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child's best interests in mind, *Understanding Children's Drawings* is destined to become a classic. (Carol Thayer Cox, MA, ATR, LPAT, George Washington University)

#### About the Author

Cathy A. Malchiodi, ATR, LPCC, CPAT, REAT, is Director of the Institute for the Arts & Health, Salt Lake City, Utah, and Editor of *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*. She has authored or coauthored three previous books and has published and lectured widely on topics including the use of art therapy with trauma, child physical and sexual abuse, and medical problems.

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