

# Hypnosis with Children

**CLINICAL WORKSHOP**  
**LEVEL 1**

**January 31, February 1, February  
28, and March 1, 2026**



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Linda Thomson is a Nurse Practitioner and Approved Consultant in Clinical Hypnosis, a Diplomate of both the American Board of Medical Hypnosis and the American Board of Hypnosis in Nursing and a Fellow of ASCH. Linda is a past president of ASCH and was awarded ASCH's Lifetime Achievement Award.

She has lectured and taught workshops across the country and around the world. She is passionate about teaching health care professionals how to incorporate hypnosis and hypnotic language into their practices.

# Continuing Education & Accreditation Statement

- This program has been approved by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis Standards of Training Committee to be used toward Membership and Certification requirements.
- The American Society of Clinical Hypnosis-Education and Research Foundation (ASCH-ERF) is accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education to provide continuing medical education for physicians.
- ASCH-ERF designates this enduring material for a maximum 22 CE of AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)<sup>™</sup>. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity.
- This session is approved by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis and as such is an approved continuing education course.

# Disclosures (Yes Financial, Yes AI)

- ASCH and ASCH-ERF jointly provided this program.
- No staff or committee members involved in the development, planning or execution of educational content have any financial relationships or conflicts of interest to disclose.
- Dr. Thomson has had a significant financial relationships or conflict of interest from the past 24 months to disclose.
  - *For an in-depth definition of what constitutes a financial relationship, please visit the ACCME at <https://accme.org/rule/identify-mitigate-and-disclose-relevant-financial-relationships/>*
- Financial Relationships listed below:
  - Company Name, Nature of relationship, current status of relationship
- All relevant financial relationships have been mitigated.
- Dr. Thomson has used AI in the development of this program/materials.
- Description of How AI was used:

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# Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this session the participant will be able to:

Identify 3 developmental characteristics that make children particularly hypnotizable

Describe how hypnotic approaches vary with the developmental age

Define the therapeutic benefits and applications of using hypnosis with children

Hypnosis is about learning what you never knew you knew and controlling what you never knew you could.

.

Using your mind. . .

Daydreaming on purpose. . .

Thinking to help yourself. . .

Learning how to work to control your mind. . .

# Developmental Traits Enhancing Hypnotic Ability

(Gardner, 1974)

- ◆ Absorption
- ◆ Immediacy
- ◆ Eidetic Imagery
- ◆ Concrete, literal
- ◆ Magical, limited reality testing
- ◆ Intense
- ◆ Enjoyment of new ideas and experiences

# Characteristic Features of Hypnosis with Children

- ◆ Shift in and out of trance
- ◆ Eyes open
- ◆ Active
- ◆ Elicitation – simple, playful, flexible

# Children and Adolescents are Hypnotically Talented

- ◆ Indistinct boundaries between rational and imaginative worlds
- ◆ Children use imagination in play, to cope and to fantasize about the future

# Studies show that children

- ◆ Have greater hypnotic capacity
  - ◆ Most hypnotizable 11 years (8 – 12)
- ◆ Their ability to alter behavior/physiology with hypnosis related to depth/creativity of imagery

Hypnosis uses imagination to change:

symptomatology  
physiology  
and  
behavior

Understand child development  
and  
brain development

# Developmental Goals

Birth to Six

- ◆ Attachment
- ◆ Regulation
- ◆ Exploration

# Self Regulation

- ◆ Refers to processes to control thinking, emotions, behavior, AND physiology

When the fear of pain is bigger  
than the pain itself

# Developmental Goals

Elementary and Middle School

- ◆ Attachment

- ◆ Regulation

- ◆ Exploration

# Case Example

- ◆ 6 year old with enuresis
- ◆ 2nd session
- ◆ Playfully engages his imagination to help control what he never knew he could

# Hypnosis with School-age Children

- ◆ Concrete thinkers
- ◆ Active use of fantasy and identification with real and imagined characters
- ◆ Increasing self-awareness, rules, fairness
- ◆ Increasing control over new feelings/desires
  
- ◆ Mastery and achievement

# Headaches

- ◆ 8 yr old 3rd grader
- ◆ Recent death of grandfather
- ◆ Learning difficulties
- ◆ Not a good “fit” with teacher

# Case Example

- ◆ 8 year old, developmentally delayed with anxiety
- ◆ Erikson's Developmental Task: Initiative vs Guilt
- ◆ 3 1/2 – 6 yrs
  - ◆ Skills broaden thru play and imagination
  - ◆ Guilt restricts development of play skills and imagination

12 year old with Headaches

# Developmental Goals

Adolescents

- ◆ Attachment
- ◆ Regulation
- ◆ Exploration

# Abstract Reasoning

This begins to come into thought processing at an average age of 16 years. The range may be 12 to 20 years.

During puberty  
teens expand  
their neural  
matrix through  
myelination

Pathways that  
are used are  
strengthened.  
Neurons that  
aren't used  
are pruned or  
eliminated

**Use it or Lose it**

RISK TAKING; LACK OF IMPULSE CONTROL

“Nothing’s going to happen to me.”

# Hypnosis with Adolescents

- ◆ Period of tremendous change, great variability
- ◆ Ego-centricity of adolescence - imaginative audience
- ◆ Illusion of immortality
  
- ◆ Autonomy, independence and mastery

# Adolescence

- ◆ Desire more novelty and increased social connection
- ◆ Peers and social media are powerful influences

# Headaches

- ◆ 16 yr old with long history of migraines
- ◆ recently diagnosed with CF and liver damage
- ◆ Told not to take analgesics due to liver disease
- ◆ Headaches exacerbated

# Case Example

- ◆ 15 year old girl
- ◆ stress-induced IBS / Functional Abdominal Pain
- ◆ Sleeping Problems

# Developmental Goals

Infancy, Childhood, & Adolescence

- ◆ Attachment

- ◆ Regulation

- ◆ Exploration

# Biofeedback

Therapeutic technique to improve health by using signals  
from one's own body

# Summary

- ◆ Children are not small adults
- ◆ Developmental level is more important than chronological age
- ◆ Goals through-out childhood: attachment, regulation and exploration
- ◆ The child's world is the framework for treatment
- ◆ We can make a difference - for a lifetime

# GOAL

- ◆ Happy, healthy, productive children
- ◆ It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken adults (Douglas)



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# Resources from Hypnosis and Children

- ♦Kohen & Olness - Hypnosis and Hypnotherapy with Children
- ♦Lyons - Using Hypnosis with Children
- ♦Sugarman & Wester - Therapeutic Hypnosis with Children and Adolescents
- ♦Thomson - Harry Hypnopotamus - Metaphorical Tales for the Treatment of Children
- ♦Thomson - Harry Hypnopotamus - More Metaphorical Tales for Children

# Contact Information

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