

Hypnosis with Children

CLINICAL WORKSHOP
LEVEL 1

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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)[™]. 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 (No Financial, No 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 no 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/>*
- Dr. Thomson has not used AI in the development of this program/materials.

Learning Objectives

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

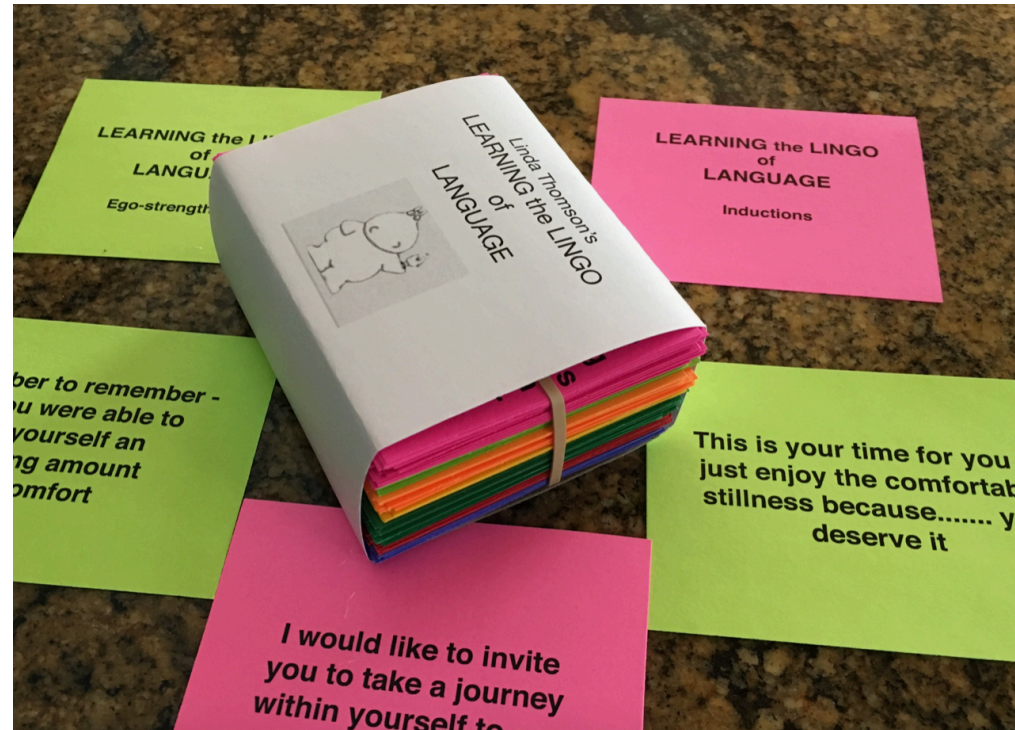
Identify 3 developmental characteristics that make children particularly hypnotizable

Describe how hypnotic approaches vary with the developmental age

Define the therapeutic benefits and applications of using hypnosis with children



LEARNING the LINGO of LANGUAGE CARDS



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

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 – 6yrs
 - ◆ Skills broaden thru play and imagination
 - ◆ Guilt restricts development of play skills and imagination

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 though
myelination

Use it or Lose it

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

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

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

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