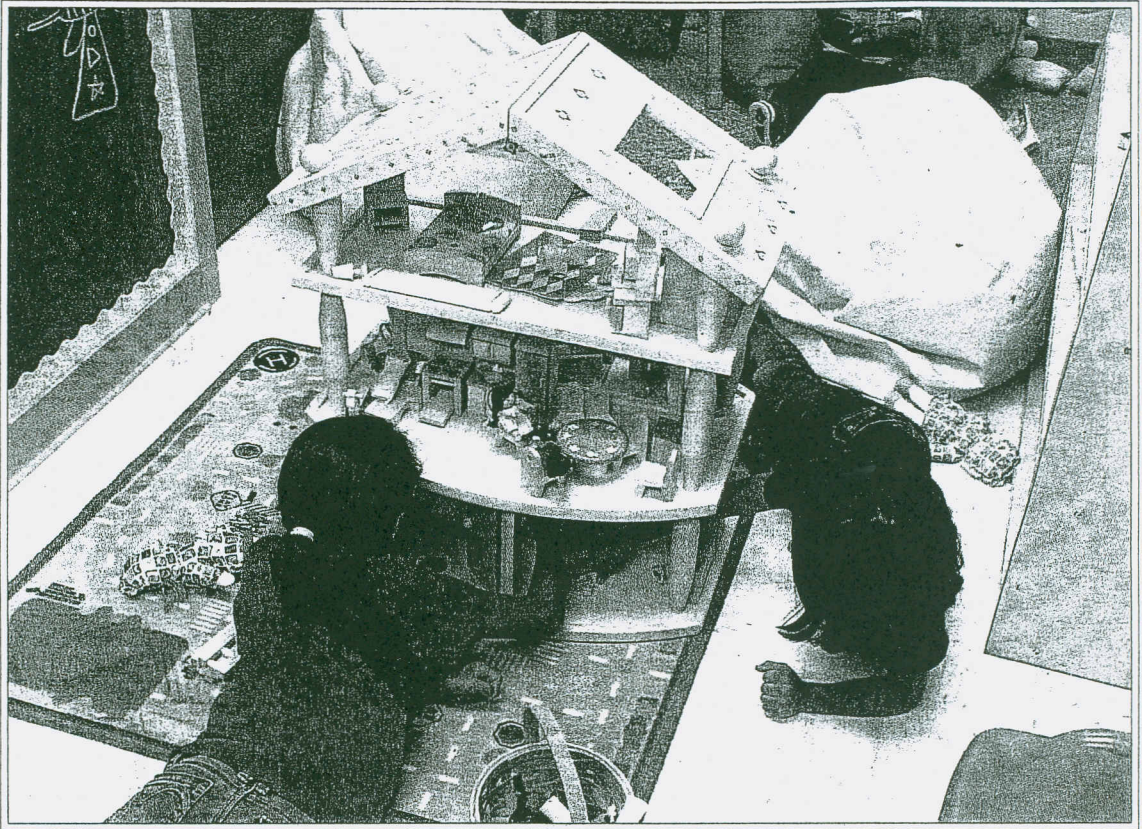


FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER'S NEW AREA FOR CHILDREN



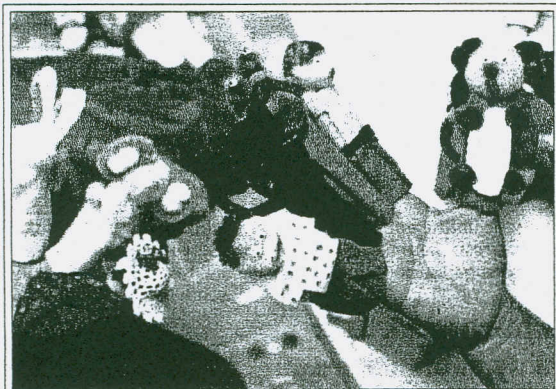
PHOTOS BY ROBERT MCLEROY/SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS-NEWS

Children play in the child therapy area of the Bexar County Family Justice Center, which is at University Health Center-Downtown.

A place for healing and hope

The Bexar County Family Justice Center on Tuesday unveiled its new child therapy area, a designated space for children of domestic violence victims to play or be counseled. Designed and equipped by volunteers from the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph AFB, the idea behind the area was to create something that would inspire children "so that they know there are people out there who care for them and give them hope," said Staff Sgt. Aidaliz Lagueux. The office of District Attorney Susan Reed created the family justice center three years ago after Reed toured something similar in San Diego, Calif. On Tuesday, she told reporters that "children have a lot of anger from witnessing violence." The new area, she said, gives them an opportunity to express their anger in a healthy way. Meera Ballal, the center's executive director, said 4,300 new clients and 4,200 repeat clients visited the center last year.

— Elizabeth Allen



The new area is a designated space for children of domestic violence victims to play or be counseled. The family justice center opened three years ago.



Air Force Staff Sgt. Aidaliz Lagueux (left) and Senior Master Sgt. Carianne Melnick were instrumental in opening the area, designed and equipped by volunteers from Randolph AFB.