

DollsVilla by Liliane®



DollsVilla by Liliane® is the child-height, sustainably made house on wheels for 12" [30cm] dolls and toy animals, and their cars. Featuring a stylish modern interior, car ramp and storage drawers, DollsVilla is made of birch plywood double-coated with transparent varnish, and solid beech, stainless steel and Plexiglas. The wheels are metal with foot brakes. CE | European and US standards for safety EN 71-1 71-2 71-3 | ASTM F 963-11 | TÜV | FSC. DollsVilla is Dutch-designed since 1999.

DollsVilla.nl – Video



VISION MISSION | LILIANE LIMPENS – DESIGNER OF DOLLSVILLA BY LILIANE®

When children's children have their own beautiful, sustainable house to live in, with ample light and space, this is reflected in the wellbeing and resilience of the little parents.

DollsVilla is an idea born out of experiences and observations I had in my own childhood.

As a young girl, I witnessed the inability of adults to relate to the feelings and perceptions of a child. I saw my parents unable to carry through their intentions to provide their child with a secure and loving home. I saw their isolation, the parry and thrust of threats, and their shame.

At the same time, I saw – looking out from our living room window – my dad's love for his kids, when he built a wooden see-saw and swing for us. I saw my mum's loving care expressed in her needlework. I felt a sense of delight when pushing my doll Liesje in her shiny new deluxe pram. But equally, of sadness at the impossibility of sharing that wonderful and seemingly so simple connection with the flesh and blood people around me. Secretly, I

dreamt of a future life replete with warmth, trust, fulfilment, friendship and freedom. And in the make-believe world of Barbie dolls, a friend and I began building that new road.

As a little girl, I dreamt of finding an adult whom I could take into my confidence. The language of words was too direct, however, to convey that wish – but not the language of pictures and play.

These elements come together in the design of DollsVilla. It is an answer. It is delight. It is a place apart; a safe haven for children that can be or become whatever they wish. I built a villa for my daughter and son, and then I wanted to give that villa to every child. This desire grew so strong that in 1999 I decided to start my own company centring wholly around DollsVilla by Liliane®, the first sustainable and exclusive house for 12" (30cm) dolls, and their cars.

The design of DollsVilla is the three-dimensional embodiment of that intention. An intention which first took hazy shape far back in mid-1960. Would I, one day, be able to create something that could help parents, teachers and doctors better understand children's wordless language? Something that could bridge their two worlds?

Now, in 2019, DollsVilla by Liliane® has become that means of expression for thousands of children every day in Europe, the US, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. I have found my own way to contribute to the foundations of a better life. It all goes back to the beginning: to children's children.

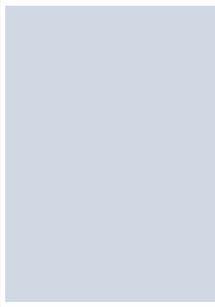
Liliane Limpens | designer [May 2019]

DollsVilla by Liliane® to house their most important emotions



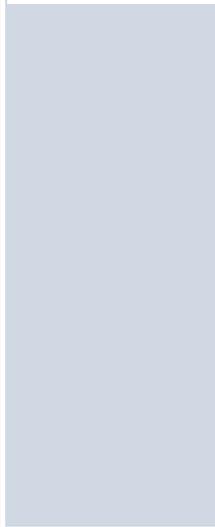
ATTACHMENT ✓

Dolls and toy animals measuring 12 inches [30cm] are just the right size and shape to hold and often are a child's favourites – confidantes to whom she or he grows keenly attached. Their dolls'



cars, skis, bikes, skateboards, sleds and horses have their own entrance through the villa's car ramp.

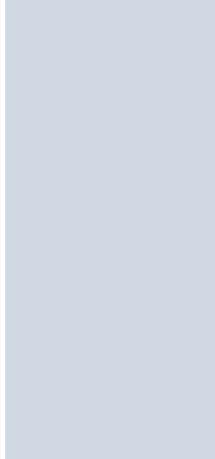
'As soon as you see the DollsVilla by Liliane® your heart will explode with a child's excitement, however old you are.' – Olive Bell | Moon Picnic UK/US.



AUTONOMY ✓

DollsVilla is the exclusive domain of children and they alone determine its norms and values, its rules of conduct, and its viewpoints and freedoms. Adults have no authority and are granted access solely by invitation. Instead of being focused on the world of adults, the villa shifts the child's attention to her or his own life, which is precisely where it should be. #mindful

'The best medicine against the biggest threats facing humankind – that is, loss of autonomy and the division of humanity by artificial intelligence and biotechnology – are mental equilibrium and emotional intelligence. These qualities will enable children to keep reinventing themselves in an extremely changeable world.' – Yuval Noah Harari | Author of Sapiens.

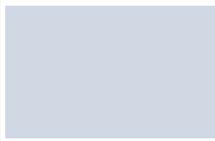


BASIS ✓

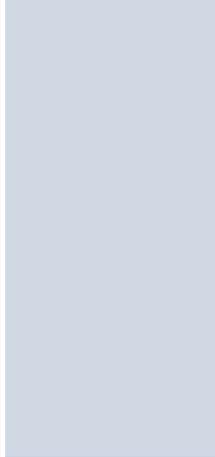
A child has only one chance to make a good start. No one gets to go back and begin again. For a baby, those early days consist almost wholly of smells, the rustle of the world moving around them, the hands that hold them, and the sound of their parents' voices. These things provide familiarity, stability, love.

The first one thousand days, from conception to the second birthday, are crucial for each person's lifelong health. Everything that follows in adulthood is moulded by this basic DNA.

'If human life is so heavily influenced by this early stage of life, then we ought to be paying a lot more attention to it.' – Tessa



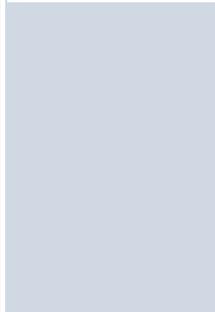
Roseboom | Professor of Early Development and Health at the University of Amsterdam's Faculty of Medicine.



CHILD-REARING SUPPORT ✓

It's wonderful to hear from parents about how they use DollsVilla by Liliane® to teach children about ordinary facts of life.

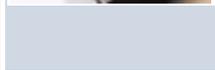
'Just by looking at the world from their child's point of view, parents can have a huge impact on how their baby copes with emotions. By co-regulating their baby's internal experiences, parents are effectively teaching her or him that emotions don't have to be overwhelming or overpowering, but can be managed. Over time, this co-regulation facilitates a healthy form of self-regulation, going from infant to toddler to child.' - University of Amsterdam.



COMMUNICATION ✓

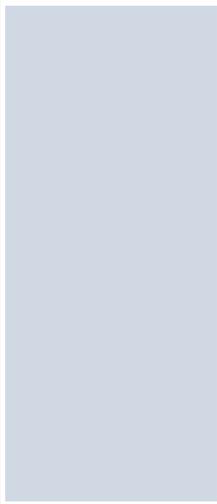
Whereas words are the language of adults, children use the language of play. My aim is to make the non-verbal children's voices of this world resonate and respected in that of the adults.

'The language of little children can be understood through the careful, primarily intuitive, observation of play. Go, children, show them your inner world.' - Liliane



CONNECTION WITH THE EARTH ✓

Playing with DollsVilla by Liliane® means playing with wood. Young children get to engage with a natural product: to feel it, to smell it,



to see it. Wood is such a wonderful and tactile material. By playing with wood, children also develop a sense of connection with the earth's gifts. DollsVilla helps to cultivate an awareness of the need to cherish and conserve those gifts at an early age.

'Building a sustainable earth begins primarily in the basis of life, on the foundation of young children.' – Liliane

DollsVilla is made from FSC [Forest Stewardship Council] certified wood, guaranteed to protect forest biodiversity and ecological processes.



CONSIDERATION ✓

By taking care of their doll-children and their dolls' home, children learn the value of loving concern for others.

'The real reward of good parenthood is not your children's gratitude, but that they are kind to their own children.' – Alain de Botton.



COPING ✓

'DollsVillas are used in hospitals for diagnostic purposes, treatment and to help children work through traumatic experiences, because they help children open up to paediatric physicians, psychologists and psychiatrists. Sometimes it is difficult for kids to articulate what they've been through, but they can act it out in their play, and DollsVilla is an excellent tool for that.' – Medical Psychology Department at the Wilhelmina Children's Hospital [WKZ] in Utrecht.

'When allowed to play without any predetermined goal, kids can work through experiences using make-believe.' – Louise Berkhout | University of Groningen.



CULTIVATING CREATIVITY ✓

Play helps to foster creative thinking and behaviour.

'Play satisfies the basic human need for a sense of freedom, connection and flow. Through play, kids learn to regulate their behaviour, negotiate with others, to solve problems. Grown-up science demands a lot of playfulness too! Scientists play with various potential hypotheses and possibilities.' – Scott Barry Kaufman | Imagination Institute, US.



DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT ✓

Whether to aid in a diagnosis or treatment or help a child cope with hospitalisation or a traumatic medical experience, paediatric physicians, psychologists and psychiatrists and play therapists all use DollsVilla by Liliane® to facilitate interaction with and observation of a child. Accompanied by their own doll or car, they can brave that trip to the doctor.

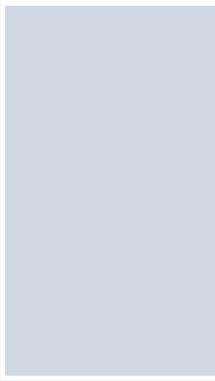
'As a child, you intuit everything, but you can't put it into words.'
– Griet op de Beeck | Belgian author.



DREAMING | FANTASISING ✓

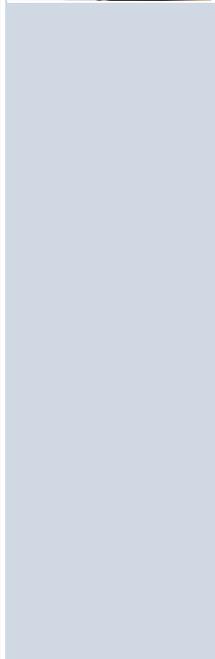
My motivation for designing DollsVilla by Liliane® was to give children and their children – their dolls – a dream home and safe haven of their own. All crafted to the highest quality for their favourite 12" [30cm] playmates.

'Playing with dolls as a little girl let me dream about a beautiful future life and to escape, however briefly, the constraints of family and school. In that life, I would be a loving mother and an



autonomous woman with a mind and a will of her own, which I would enlist to better reach children's inner tonalities.'

'The *Thunderbirds*' Scott Tracy become my girlhood blueprint of the man with whom I wanted to one day share my life and work: upright, empathetic, an effective communicator, stress-proof and dedicated to efficiently saving human and animal lives in advanced, savvy ways.' – Liliane

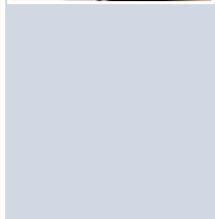


EMERGENCY SHELTER ✓

It is to the children in need, those living in extremis, to whom my heart goes out the most. To them I want to say: 'Make yourself heard in your own language. Talk to us. Play!'

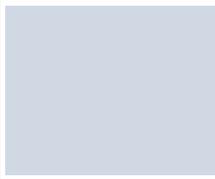
DollsVilla by Liliane® helps to create a sense of hominess for children living in a shelter, as well as a sense of self-worth. Its child-height and use of sustainable materials manifests respect for children. Playing together in the villa serves to keep confrontations at bay and thus makes it easier to forge friendships with other kids who are experiencing the same things, and to work through those experiences together. DollsVilla is also used by professional care providers.

'DollsVilla by Liliane® is a unique playhouse that makes it significantly easier to connect with children.' – Child in Family Alliance | inhuisplaatsen.nu.



EMPATHY ✓

Now that dolls are being targeted specifically to boys on a large scale, a perceptible shift is taking place. Adopting the viewpoint of a doll – of the other – activates boys' capacity for empathy, which is crucial at this age when lifelong norms, values and manners are imprinted.



'The mother's ability to tune into her baby's feelings and thoughts helps teach her child how to project him or herself into the inner lives of other people.' – Dr Elizabeth Krik | University of York.



EQUALITY ✓

With DollsVilla by Liliane® I wanted to craft an ideal world. Children are entitled to the same luxuries as their parent – or perhaps even a bit more... 'If mum and dad have granite counter tops, stainless steel taps, twin washbasins, an elegant bed... then so do the kids and their dolls!'

'Adults can learn a great deal more from children than is still generally assumed, especially from their higher sensitivity. DollsVilla is a medium that helps to open up the channels of communication, manifesting this equality for children and thus engendering an experience of respect and love. It's as authentic as the wood itself.' – Liliane



FUN ✓

It is fun to see children get caught up in their fantasy worlds, swept away by their imaginations, and to listen to the different voices they use to make their dolls come alive.

'Nothing is more beautiful than seeing a child playing and developing her imagination.'

'Home means the place where our soul feels that it has found its proper physical container, where, every day, the objects we live amongst quietly remind us of our most authentic commitments and loves.' – Alain de Botton.



INTERACTION ✓

Often, approaching a situation indirectly ultimately yields the most direct results. A child who plays, is a child who feels safe and secure. That sense of security is vital to genuinely connect with a child. And the effect is remarkable. Through light-hearted play, sitting around DollsVilla together, the dolls begin to talk and interact with each other.

The Astrid Lindgren Children's Hospital in Stockholm, Sweden, uses DollsVilla by Liliane® in its creative therapy department. 'Children that are seriously ill barely look at each other. Mostly, they stare at the ground. We spent a long time searching for something that could spark interaction between boys and girls. DollsVilla by Liliane® is right on the mark.'



INTUITION ✓

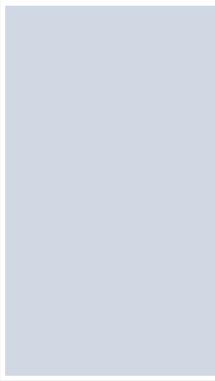
When children play with their dolls, they are enacting their own motivations and yearnings. Dolls symbolise their intuition, their spirit. Just as in the fairy tale of Vasilisa.

'The doll is symbolic homunculi, little life. It is the symbol of what lies buried in humans that is numinous. It is a small and glowing facsimile of the original Self. Superficially, it is just a doll. But inversely, it represents a little piece of soul that carries all the knowledge of the larger soul-Self. In the doll is the voice, in diminutive, of old *La Que Sabe*, The One Who Knows. – Clarissa Pinkola Estés | *Women Who Run With the Wolves*.



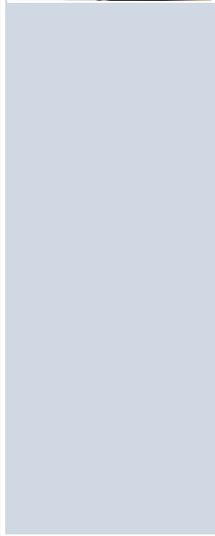
LANGUAGE AND SPEECH DEVELOPMENT ✓

DollsVilla by Liliane® encourages spontaneous speech and practising words. Asylum seekers' centres in the Netherlands use the villa to support language development among refugee



children, with excellent results. The children quickly pick up the names of a whole host of domestic objects.

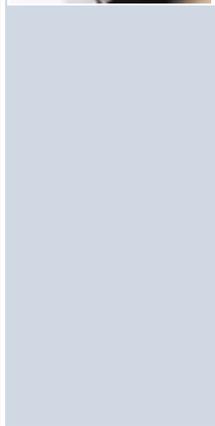
‘Speech therapists use dollhouses in their professional practice. Having children bring their own doll from home to play in DollsVilla by Liliane® provides a strong basis from which speech therapists can elicit spontaneous speech.’ – Elisa Gielen | Director of TinyEYE Europe, an online speech therapy service.



MENTAL | PHYSICAL DISABILITIES ✓

DollsVilla by Liliane® is built specifically for 12” [30cm] dolls, which are slightly larger and therefore easier for children with physical and/or mental disabilities to hold and manipulate. The villa’s child-height also makes it easier for them to play with compared to standard dollhouses.

‘The use of appropriate games and toys in different themed corners of therapeutic nursery school classes gives our kids a chance to play in imaginative ways – exploring, mimicking and talking. A DollsVilla by Liliane® in which their own doll or toy animal can play a part has added value in the sense that it provides recognition and familiarity.’ – Adelante Zorggroep, a healthcare group in Valkenburg.



MOTOR SKILLS ✓

DollsVilla by Liliane® supports teachers, remedial educationalists, speech therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists who work with children with disabilities. Its child-height and easily graspable furnishings make the mobile villa ideal for children who have less motor coordination to play in.

‘Oh wow! No plastic, no pink, no shapeless design that takes kids for idiots... Just a simple and clean design, that helps kids to learn something we should all instil: less is more. Sharp details.’ – Marianne Charbonneau | Canadian architect.



OBSERVATION ✓

DollsVilla by Liliane® gives parents and professional care providers valuable insights, because they can observe a child in a world and language of his or her own creation. As well as revealing a child's developmental phase through the stories and forms of play they engage in, this also brings to light possible areas of stagnation.

'The AZM Psychiatry and Psychology departments use DollsVilla by Liliane® to observe child-parent interactions and to help children cope with a hospitalisation or possible traumatic experiences connected with the hospital.' – Jim van Os | Professor and head of Maastricht University Medical Center's Psychiatric Department.

The University of Silesia in Katowice's Psychology Department has been using DollsVilla by Liliane® in its large paediatric observation room for children with trauma since 2014.



PLAY ✓

Play is a child's life. And because children identify with the objects they play with, quality is vital. The quality of the design, of the material and its aesthetic aspects, and how child-friendly they are in use. DollsVilla by Liliane® encourages interactive play among two to six children, or lets more introverted children escape into their own world.

Children who do not play need us most of all.

'Children in the first two years of primary school should have more opportunity for play that's uninterrupted and not attached to any kind of adult-imposed goal. My recommendation is to let children play on their own at least several hours a day. With language and maths being prioritised in the first two school years, I've noticed a diminishing knowledge about the importance of play. Playing make-believe trains social skills and aids in getting to grips with life events.' – Louise Berkhout | University of Groningen.



PLAYING TOGETHER ✓

Playing together is a developmental process – now more than ever, in an age of increasing digitisation and individualism. It teaches children to be considerate of others, to share, and to respect social rules. But it also requires that children feel safe and secure, that they can put themselves in another person's shoes and interpret and understand the reactions and actions of their peers. DollsVilla by Liliane® is big enough for two to six children to play with together.

'Two-year-olds with language delays also experience difficulties playing with other kids. They find themselves socially excluded. By missing out on interactive play, their language skills fall even further behind and that social exclusion persists even into secondary school age.' – Elisabeth Brekke | Stangeland, Norway.



REHABILITATION ✓

Play offers a distraction from the realities of rehabilitation.

'DollsVilla provides distraction for the children of parents who are here with serious acquired brain injury. We use it professionally in role play to re-enact what life was like at home. Who slept where? What did mum do around the house before the accident occurred? That can make it easier for kids to talk about what they're going through. One mother even said, 'They want to come to Heliomare not only to see their dad, but to play with the dolls.' – Melissa Cabaret-Wesselius | Heliomare Rehabilitation centre in Wijk aan Zee.

'We use DollsVilla in our paediatric rehabilitation therapeutic toddler group for a range of developmental domains. It is valuable particularly for sensorimotor development, including exploration, eye-arm and eye-hand coordination and processing tactile stimuli. The child-friendly materials also make it suitable for kids in a wheelchair.' – Lisi van Hees-Kreckler | Sint Maartenskliniek Rehabilitation clinic in Nijmegen.



DollsVilla by Liliane® also in use by the Royal Rehab Sydney Australia.



RELAXATION ✓

‘The villa is clear-lacquered, uncoloured, which makes it a beacon of calm in a room. This naturally carries over to the – often turbulent – emotional state of a child. Moreover, the dolls and their accessories bring a whole world of colour to the villa.’

‘I’ve seen how much fun they have playing with the villa, and how it helps them cope with trauma, with placement in a new family, and with language development and interaction.’ – Mathilde Lievers-Wolfard | Primary school education director in Groningen.



ROLE PLAY ✓

In hospitals, role play with dolls is an effective method to prepare children for surgery and the phases of home recovery. In primary education, role play promotes social skills and social and emotional development. DollsVilla by Liliane® therefore stands alongside other educational and game resources as a role-play tool.

‘DollsVilla by Liliane® is a wonderful and practical tool that I’ve already used with several clients. In the first place to engage with the child, and also to observe them in play, in their mimicking behaviour, their imagination and interactions. Beyond that, I use the villa to simulate specific “difficult” situations in the home.’ – Dr Jeurissen | Child psychologist, Prima.Psychologen.



SECURITY ✓

A child who plays, is a child who feels safe and secure.

'DollsVilla by Liliane® is used intensively on a daily basis in the primary school at our asylum seekers' centre, because it supports the two main pillars of our work: to provide security (that it's safe for them to play) and to teach them the Dutch language (making a game of naming the various rooms and parts of a house).' – Ella van Essen | Director of an asylum-seekers' centre.



SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT ✓

When playing with DollsVilla, whether spontaneously or orchestrated, children exhibit their emotional state. The villa encourages them to practise social behaviours and to learn by mirroring each other.

'Playing make-believe trains social skills and aids in getting to grips with life events.' – Louise Berkhout | University of Groningen.

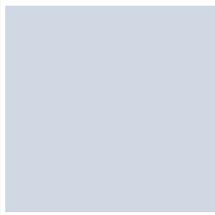


SOCIALISING ✓

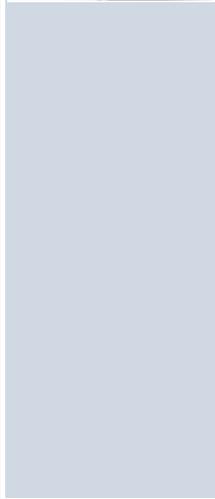
DollsVilla by Liliane® is a space where children meet, interact and spontaneously make new friends. The villa naturally sparks connections in their own language of play. And, while playing, children can discover whether there is a bud that could blossom into friendship.

Language barriers are no obstacle to this kind of socialisation, as DollsVilla by Liliane® lets children communicate without words – using the child's universal language of play.

'An imaginary friend is always there, so the child can test everything they do, think and are on that friend. Kids who have an



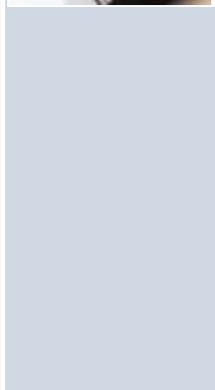
imaginary friend talk to or about this pretend playmate, and that teaches them to remember and fully recount stories, therefore strengthening both language proficiency and memory.’ – Martine Delfos | Biopsychologist.



SOLITARY PLAY ✓

Primary schools and child day care centres make a particular point of encouraging children to play together, laying the basis for effective cooperation in adulthood. However, some children function better when they play and learn on their own. For them, playing together feels forced and drains their energy.

‘Approximately a third of children are introverts. They prefer activities that are solitary and need to be alone to achieve their potential, creatively or otherwise. School forces them into a group mode that doesn’t come naturally. Overloading them with stimuli undermines their development and wellbeing.’ – Susan Cain | Co-founder and CEO of Quiet Revolution, US.



STORYTELLING ✓

At schools and day care centres, children build stories around DollsVilla, adding to and extending those narratives every day. Over time, children concoct whole new books.

‘DollsVilla has made an enormous difference in advancing our primary school pupils’ language skills, because as they play with the dolls and cars they talk to each other about what they’re doing.’ – Manon Waltmans | Teacher at De Zonnewijzer primary school in Roermond.



THERAPY AID ✓

The villa is used in mental healthcare as part of play-based and other therapy methods to work with children, adolescents and adults [systemic work, family constellations]. According to one healthcare psychologist: 'DollsVilla by Liliane® aids perception and treatment.'

'Pain travels through families until someone is ready to feel it. The pain we do not heal becomes the legacy of our children. If you want to heal the children, heal the adults first.' – Stephi Wagner.

Liliane Limpens is a designer. Previously she was a copy editor and editor-in-chief at the Dutch art magazine Harlekijn [Harlekijn Holland b.v.], head of the Dutch national organisation for arts education, and initiator and board member of the Ronald McDonald House in Maastricht, which provides accommodation and services to families of seriously ill children at Maastricht University Medical Center. DollsVilla Global BV supports the Liliane Fund for children with disabilities in developing regions.

[DollsVilla.nl](#) – Video