
Parent-Child Interaction Therapy Applications

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is a 14-session parent training intervention that teaches caregivers specific behavior management techniques as they play with their child. PCIT focuses on improving the caregiver-child relationship and increasing children's positive behaviors.



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Praise
Reflect
Imitate
Describe
Enthusiasm



Trauma Treatment Training Center

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Who is PCIT for?

Children who have experienced stress or trauma

Children ages 2–12 with the following behavior problems:

- refuse/defy adult requests
- lose temper easily
- annoy others on purpose
- steal things
- destroy things
- start fights/hurt others
- have difficulty staying seated
- have difficulty playing quietly
- have difficulty taking turns

Caregivers

- Parents
- Foster parents
- Adoptive parents
- Legal guardians
- Residential caregiver staff

Caregivers are the “heart” of the program. PCIT cares for caregivers.

What is PCIT?

Parent–Child Interaction Therapy consists of about 14 sessions and focuses on two basic interactions:

Child Directed Interaction (CDI):

Caregivers are taught the PRIDE skills: Praise, Reflect, Imitate, Describe, Enthusiasm. Caregivers follow the child’s lead. They ignore annoying or obnoxious behavior and control dangerous behaviors.

Parent Directed Interaction (PDI):

Caregivers learn to use effective commands and specific behavior management techniques as they play with their child. Caregivers are taught effective time out procedures and how to manage children’s behaviors in real–world settings.

PCIT is fun for both the parent and child. Caregivers generally see marked improvement in 3-4 sessions.

How does PCIT work?

PCIT is an exceptionally effective treatment backed by 20 years of research. Live coaching is the primary method of caregiver training in PCIT. Caregivers are coached in specific play therapy and discipline skills by the therapist through an earpiece while the therapist observes the caregiver and child.

Advantages of live coaching:

- skills are acquired more rapidly because caregivers learn by doing
- therapist supports caregivers as they learn the PRIDE skills
- caregivers quickly become confident and proficient in skills with child
- therapist provides immediate feedback to caregivers

Caregivers are given a homework assignment after each session to practice PRIDE skills with children every day for 5–10 minutes.
