



## Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

PCIT is an evidence-based, specialized behavior management program designed for young children and their families who are experiencing behavioral and/or emotional difficulties. PCIT teaches caregivers to manage their child's difficult behaviors, while increasing their positive behaviors. PCIT works with the child and caregiver together to improve behavior and reduce parenting stress.

PCIT involves weekly 60-minute in-person therapy sessions over two treatment phases, typically lasting 12-16 weeks. Parents are encouraged to have special playtime with their child five times a week and complete a homework sheet detailing these sessions.

### Phase 1: Child-Directed Interaction (CDI)

Caregivers are taught the PRIDE skills: Praise, Reflect, Imitate, Describe and Enjoyment. These skills promote positive child behaviors.

### Phase 2: Parent-Directed Interaction (PDI)

Caregivers learn to use effective commands and discipline procedures. The PCIT therapist helps caregivers manage their child's behaviors in many settings.

### Who is PCIT for?

Children ages 2 ½ to 6 ½ who display any or all of the following:

- Parent-child relational problems
- Refusal and defiance of adult requests
- Easy loss of temper
- Purposeful annoyance of others
- Destruction of property
- Difficulty staying seated
- Difficulty playing quietly
- Difficulty taking turns



## Who are appropriate caregivers for PCIT?

Skills are acquired rapidly by caregivers, as they practice in the moment with therapist support. A variety of caregivers can participate in PCIT services. This includes:

- Biological parents
- Foster parents
- Adoptive parents
- Legal guardian
- Grandparents
- Kinship caregivers

To receive the services of this program, families need to have Medicaid.

## Therapist's Role

- Before each session, the PCIT certified therapist briefs the parents. They then participate in a 5-minute play therapy assessment, using ear buds for real-time guidance from the therapist on specific skills.
- Therapists use praise and record parents' interactions, graphing progress through a method called Coding Interactions. This targets 10 skills across three areas to eliminate negative behaviors.

## Who can make a referral?

Referrals can come from schools, agencies, or any location within the counties providing PCIT.

Email referrals to:

[centralcftss@cayugacenters.org](mailto:centralcftss@cayugacenters.org)

[cftsscapitalintake@cayugacenters.org](mailto:cftsscapitalintake@cayugacenters.org)

