

Why Choose PCIT?

PCIT is a proven therapy for families with young children (ages 2 to 7) facing behavioral and emotional challenges.

Benefits to Children:

- Improved behavior, including better compliance with adult instructions
- Increased feelings of safety and attachment to caregivers
- Enhanced attention spans, self-esteem, and social skills like sharing and taking turns
- Decreased frequency and intensity of tantrums, as well as reduced aggressive behavior
- Lower levels of hyperactivity and fewer negative attention-seeking behaviors, such as whining

Benefits to Caregivers:

- Reduced stress and frustration in parenting
- Increased confidence in parenting skills

What to Expect from PCIT:

In PCIT, therapists help caregivers improve their relationship with their child(ren) and learn how to set healthy boundaries. PCIT is divided into two parts:

- In the **Child-Directed Interaction Phase (CDI)**, parents learn how to improve their relationship with their child through child-centered interaction skills
- **During the Parent-Directed Interaction Phase (PDI)**, caregivers learn new skills to handle their child's behavior

PCIT focuses on enhancing the parent-child bond and teaching caregivers effective behavior management skills.

Contact Us

For general information about our services, please contact us at our main number
(585) 279-7800

For more information about PCIT, please contact Lauren Mutignani, PhD., at
(585) 273-4756

Pediatric Behavioral Health & Wellness
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Part of Strong Memorial Hospital.

Pediatric Behavioral Health & Wellness Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)



How Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) Works:

In PCIT, caregivers receive constructive coaching in real-time. Here's how it all comes together:

- **Play as Communication:** Play serves as a child's way of communicating, offering a relaxed and safe setting
- **Therapist's Role:** The therapist will review the skills you are learning and observe a brief interaction between you and your child during play
- **Coaching:** For the rest of the session, the therapist will coach you in using these skills with your child during play
- **Coaching Settings:** The therapist can coach you from another room using a provided earpiece, or they can sit nearby in the same room
- **Practice at Home:** In addition to the sessions, caregivers are expected to practice these skills every day at home and complete a practice sheet

What to Bring to Your First Appointment:

It's important for at least one parent or guardian to accompany the child to all appointments, including the first one. Here's a checklist of what to bring to ensure a smooth first visit:

- A completed Patient and Family Information Form (If you can't bring it with you, we'll provide one for you to fill out before meeting with your clinician)
- Your insurance information
- Any legal documents related to your child, including custody paperwork
- Previous evaluations, if available
- Additional paperwork related to your child, such as school documents like a 504 Plan or IEP (if applicable)
- Providing these documents help us to provide the best care for your child during the appointment

Who Is Eligible for This Service:

PCIT services are designed for children between the ages of 2 and 7, along with their families, who may be facing challenges related to their child's behavior and emotions. To determine if PCIT is suitable for your child and family, consider the following criteria:

- The child's behavioral and emotional difficulties are causing distress within the family
- The child and family are not currently receiving mental health services
- Families can commit to weekly or biweekly therapy appointments, each lasting 50-60 minutes, for approximately 12-18 sessions and can commit to daily at home practice of skills. For example, engaging daily in 5 minutes of special play time using skills
- Please note that PCIT may not be suitable for children with immediate safety concerns or long-term behavioral health needs
- If your family requires immediate mental health assistance, please contact the Behavioral Health Crisis Call Line at (585) 275-8686 or call 911

In PCIT, parents actively participate in the treatment process, which aims to enhance their relationship with their child.

The family's consistent attendance and practice at home are key to successful treatment.

About Our Team

PCIT therapists are either certified in PCIT or working toward PCIT certification with qualified PCIT trainers, including those from Parent-Child Interaction Therapy, Inc. (PCIT, Inc.). In order to get certified, therapists must review their cases with trainers and submit session videos with their trainers (without sharing personal information such as names or dates of birth) for feedback. Families must authorize session recording as part of our standard PBH&W policy. In addition, they must sign a separate consent form allowing their therapist to share those sessions with their trainers.



Medication Information

PCIT usually doesn't offer medication advice. We will provide you with information about suitable resources if a psychiatric or medication consultation is recommended for your child. This includes resources available through our service providers.

Attendance Policy

Families are expected to come to all scheduled appointments. To continue in the program, they must attend the first appointment. After that, they should attend at least three out of four appointments. If your family misses, cancels, or changes more than one out of four appointments, we may refer you to other community resources.