



## Training Requirements for Certification as a PCIT Therapist

These requirements were developed by the PCIT International Training Task Force in collaboration with the PCIT International Board of Directors. This document should be considered “dynamic” in that the training and certification requirements will evolve as new research arises in intervention, training, and dissemination. Currently there are several models used in training therapists to deliver PCIT effectively with adherence to its essential elements. These training requirements reflect the minimum training necessary within any of these models to develop competence as a PCIT Therapist using the 2011 PCIT Protocol (Eyberg & Funderburk, 2011).

### I. Definition

Certified PCIT Therapists are individuals who have received appropriate and sufficient PCIT training to be qualified to provide PCIT services to children and families.

### II. Training Requirements for Certified PCIT Therapists

**A. Graduate Education.** To apply for status as a Certified PCIT Therapist, an applicant must demonstrate appropriate graduate education. Specifically, an applicant must meet both criteria 1 and 2, OR criterion 3 to be eligible to become a Certified PCIT Therapist:

1. Have a master’s degree or higher, or an international equivalent of a master’s degree, in a mental health field

**AND**

2. Be an independently licensed mental health service provider (for example, licensed psychologist, licensed marital and family therapist, licensed practicing counselor, licensed clinical social worker, etc.) or be working under the supervision of a licensed mental health service provider.

**OR**

3. Be a psychology doctoral student who has completed the third year of training and be conducting clinical work under the supervision of a licensed mental health service provider.

**B. Initial Training.** To apply for status as a Certified PCIT Therapist, an applicant must demonstrate appropriate Initial Training, as evidenced by:

1. 40-hours of face-to-face training with a PCIT Trainer that includes an overview of the theoretical foundations of PCIT, DPICS coding practice, case observations, and coaching with families, with a focus on mastery of CDI and PDI skills, and a review of the 2011 PCIT Protocol. The 40 hours of training may be conducted via didactic training, a mentorship model, or any combination of the two.

**OR**

2. 10 hours of online training and 30 hours of face-to-face contact with a PCIT Trainer. Online training must be supplemented with skills review from a PCIT Trainer. Therefore, the 30 hours of face-to-face training may be conducted in didactic training, a mentorship model, or any combination of the two. This training will include an overview of the theoretical foundations of PCIT, DPICS coding practice, case observations, and coaching with families, with a focus on mastery of CDI and PDI skills, and a review of the 2011 PCIT Protocol.

**C. Continuation Training.** Following completion of initial training, Continuation Training occurs over the course of approximately 1 year and focuses on active practice of skills, addressing complex treatment issues (e.g., parent engagement), and an assessment of coaching and coding skills (see competency requirements below). The Continuation Training may be conducted in a workshop format, co-therapist model, online training, or any combination of the three.

1. Case Experience.
  - a. The applicant must serve as a therapist for a minimum of two PCIT cases to graduation criteria as defined by the 2011 PCIT Protocol. At least one of the cases must be conducted with the applicant as the primary therapist (e.g., lead therapist or equal co-therapist).
  - b. Until the two PCIT cases meet graduation criteria, the applicant must remain in at least twice a month contact via real-time consultation (e.g., telephone conference or live, online, or telehealth observation) or video review with a PCIT Trainer.
2. Skill Review.
  - a. Applicants must have their treatment sessions observed by a PCIT Trainer. Observations may be conducted in real time (e.g., live or online/telehealth) or through video recording.

- b. To demonstrate skill development, the applicant's competence will be observed by a PCIT Trainer in the following sessions conducted by the applicant:
  - i. CDI Teach
  - ii. PDI Teach
  - iii. CDI Coaching (ideally the first CDI coaching session), and
  - iv. PDI Coaching (ideally the first PDI coaching session)
- c. The PCIT Trainer will review these sessions and determine whether the applicant has demonstrated mastery of each skillset; as such, the applicant must be prepared to provide additional session observations as necessary to document adequate skill.

**D. Special Note Concerning Timing of Training:** Students may receive PCIT training before completion of their master's degrees. However, they cannot be certified as PCIT therapists until their master's degree is complete or until they have completed the third year of their doctoral training.

### III. Therapist Competency Requirements

**A. Assessment Skills.** By the end of the training process, the applicant should be able to:

1. Administer, score, and interpret the required standardized measures for use in assessment and treatment planning. (Required measures: ECBI, DPICS-IV; Recommended measures: TAI, PSI-SF, SESBI-R, and BASC or CBCL.)
2. Administer behavioral observations from the DPICS-IV Coding System.
3. Achieve a minimum of 80% agreement with a PCIT Trainer using the DPICS-IV either during 5-minutes of live coding, or in continuous coding with a criterion video recording.

**B. CDI-Related Therapist Skills.** By the end of the training process, an applicant should be able to:

1. Conduct the CDI Teach session, adequately explaining all non-optional items on the treatment integrity checklist in the 2011 PCIT Protocol as observed by the PCIT Trainer.
2. Meet the parent criteria for CDI skills (10 labeled praises, 10 behavioral descriptions, 10 reflections; 3 or fewer negative talks, questions, plus commands) in a 5-minute interaction with a child or a 5-minute role-play with an adult portraying a child.

3. Demonstrate for the PCIT Trainer how to determine the coaching goals for a CDI session by interpreting the DPICS-IV Coding Sheet data gathered at the start of the session.

**C. PDI-Related Therapist Skills.** By the end of the training process, an applicant should be able to:

1. Present the PDI Teach Session, adequately explaining all non-optional items on the treatment integrity checklist in the 2011 PCIT Protocol as observed by the PCIT Trainer.
2. Effectively manage a PDI Coach session and accurately demonstrate the discipline sequence with a child in treatment. In the case when a full discipline sequence does not occur or cannot be video recorded, the applicant must demonstrate the skills through role-play.
3. Accurately explain the House Rules procedure as described in the 2011 PCIT Protocol. Accuracy can be assessed through role-play, and does not require observation of an actual session. However, the PCIT Trainer must observe the role-play in real time (e.g., live or online/telehealth) or by video recording.
4. Accurately explain the Public Behaviors procedure as described in the 2011 PCIT Protocol. Accuracy can be assessed through role-play, and does not require observation of an actual session. However, the PCIT Trainer must observe the role-play in real time (e.g., live or online/telehealth) or by video recording.

**D. General Coaching Skills**

1. By the end of the training process, an applicant is expected to demonstrate adequate and sensitive coaching as observed by the PCIT Trainer.
2. By the end of the training process, an applicant is expected to model CDI skills during all interactions with parents and children throughout the treatment.

**IV. Application Requirements**

- A.** Upon completion of Initial and Continued Training, an applicant for Certified PCIT Therapist status must complete the Certified PCIT Therapist Application (available from PCIT International Certified Trainers or at PCIT International Therapist workshops). (A list of PCIT Certified Trainers can be found at [www.pcit.org](http://www.pcit.org).)
- B.** Following acceptance of the Certified PCIT Therapist Application, the applicant must successfully complete the PCIT Certification Experience (which is available at [www.pcit.org](http://www.pcit.org)).
- C.** Final decisions about certification of PCIT Therapists will be made by PCIT International.

## V. Responsibilities of Certified PCIT Therapists

- A. Use the 2011 PCIT Protocol and 2013 Clinical Manual for DPICS-IV as disseminated by PCIT International.
- B. Remain current in PCIT research by activities such as attending conferences, reading research or practice articles, or conducting research.
- C. Certified PCIT Therapists are required to obtain at least 3 hours of PCIT Continuing Education credit every 2 years through educational activities sponsored by the PCIT International Task Force on Continuing Education. PCIT International is an APA-approved CE sponsor and provides continuing PCIT education through its online educational and conference programming.

## VI. Maintaining Certification

- A. **Certification Period.** Therapists are certified for 2 years from the beginning date on their Certified PCIT Therapist Certificate.
- B. **Re-Certification.** Certification as a PCIT Therapist is renewable every 2 years. To renew, Certified PCIT Therapists must submit a brief application for re-certification and document successful completion of 3 hours of PCIT Continuing Education in programs of learning that have been preauthorized by PCIT International. Certification Experience scores are required only for the initial certification process.