PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION THERAPY

An empirically supported therapeutic intervention model for children ages 2 – 7.

The main concern for referral is one of the following:
- Child's behaviors
  - Defiance to directives
  - Excessive tantrums
  - Attention seeking behaviors
  - ADHD, ODD
- Attachment issues
- Caregivers' difficulty managing behaviors
- Caregiver stress

DEFINING FEATURES OF PCIT

- Theoretically grounded
- Scientifically based, clinically validated and empirically supported
- Parent and child together
- Emphasis on restructuring interaction patterns
- Assessment-driven not time-limited
THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Social Learning Theory

Attachment Theory

Play Therapy

PARENT AND CHILD TOGETHER IN TREATMENT

• Focus is on changing behaviors of both parent and child.
• Therapist tailors treatment based on observation of parent-child interactions during treatment.
• Parent errors in application are corrected on-the-spot.
  – One-way mirror
  – Bug-in-the-ear device
• Therapists can assess when parents are ready to move to the next step in treatment.
• Allows accurate determination of treatment completion.

ASSESSMENT DRIVEN

• Every appointment begins with the parent completing an ECBI (Eyberg Child Behavior Inventory).
  – Assesses conduct problems such as noncompliance, defiance, aggression & impulsivity.
  – Takes 5-10 min. to complete.
  – Measures include both an Intensity Scale and a Problem Scale. Both need to be at or below an established number to qualify for graduation.
### ASSESSMENT DRIVEN

- Intake includes standardized observation to establish baseline.
  - Child-directed interaction time (CDI)
  - Parent-directed interaction time (PDI)
- Graduation of PCIT determined by:
  - Step 1: Mastery of CDI
  - Step 2: Mastery of PDI
  - Overall: ECBI at or below normed scores

### NECESSARY CONDITIONS

- Availability of parent(s) or other stable caregiver to partner in weekly therapy sessions with the child.
- Parent/caregiver has access to / visitation with the child at least 4-5 times each week.
- Is the child in a stable placement for at least the next three months?
WHEN NOT TO REFER

• Child is 7 or older.
• Parent/caregiver not available to attend weekly sessions.
• Parent/caregiver participating in treatment does not have access to the child to complete daily homework (aka – Special Time).
• Parent/caregiver is known sexual perpetrator.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

• Trauma
• Other diagnosis such as Autism and Downs Syndrome

STRUCTURE OF PCIT

• Intake / Assessment - 1-3 sessions
• Child-Directed Interaction (CDI) Teach (adults only) – 1 session
  – Describe, model, role-play
• CDI Coaching (4+ sessions)
• Parent-Directed Interaction (PDI) Teach (adults only) – 1 session
  – Describe, model, role-play
• PDI Coaching (4+ sessions)
• Post-assessment / Graduation
  – typically 16-20 sessions “or so”

* Homework (aka – Special Time) occurs for 5 min. every day following the CDI Teach session.
STRUCTURE OF PCIT COACHING SESSIONS

- Parent wears a bug-in-the-ear receiver while playing with child in playroom.
- Therapist observes and coaches from an observation room using a microphone.
- Therapist codes parent and child behaviors at start of session (5 min.).
- Therapist coaches specific identified skills based on 5 min of coding.
- Spouses take turns being coached with child and observing spouse’s coaching.

CHILD-DIRECTED INTERACTIONS

- **DO**
  - Praise
  - Reflect
  - Imitate
  - Describe
  - Enjoy
- **DON’T**
  - Ask questions
  - Give commands
  - Criticize
- Ignore annoying, obnoxious behavior.
- Stop the play for dangerous or destructive behavior.

**Video sample of CDI Skills**
**Video sample of in-room coaching**

PARENT-DIRECTED INTERACTION

Teaching Effective Commands:
- Direct (telling, not asking)
- Positive (what to DO, not stop doing)
- Single (one at a time)
- Specific
- Age-appropriate
- Given in a normal tone of voice
- Polite and respectful (Please... )
- Explained before given or after obeyed
- Used only when really necessary
- Immediate praise for instruction compliance
MAKING A GOOD REFERRAL

• How can I find a provider?
• What questions should I ask of a provider?

For more information:
• http://www.pcit.org/
• http://pcit.ucdavis.edu/

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