



PCIT is regarded by national expert panels as a gold standard treatment for most families.

- It works. (50+ years of research show huge gains)

- The gains last over time.

- The gains generalize to school settings.

- The gains generalize to siblings.

- It includes all the key elements found by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) to be essential in helping parents with disruptive kids. These elements include:
 - teaching parents emotional communication skills
 - teaching parents positive interaction skills
 - live, in-session practice with your child during the session while the therapist gives live, in-the moment feedback.
 - teaching correct use of safe time-out procedures.
 - teaching and reinforcing parental consistency.

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

An Informational Guide



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What is Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

Parent-child interaction therapy (PCIT) is an evidence-based behavior parent training treatment for young children with emotional and behavioral disorders that focuses on improving the quality of the parent-child relationship and changing parent-child interaction patterns.



Children and their caregivers are seen together in PCIT.

When Should I Seek Help for Challenging Childhood Behavior?

One thing to consider is if the behavior intensity is higher than that of other children in similar age groups. Most parents will learn that their child is struggling when they enter daycare and they get concerning reports from teachers and caregivers. These kids may not respond to traditional parenting skills and teaching techniques. Some parents will report that their child is *always* struggling with listening, compliance and managing emotions. They may also notice that they are losing patience with their child and considering harsher punishments to try to get behavioral control. These parents typically feel frazzled, and are searching for anything that can help.

What are the two phases of PCIT?

Child-Directed Interaction encourages children to lead a play activity while their caregivers observe and comment on their child's positive behaviors (and ignore inappropriate behaviors). The primary goal of this phase is to strengthen positive caregiver- child relationships.

Benefits include:

- Increased feelings of security, safety, and attachment with caregiver(s)
- Increased attention span
- Increased self-esteem
- Increased pro-social behaviors (sharing, taking turns)
- Decreased frequency, severity, and/or duration of tantrums
- Decreased hyperactivity
- Decreased negative attention-seeking behaviors (whining, bossiness)
- Decreased caregiver frustration

Parent-Directed Interaction teaches caregivers how to deliver clear, direct commands to reward child compliance and use effective strategies for child noncompliance.

Benefits include:

- Increased compliance with adult (caregivers, teachers) requests
- Increased caregiver confidence (and decreased stress)
- Improved behavior at home, and in public
- Decreased frequency, severity, and/or duration of aggressive behavior
- Decreased frequency of destructive behavior
- Decreased defiance

How does PCIT take place?

PCIT uses constructive, positive, live coaching of caregivers. Therapists typically coach from an observation room with a one-way mirror into the playroom, using a "bug-in-the-ear" system for communicating to caregivers as they play with their child. However, live coaching of skills can be conducted within the same room, within the client's home or via telehealth (iPCIT).

Who can benefit from PCIT?

If you are a parent of a child, ages two to seven years of age, who exhibits any of the following behaviors, then PCIT may be an option for your family.

- Cannot sit still
- Has frequent temper tantrums
- Hits or kicks
- Easy loss of temper
- Defiance to adult requests
- Has difficulty taking turns
- Low frustration tolerance
- Deliberately annoys others
- Has difficulty playing with peers
- Being spiteful or vindictive
- Destructive to property
- Blames others for their mistakes

Children getting PCIT generally have one of the following diagnoses:

- Oppositional defiant disorder (ODD)
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Other disruptive behavior disorders (DBDs)
- Anxiety disorders
- Selective mutism

How long does PCIT take?

Sessions are held weekly until a family graduates. While sessions are weekly, the most important work is the daily five minutes of practice parents need to do with their child at home. Most families need 14-20 coaching sessions to complete the treatment.

For Referrals and More Information

Glade Run is currently taking referrals for PCIT at our Zelenople Campus. All referrals can be made by contacting **Glade Run at (724) 452,4453, ext. 1084** or **[www.referrals@gladerun.org](mailto:referrals@gladerun.org)** or through our online referral portal at **<https://gladerun.org/mental-health/outpatient-counseling/>**