



PARENT CHILD INTERACTION THERAPY (PCIT)

Stephanie Wolf JD, PhD
Licensed Psychologist
PCIT Level 1 Trainer

WHAT IS PCIT?



- Evidence-based, time limited treatment
- For young children with behavioral problems
- Parent learns skills with just therapist
- Skills applied with child through "coaching" sessions
 - Caregiver and Child are in a playroom while the Therapist is in an observation room watching interaction
 - Therapist provides in-the-moment coaching on skills learning to manage child's behavior

WHERE DID PCIT COME FROM?

- *Attachment Theory*

- Warm and Responsive parent leads to positive relationship with child and child extends to healthy relationships in future
- With a positive parent child relationship the child wants to comply and please
- Secure base is foundation for good behavior

- *Social Learning Theory*

- Child learns expectations and logical consequences
- Parent is consistent, reliable and still provides love



WHO IS IT FOR?

- Children:
 - Ages 2-6 with oppositional behavior
 - Must have receptive and expressive language of 24 months
 - Need a caregiver with certain capabilities (see next slide)
- Also works with:
 - Trauma
 - ADHD
 - Anxiety
 - Selective Mutism
 - ASD



CAREGIVER REQUIREMENTS

- Ongoing consistent contact with child
- Weekly attendance to sessions
- Average or below average cognitive ability
- Willingness to do homework of 5 minutes a day



CAREGIVER RULE OUTS

Rule Outs:

- Serious ongoing mental health problems such as auditory or visual hallucinations or delusions
- Parents with hearing impairment or receptive/expressive language delays (some adaptations can be accomplished)
- Active substance abuse
- Sexually abusive or sadistic physical abuse
- Limited contact with child



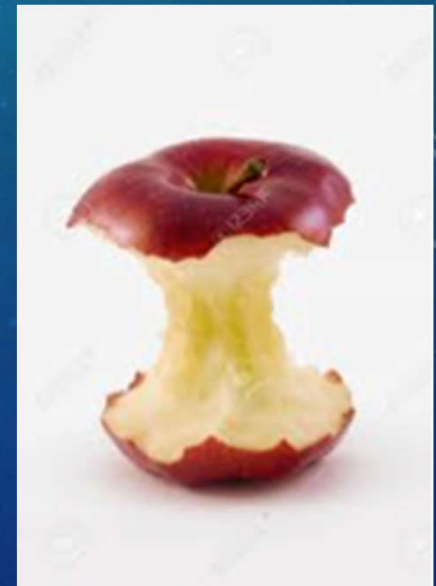
CORE COMPONENTS PCIT?

BASICS:

- Between 15-20 therapy sessions
- Therapy sessions are between 1-1.5 hours
- Intake session includes observations of parent with child

TREATMENT

- **Two phase approach**
 - Relationship Enhancement
 - Discipline and Compliance
- **Each phase includes:**
 - Teach session with just parent
 - Live coaching session with parent and child
 - Counting of skills for mastery
 - 5 minutes daily of homework and recording



PHASE ONE- RELATIONSHIP ENHANCEMENT

Purpose: Improve the quality of interactions between child and caregiver

Child Directed Interaction (CDI)

- Child leads the play and caregiver follows
- Specific toys are offered
- Caregiver taught to be a “play therapist”
- Five minutes a day
- Caregiver tells child when play starts and stops- modeling the child can have control but within limits
- Caregiver taught: active ignoring, selective attention, does not end play unless destructive or dangerousness



AFTER PHASE 1- RELATIONSHIP ENHANCEMENT (CDI)

- **Decreased:**
 - frequency, severity, and/or duration of tantrums
 - activity levels
 - negative attention-seeking behaviors (such as whining and bossiness)
 - parental frustration
- **Increased:**
 - feelings of security, safety, and attachment to the primary caregiver
 - attention span
 - self-esteem
 - Following directions
 - Pro-social behaviors (such as sharing and taking turns)



PHASE TWO- COMPLIANCE

Purpose: Structured and Consistent Approach to following commands and providing consequences

Parent Directed Interaction (PDI)

- Caregiver is in charge
- Caregiver learns how to give effective commands-
 - Simple, direct, developmentally appropriate etc.
 - Praises child for following directions when they comply
- Caregiver taught time out sequence
 - Implemented in session with practice commands
 - Once mastered in session practice at home, gradually add in to a few problem areas, then at home and then public
 - Given specific language, taught to act without emotionality and child always knows what to expect if do not follow rules

TIME OUT????

Isn't time out harmful and undermines loving parenting?

No, when parents set age appropriate limits it helps children learn positive behavior. When used correctly it is safe and effective for children to learn how to manage their behavior

Doesn't time out re-traumatize children when they have experienced abuse? No, time out teaches children that even when they misbehave their parents will treat them respectfully, safely and consistently

I've tried timeout and it does not work.

I will coach you to make sure it works.



OUTCOMES FROM PHASE 2- (PDI) DISCIPLINE AND COMPLIANCE

- **Decreased:**
 - Frequency, severity, and/or duration of aggressive behavior
 - Frequency of destructive behavior (such as breaking toys on purpose)
 - Defiance
- **Increased:**
 - Compliance with adult requests
 - Respect for house rules
 - Improved behavior in public
 - Parental calmness and confidence during discipline



HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FINISH PCIT?



- Family's **regular attendance** to treatment
- The extent that caregivers engage in **quality homework** practice in between sessions
- The rate that caregivers display mastery of PCIT skills in session
- The intensity of the child's behaviors at the start of treatment
- The rate at which caregivers report reductions in children's behavior problems
- The extent that the child has other emotional or developmental concerns

BUT IS IT EFFECTIVE? YES!



Large Research Base:

- At least 30 randomized clinical outcome studies and more than 10 randomized controlled trials have demonstrated

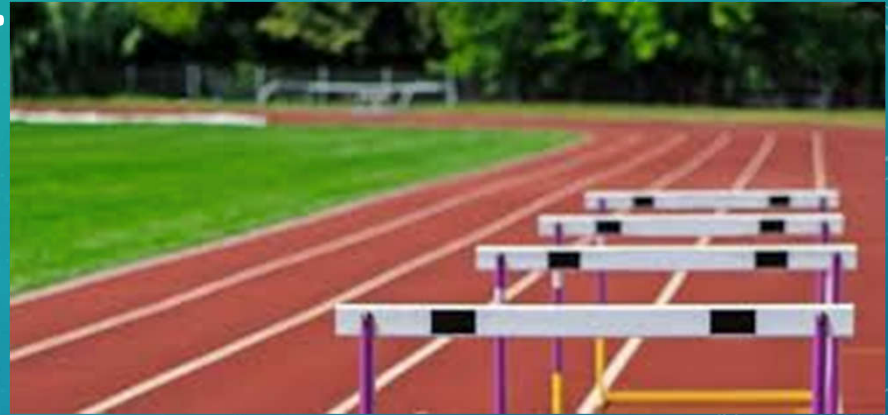
Overall:

- Improvements in child behavior
- Better parenting skills and attitudes
- Lower risk of child abuse
- Increased child emotion regulation skills

HOW IS IT DIFFERENT THAN OTHER TREATMENTS?

- Emphasizes in-session parent practice of skills
- Parents receive live coaching and feedback related to skills
- Parents are required to master specific parenting skills
- PCIT is not session-limited.
- Graduation is based on parent demonstration of mastery of skills
- Parents rate children's behavior problems as within normal limits before treatment graduation.

WHAT ABOUT.....



Multiple Children In The Home?

- Choose one child to do PCIT for and other children also need to get “special time”

Multiple Caregivers?

- All caregivers need to learn skills and come in for coaching

Foster Parents?

- Can do with foster parents as long as child will be in the home for at least 6 months

Parent Who Only Has Visitation?

- Parent can learn skills and be coached but can't do treatment fully until living with parent at least 50% of the time

WHERE DO I LEARN MORE?

- <http://www.pcit.org/>





More Information/Resources

Stephanie Wolf, JD, PhD

Wolf Psychology, LLC

stephanie@wolfpsychology.com

National Traumatic Stress Network

<http://www.nctsn.org/>