



**Credentialing Standards for**  
**Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor™**  
**APT Professional Credentialing Program**

This revision is effective as of January 1, 2020, and supersedes all previous versions.

APT may revise its Credentialing Program and its criteria, standards, process, and other aspects of the program at its sole discretion.

# Credentialing Standards for the Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor™ (RPT-S) Credential

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All approval determinations are made at the sole discretion of APT based on all information received and reviewed, and that APT may approve or deny applications or renewals based on any and all information received by it during the application and renewal process or otherwise, including information that may be obtained independently or from third parties.



# Credentialing Standards for the Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor™ (RPT-S) Credential

## Mission

The mission of the Association for Play Therapy (APT), a national professional society in the United States, is to promote the value of play, play therapy, and credentialed play therapists. To satisfy this mission, APT will advance the psycho-social development and mental health of all people through play and play therapy by promoting and supporting those programs, services, and related activities that promote the

- understanding and valuing of play and play therapy;
- effective practice of play therapy through training, research, and support;
- recognition, incorporation, and preservation of diversity in play therapy; and
- development and maintenance of a strong professional organization to accomplish these objectives.

We confer the Registered Play Therapist™ (RPT), Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor™ (RPT-S), and School Based-Registered Play Therapist™ (SB-RPT), credentials upon those licensed clinical mental health professionals to help consumers identify those with specialized training and experience in play therapy.

## Program Intent

The intent of the APT Credentialing Program is to develop national standards for the competent practice of play therapy and confer the Registered Play Therapist (RPT), Registered Play Therapist–Supervisor (RPT-S), and School Based-Registered Play Therapist (SB-RPT) to those mental health professionals who meet these national standards.

This is accomplished by integrating play therapy instruction, clinical experience, and supervision in order to earn the RPT credential by completing a sequential 3-phase approach that builds upon a completed graduate degree, and requires depth and breadth of training, experience, and supervision to increase play therapy competencies.

The updated credentialing standards, established in 2019, focus on promoting professional accountability and require ongoing professional growth and development that ultimately improve mental health services to the most vulnerable populations, especially children.

## RPT-S Designation

The RPT-S designation represents an advanced level of expertise, as evidenced by ongoing practice and continued education, in the field of play therapy. As with one's primary license, it is important to recognize experience informs supervisory practice and that advanced clinical skills are needed before one may supervise others under the RPT-S designation. **Therefore, the RPT-S credential is granted when a) applicant holds a current RPT designation, b) has held the RPT for a minimum of three consecutive years in good standing at the time of application, and c) with documentation of additional play therapy experience, education, and supervision.** This allows RPTs to further mature in the field and to more fully hone and integrate their knowledge, skills, and person of therapist, prior to being considered for the RPT-S designation.

Since RPT-Ss providing supervision to credentialing applicants serve in a gatekeeping capacity, we believe it is supervisors' obligation to identify gaps in knowledge and/or skill sets, to provide recommendations for remediation, when necessary, and to protect the integrity of the play therapy field and the vulnerable children and families play therapists serve.

As an RPT-S, registrants are expected to display the abilities to:

- a. Demonstrate advanced play therapy skills
- b. Facilitate play therapist self-awareness and insight
- c. Resolve supervisee reluctance and resistance
- d. Utilize a variety of supervisory interventions

- e. Facilitate parent consultation and involvement
- f. Facilitate play therapist development
- g. Build trust and rapport with supervisees
- h. Develop professionalism, professional identities, and advocacy skills
- i. Incorporate technology in supervision
- j. Demonstrate multicultural competency

### Application & Annual Fees

RPT-S applications are welcome upon the completion and documentation of all credentialing requirements. An RPT-S application will remain open for a maximum of 12 months after submission. Once earned, the credential must be renewed annually.

Applicants must first apply for, be granted, and maintain the RPT credential in good standing at the time of submitting the application for minimum of three (3) years prior to applying for the RPT-S credential.

RPT-S Application Fee		RPT-S Annual Renewal Fee	
Member	Non-Member	Member	Non-Member
\$245.00	\$375.00	\$ 90.00	\$180.00

**Application fees:** The non-refundable application fee of \$245.00 (or \$375.00 for non-members), includes complimentary initial 12-month activation fee.

**Annual Renewal fees:** Renewal fees are billed and due annually upon your anniversary date (see Appendix II for renewal criteria and process).

### RPT-S Application Instructions

1. Review the RPT-S Credentialing Standards. APT reserves the right to unilaterally revise, from time to time, the terms and conditions, this guide, governing policies, approval and renewal criteria, and other facets of this agreement.
2. Before starting the application process, please have the following documents available as .pdf files to upload.
  - a. Copy of current and active clinical mental health license.
  - b. Copy of completed Form A - to document both clinical and play therapy experience.
  - c. Copy of state licensing board requirements and proof of eligibility to provide clinical supervision.
  - d. Copy of certificates or documentation of both clinical supervisor instruction and play therapy specific supervisor instruction.
  - e. Signed copy of RPT-S Attestation
3. Complete the online application.
4. Upload the necessary documentation to support completion of requirements when prompted.
5. Submit a non-refundable application fee, which includes complimentary initial 12-month activation fee with approval.

You will receive a confirmation email from APT upon receipt of your application. Incomplete applications will not be reviewed. APT will notify applicants within 6 – 8 weeks via email regarding the status of their application. Should there be a change in your licensure status at any time during the application process or once approved, you are required to immediately notify APT by certified, registered, or receipted mail.

If after reviewing the RPT-S Credentialing Standards you continue to have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

## Program Criteria Overview

The RPT-S is intended for professionals who have held the Registered Play Therapist™ credential for a ***minimum of three (3) consecutive years*** in good standing. This chart summarizes the criteria that applicants must satisfy to earn the Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor (RPT-S) credential.

<b>Section</b>	<b>Credentialing Criteria</b>
<b>01 - License</b>	Required to hold a current, active, and unconditional individual state license to independently provide clinical mental health services in one of the following general practice disciplines: counseling, marriage and family therapy, psychiatry, psychology, or social work.
<b>02 - Clinical Experience</b>	An additional three (3) years and 3,000 hours of direct client contact AFTER issuance of full, clinical licensure.
<b>03 - Play Therapy Experience</b>	An additional 500 hours of direct client contact of play therapy experience AFTER attainment of RPT credential. These hours need not be supervised, must be verified.
<b>04 - State Board Requirements &amp; Approval</b>	Must be approved by state licensing board to provide clinical supervision to others.
<b>05 - Supervisor Training</b>	Complete 30 continuing education hours of clinical supervisor training. Of these, six (6) hours must be play therapy specific supervisor instruction. These hours may be contact or non-contact hours. If your state licensing board requires supervisor instruction for approval, these hours may be eligible towards no more than 24 hours of clinical supervisor education.

### Section 01 - Verification of License

Applicants must hold a current, active, and unconditional state mental health license in the general practice fields of counseling, marriage and family therapy, psychiatry, psychology, or social work indicating you are legally permitted to independently provide clinical mental health services. An add-on specialty license (e.g.: addictions, art therapy, dance/movement therapy, etc.) is not acceptable in lieu of a clinical mental health license in any of the aforementioned general practice disciplines. Attach a copy of license.

APT only accepts licenses that are unconditionally issued by an authority that promulgates mental health standards and practices and that investigates and penalizes violations of such standards and practices.

### Section 02 - Verification of Clinical Experience

Applicants must complete an *additional* three (3) years and 3,000 hours of direct client contact after issuance of full, clinical licensure. These hours must be verified by a licensed clinical mental health professional familiar with their clinical practice on Form A (available on APT website).

### Section 03 - Verification of Play Therapy Experience

Applicants are required to complete an additional 500 hours of play therapy experience (direct client contact) AFTER attainment of RPT credential. These hours need not be supervised, but must be verified by a licensed clinical mental health professional familiar with their play therapy practice on Form A (available on APT website).

APT will accept previous *completed* versions of Form A, when the verifier is unable to sign off on the most current version available.

## **Section 04 - Verification of State Board Supervisor Requirements and Approval**

Applicants must be approved by their state licensing board to provide supervision to others whether or not the applicant chooses to supervise towards another's licensure. Submit documentation, issued directly by your state licensing board, to support you have met this requirement. This may include a copy of your approval letter, a copy of the approval email, or a printout of the licensee verification or lookup page on your board's website.

For applicants whose state licensing board does not provide formal approval designation, your state licensure must either allow or not specifically prohibit you from supervising others.

Applicants must upload a copy of their state licensing board's requirement for supervisor approval when completing online application.

## **Section 05- Verification of Supervisor Training**

Applicants must complete 30 instructional hours on the clinical supervision of mental health practitioners. Of these, six (6) hours must be play therapy specific supervisor instruction. The remaining 24 hours may be either specifically on play therapy supervision or on clinical supervision. These hours may be obtained as contact and/or non-contact and through graduate coursework or continuing education.

When satisfying the play therapy specific supervisor instruction requirement, graduate coursework and APT CE trainings must be specific to the provision of play therapy supervision and sponsored by an APT Approved Provider, respectively. Supervisor training hours may not be included in the initial 150 clock hours of play therapy education and training submitted towards the RPT requirements.

For applicants whose state licensing board requires supervisor instruction to obtain approval to supervise, these hours may be submitted for consideration towards the 24 hours we require. For example, if the applicant's state licensing board requires 15 instructional hours of supervisor training, APT would accept these hours in lieu of the 24 hours required. If your state licensing board requires no supervisor education, you must complete the entire 30 hours required by APT.

Attach a copy of certificates or documentation of both clinical supervisor instruction and play therapy specific supervisor instruction. Also, include a copy of your Board's regulations regarding supervisor approval (requirements to obtain board approval).

APT requires that supervisor training address these core areas and recommends the number of hours identified adjacent to each core area:

1. Models, theories, and techniques of clinical supervision (10-12 hours)
2. Legal and ethical issues related to supervision (5-8 hours), i.e. vicarious liability; supervisory disclosure statement, supervisory contracts, supervisory informed consent; confidentiality, informed consent, and dual relationships; and gate-keeping responsibilities.
3. Clinical issues related to supervision (5-8 hours), i.e. transference and counter-transference, diversity, vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout.

## **Section 06 - Attestation by Applicant**

A comprehensive attestation is included with the online credentialing application. All applicants are encouraged to read the attestation before submitting an application in order to familiarize themselves with the terms and conditions therein.

To protect the public and reduce legal liability to APT, RPT and RPT-S credentials rely upon your strict adherence to the ethics and standards of conduct promulgated by your primary mental health discipline and are not reliant upon the play therapy best practices promulgated by APT.

By submitting an application to APT, you accept sole and total responsibility for the accuracy and completeness of the information provided in your application and agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the application and as set forth in these Credentialing Standards.

# **Credentialing Standards for the Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor™ (RPT-S) Credential**

## **Appendix I - Application Denial, Complaints, and Appeals**

### **Denial, Revocation, Suspension, or Probation**

**Section A.** A credentialing application or renewal may be denied, or APT may unilaterally – revoke, suspend or place on probation an RPT, RPT-S, or SB-RPT credential, for one or more of these reasons:

1. Disciplinary action is taken against you by the applicable licensing authority that results in the suspension or revocation of your license or a condition placed on your license
2. Conviction of a crime related to the provision of mental health services or a crime that would adversely affect the interests, effectiveness, reputation, or image of APT
3. Falsification, by inclusion or omission, of information on the credentialing application or renewal or any supporting document
4. Failure to complete credentialing application or renewal requirement(s)
5. Representing your credential (RPT, RPT-S, or SB-RPT) as your primary credential or mental health license
6. Voluntary relinquishment of your license
7. Aiding or engaging in any conduct that is prejudicial to the purpose, interests, effectiveness, reputation, or image of the play therapy profession and/or APT
8. Adverse action taken against you pursuant to any policy or procedure adopted by APT from time to time

**Section B.** If an initial or renewal application is denied and the applicant disagrees with one or more policies pertaining to the approval of such applications, the applicant may appeal to the CEO of APT. If the latter declines to grant such approval, the applicant may ask that the CEO reconsider by consulting with the Chairs of the Board of Directors, the Ethics & Practices Committee, and/or the Registration & Continuing Education Committee regarding whether such policies should be changed. The reconsidered decision of the CEO is final.

**Section C.** When issuing the revocation, suspension or prohibition of a credential, APT may identify the number of months before which the individual may reapply for or have the credential reinstated. In determining the number of months, APT may consider the extent of the infraction resulting in the revocation, suspension or prohibition and does not have to adhere to the time periods set forth in Section H below. Subject to the review described above in Section B, the decision of APT for revocation, suspension or prohibition and the time period therefore are final.

### **Complaint Process**

**Section D.** APT may consider revoking, suspending, or the placing one credentials on probation if a complainant files a formal written complaint against one or more mental health professionals holding an APT credential with their applicable mental health boards of license authorities.

1. For example, if the California Board of Behavioral Sciences has issued a license to a RPT or RPT-S designee, then a complainant will be advised by APT to file a formal complaint with that board.
2. If the identity of the applicable authority is unknown to a complainant, the latter may contact APT to learn the identity of the authority upon which the RPT, RPT-S, or SB-RPT designee's application or renewal application is based.

**Section E.** If the formal complaint results in an adverse finding about and disciplinary action against a credential holder, the complainant may then file with the CEO a) a formal written complaint and b) a copy of the official written resolution to the complaint previously filed with the applicable licensing or certifying authority.

1. Complainants may themselves forward - or ask that the applicable mental health licensing or certifying authorities forward - a copy of their resolutions to the CEO.
2. APT may take no action with respect to the RPT, RPT-S, or SB-RPT designees against whom formal complaints are filed until its receipt of such formal written complaint resolutions.



Section F. If the resolution of any formal complaint is adverse to a RPT, RPT-S, or SB-RPT then, within 10 calendar days of receipt of the resolution, the CEO shall send copies of the formal complaint and other documentation relating to the complaint, including the resolution of the licensing or certifying authority, to both the credential holder and the Ethics & Practices Committee.

Section G. An RPT, RPT-S, or SB-RPT may submit to the Ethics & Practices Committee via the CEO a written statement in response to the complaint, resolution, and other documents within 10 calendar days of their receipt of such from the CEO.

Section H. Within 30 calendar days after receipt of the complaint, resolution, and other documents, the Ethics & Practices Committee reviews and evaluates such items and determines if the credential should be:

1. Maintained.
2. Placed on probation for six (6) or 12 months with all rights and privileges.
3. Temporarily suspended for six (6) or 12 months without any rights and privileges.
4. Permanently revoked.

Section I. Within 10 calendar days of the decision of the Committee, the CEO advises the credential holder and complainant of the decision in writing.

#### Appeal Process

Section J. The credential holder may appeal any decision made by the Ethics & Practices Committee relating to any decision made by it to revoke, suspend, place on probation, or otherwise take disciplinary action against the RPT, RPT-S, or SB-RPT for any reason identified in Sections D through I as follows:

1. File a written request (the "Appeal Request") with the CEO within thirty (30) calendar days of receipt of the decision or other action. The Appeal Request must contain the pertinent facts, the reason for the appeal, and any other information that the credential holder desires to convey but may not re-state any matters set forth in any written statement provided to APT pursuant to Sections D through I.
2. Within 10 calendar days after receipt of the Appeal Request, the CEO shall advise the Chair of the Board to appoint an Appellate Committee comprising not fewer than five (5) licensed mental health professionals.
3. Within 10 calendar days after receipt of such appointment request, the Chair of the Board shall appoint the Appellate Committee and notify the CEO of the appointed Appellate Committee members.
4. Within 10 calendar days of the notice of the Appellate Committee members, the CEO shall forward to Appellate Committee these items:
  - a. Formal complaint to APT.
  - b. Resolution of initial complaint formally filed with licensing (or certifying) authority.
  - c. Response and other written statements by credential holder or designee.
  - d. Resolution of APT Ethics & Practices Committee.
  - e. Appeal Request filed by credential holder or designee.
5. The Appellate Committee shall render a decision, based upon submitted documents, to the CEO within 30 calendar days of receipt of such documents.
6. The CEO shall inform the RPT, RPT-S, or SB-RPT of the Appellate Committee decision in writing within 10 calendar days of receipt thereof. The decision of the Appellate Committee is final.

## Credentialing Standards for the Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor™ (RPT-S) Credential

**This Appendix is applicable to individuals who received their RPT-S approval on January 1, 2020 or after, with continuing education due in 2023 or after.**

### Appendix II - Renewal of RPT-S Credential

Renewal of your credential is contingent upon receipt and acknowledgement of ALL items below, all of which are subject to review and the approval of APT:

1. Complete RPT-S renewal application and pay annual renewal fee.
2. Earn at least **24** clock hours of post graduate-level play therapy continuing education (CE) every CE cycle, which is 36-months.
  - a. Not more than **12 of the 24 hours** may be non-contact hours.
  - b. Excess clock hours may not be transferred to the next 36-month CE cycle.
  - c. Hours must be presented by graduate-level instructors from these sources:
    - 1) Institutions of higher education within or outside of the United States
    - 2) APT Approved Providers within or outside of the United States
  - d. Not more than **18 of the 24 hours** may be earned via one or more of these play therapy specific options:
    - 1) Provide contact play therapy graduate-level instruction at an institution of higher education (one (1) graduate credit of instruction equals three (3) clock hours of credit). **Limit nine (9) hours.**
    - 2) Provide play therapy post graduate-level continuing education sponsored by APT Approved Providers one (1) clock hour of instruction equals one (1) hour of credit). **Limit six (6) hours.**
    - 3) Author a play therapy publication, article, or chapter (1-15 pages equal one (1) clock hour; 16-50 pages equals three (3) clock hours; and 51-plus pages equals six (6) clock hours). **Limit 12 hours.**
3. Earn **six (6) supervisor training hours** for two (2) CE cycles and **three (3) hours** each cycle thereafter. These hours are in addition to the 24 hours in play therapy, may be general or play therapy specific and either contact or non-contact hours. This requirement may be satisfied by providing supervisor instruction, training, or for authoring or editing supervisor materials. Contact APT or log into your member profile for the exact number of supervisor training hours due.
4. If audited by APT, you must provide transcripts from institutions of higher education or certificates from APT Approved Providers of Play Therapy Continuing Education (APT Approved Provider number must be displayed on certificates). Do NOT submit original copies of your certificates as all materials will be destroyed after review.
5. APT reserves the right to:
  - a. request copies of course syllabi, registration materials, training programs, promotional flyers, etc.
  - b. review and reject the sponsor, content, and presenter of any education or continuing education program.
  - c. require submittal of additional information to support a renewal application.
  - d. obtain information independently or from third parties, including licensing agencies/boards, in review of renewal applications.

# Credentialing Standards for the Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor™ (RPT-S) Credential

## Appendix III- Renewal of RPT-S Credential

This Appendix is applicable to individuals who received their RPT-S approval PRIOR to January 1, 2020, with continuing education due in 2020, 2021, or 2022.

Beginning January 1, 2023, all individuals must meet the continuing education requirements included in Appendix II.

Renewal of your credential is contingent upon receipt and acknowledgement of ALL items below, all of which are subject to review and the approval of APT:

1. Complete RPT-S renewal application and pay annual renewal fee.
2. Earn at least **18** clock hours of post graduate-level play therapy continuing education (CE) every CE cycle which is 36-months.
  - a. Not more than **9 of the 18 hours** may be non-contact hours.
  - b. Excess clock hours may not be transferred to the next 36-month CE cycle.
  - c. Hours must be presented by graduate-level instructors from these sources:
    - 1) Institutions of higher education within or outside of the United States
    - 2) APT Approved Providers within or outside of the United States
  - d. Not more than **12 of the 18 hours** may be earned via one or more of these play therapy specific options:
    - 1) Provide contact play therapy graduate-level instruction at an institution of higher education (one (1) graduate credit of instruction equals three (3) clock hours of credit). **Limit six (6) hours.**
    - 2) Provide play therapy post graduate-level continuing education sponsored by APT Approved Providers one (1) clock hour of instruction equals one (1) hour of credit). **Limit six (6) hours.**
    - 3) Author a play therapy publication, article, or chapter (1-15 pages equal one (1) clock hour; 16-50 pages equals three (3) clock hours; and 51-plus pages equals six (6) clock hours). **Limit 12 hours.**
3. Earn **six (6) supervisor training hours** for two (2) CE cycles and **three (3) hours** each cycle thereafter. These hours are in addition to the 18 hours in play therapy, may be general or play therapy specific and either contact or non-contact hours. This requirement may be satisfied by providing supervisor instruction, training, or for authoring or editing supervisor materials. Contact APT or log into you member profile for the exact number of supervisor training hours due.
4. If audited by APT, you must provide transcripts from institutions of higher education or certificates from APT Approved Providers of Play Therapy Continuing Education (APT Approved Provider number must be displayed on certificates). Do NOT submit original copies of your certificates as all materials will be destroyed after review.
5. APT reserves the right to:
  - a. request copies of course syllabi, registration materials, training programs, promotional flyers, etc.
  - b. review and reject the sponsor, content, and presenter of any education or continuing education program.
  - c. require submittal of additional information to support a renewal application.
  - d. obtain information independently or from third parties, including licensing agencies/boards, in review of renewal applications.