



## **Important Credentialing Announcement:** **Registered Play Therapist (RPT) & Supervisor (RPT-S)**

*This announcement only applies to the Registered Play Therapist (RPT) and Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor (RPT-S) credentials. It does not apply to the School Based-Registered Play Therapist (SB-RPT) credential, to Credentialing renewals, or to APT Membership.*

APT established the Credentialing program in 1992 with the primary purpose of recognizing licensed mental health practitioners who demonstrated specialized training, experience, and supervision in play therapy. Today, over 3600 play therapists hold one of the three APT play therapy credentials currently offered.

Although APT has approved periodic changes to the requirements since its inception, the Credentialing program was understandably in need of a comprehensive review. APT first announced its plan to conduct this formidable undertaking through *Play Therapy*™ Magazine last summer, followed by member email communications, social media outlets, and on our website.

Through member and registrant surveys and the examination of current Credentialing applications, several patterns of concern emerged, as well as some critical limitations to the current guidelines. The most common patterns of concern identified were: acquisition of play therapy instruction, supervisor verification, “rushed” or expedited process of instruction, lack of opportunities for intentional integration among play therapy experience, supervision, and instruction; each is described in greater detail below. Revising and updating the Credentialing program allows APT to emphasize and clarify the need for an intentional approach to how applicants fulfill Credentialing criteria, specifically through the integration of play therapy instruction, experience, and clinical supervision grounded in seminal/foundational theories.

APT is committed to upholding a high standard of excellence so that the most competent professionals are caring for our most vulnerable populations. To protect the integrity of the RPT/S credentials, play therapy applicants will need to demonstrate that they are well-rounded play therapy clinicians. In concert with the current APT Board of Directors, Registration and CE Committee, Credentialing Task Force, and founding Board members, to meet this outcome, APT will instate a **moratorium** on the acceptance of new Credentialing applications for six months (effective 7/1/19 – 12/31/19). The new application, including updated criteria and forms, will be available on the APT website no later than **May 31, 2019**.

APT will continue to consider completed Credentialing applications that are postmarked no later than June 30, 2019 under the current standards. All applications postmarked between July 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019 **will not** be accepted and will be **returned** to sender. Beginning January 1, 2020 all applications submitted to APT must meet the updated standards and guidelines, and they must include the documentation of such on the new application.

### **ACQUISITION OF PLAY THERAPY INSTRUCTION**

APT believes in the educational/developmental model of how psychotherapists develop knowledge, skills, and personal capacities. In order to obtain competency in play therapy practice, direct instruction must be followed by periods of application to clinical cases, and must be accompanied by supervision.

This includes an understanding of how the Therapeutic Powers of Play are interwoven into play therapy practice – theory, models, skills, instruction, and supervision. This is not achieved when all 150 hours of instruction are obtained in an expedited or “rushed” period of time and in the absence of play therapy experience and supervision.

- To address this, APT has developed a process for appropriate obtention and documentation of play therapy experience, supervision, and instruction that provides the optimal training experience (intentionality and integration) for developing well-rounded play therapy clinicians.

APT believes that the bulk of play therapy education should be experienced in a live, in-person format that allows for face-to-face experiential exercises, group discussion, Q & A, and healthy debate. This is not achieved when play therapy instruction is obtained entirely through online educational portals. APT values the addition of online learning platforms as an adjunctive form of learning, which is not the primary format by which integrated play therapy training occurs.

- As previously announced, effective January 1, 2020 all live webinars will be defined as and counted toward the non-contact training maximum of 50 hours.

### SUPERVISION

APT believes that 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. This standard goes unachieved when assessment of supervisees’ competencies is not clearly stated and followed.

- APT acknowledges this concern and has developed a mechanism for assessment and documentation to assist supervisors in this expectation.
- All play therapy experience hours accrued after December 31, 2019 must be supervised by an RPT-S.

### BECOMING AN RPT-S

APT believes that the RPT-S designation represents an advanced level of expertise, as evidenced by ongoing practice and continued education, in the field of play therapy. This standard goes unachieved when the RPT-S credential and the responsibilities it entails is awarded prematurely. 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 will be granted when one has held the RPT designation for a minimum of three consecutive years in good standing and 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.

### SUMMARY OF PROGRAM CHANGES

We believe the clarifications described above address many of the concerns that surfaced during our comprehensive review of the Credentialing program. Moreover, they ensure the initial intent, integrity, and credibility of the program continues to be upheld. Holding an APT credential represents that the most qualified professionals are providing the most distinctive care to our most vulnerable population, children.

- The new application, including updated criteria and forms, will be available on the APT website no later than **May 31, 2019**.
- APT has developed a process for appropriate obtention and documentation of play therapy experience, supervision, and instruction that provides the optimal training experience (intentionality and integration) for developing well-rounded play therapy clinicians.
- As previously announced, effective January 1, 2020, all live webinars will be defined as and counted toward the non-contact training maximum of 50 hours.
- APT has developed a mechanism for assessing and documenting supervisees' knowledge and skill sets to assist supervisors in upholding their gatekeeping role.
- All play therapy experience hours accrued after December 31, 2019 must be supervised by an RPT-S.
- The RPT-S credential will be considered after one has held the RPT designation for a minimum of three consecutive years in good standing and with documentation of additional play therapy experience, education, and supervision. This allows RPTs to demonstrate their maturity in both play therapy and supervision knowledge prior to receiving the RPT-S designation.

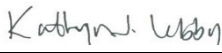
This summary includes only the most significant changes, others will also be included in the new application.

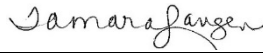
<b>IMPORTANT CREDENTIALING DATES</b>	
<b>CURRENT CREDENTIALING APPLICATION – CONSIDERED THROUGH JUNE 30, 2019</b>	
Postmarked no later than June 30, 2019	APT will <u>consider</u> completed credentialing applications only.
Postmarked after June 30, 2019	APT will <u>return</u> credentialing applications to sender.
<b>NEW CREDENTIALING APPLICATION – CONSIDERED BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2020</b>	
Postmarked starting January 1, 2020	All applications must meet the updated standards and guidelines, and submit using the new application and forms.

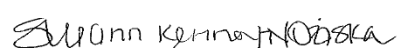
We are confident that through this process, APT demonstrates to you, the stakeholders, its commitment to preserving the integrity and value of play therapy and the Registered Play Therapist/Supervisor credentials. APT is grateful to the APT Board, Registration and CE Committee, Credentialing Task Force, and Founding Board members for their input and guidance throughout this process.

Please feel free to contact APT with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

  
 Kathryn J Lebbby, CAE, CMP  
 President/CEO

  
 Tami Langen, LISW-S, RPT-S  
 Chair, Board of Directors

  
 Sueann Kenney-Noziska, LCSW, RPT-S  
 Chair, Registration & CE Committee