Credentialing Standards for the Registered Play Therapist™

APT Professional Credentialing Program

This revision is effective as of July 1, 2022, 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™ Credential

### SPECIAL SECTION - Summary of Program Changes – Effective January 1, 2023

As with other associations, APT strives to continually improve and update our programs as we uphold the highest standards for play therapy specialization. With the events of 2020 unfolding (global pandemic, racial unrest, unprecedented storms, etc.), APT was called to again reassess our programs and processes. Incorporating input from the Inclusion, Diversity, Equity Awareness (IDEA) Team and the Registration and Continuing Education committee, the following changes to the Credentialing Standards will go into effect January 1, 2023.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Current Requirement</th>
<th>Requirements as of January 1, 2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Graduate Coursework**   | 1. Child Development  
2. Theories of Personality  
3. Principles of Psychotherapy  
4. Child and Adolescent Psychopathology  
5. Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues | 1. Child Development  
2. Theories of Personality  
3. Principles of Psychotherapy  
4. Child and Adolescent Psychopathology  
5. Cultural & Social Diversity  
6. Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues |
| **Play Therapy Instruction** | 150 hours of Play Therapy Instruction  
1. Play Therapy History – 5 hours  
2. Play Therapy Seminal or Historically Significant Theories – 55 hours  
3. Play Therapy Skills and Methods – 50 hours  
4. Play Therapy Special Topics – 25 hours  
5. Applicant’s Choice – 15 hours | 150 hours of Play Therapy Instruction  
1. Play Therapy History – 5 hours  
2. Play Therapy Seminal or Historically Significant Theories – 55 hours  
3. Play Therapy Skills and Methods – 50 hours  
4. Play Therapy Special Topics – 25 hours  
5. Play Therapy Cultural and Social Diversity Topics – 6 hours  
6. Applicant’s Choice – 9 hours |
| **Continuing Education**  | Earn at least **24** clock hours of post graduate-level play therapy continuing education (CE) every CE cycle, which is 36-months. | Earn at least **24** clock hours of post graduate-level play therapy continuing education (CE) every CE cycle, which is 36-months. Two (2) hours must be in cultural & social diversity specific to play therapy. |

The additions, titled, “Cultural & Social Diversity,” refer to individuals from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different abilities, socioeconomic backgrounds, genders, race, sexual orientations, religion, etc.
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Essential Credentialing Documents Housed Online
Glossary of Terms ........................................................................................................................ online
Competencies ....................................................................................................................................... online
Application Denial, Complaints, and Appeals .................................................................................... online

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.
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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.

Statement of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

APT credentials are conferred without regard to race, color, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender, disability, or national origin. APT is committed to the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within our organization. It is an integral component to our mission and scope. We are at our best when the principles of DEI are fully integrated into our governance, decision making processes, and policies.

As part of this commitment, APT made DEI additions to the credentialing program in 2021, which go into effect January 1, 2023. These changes can be seen in the educational requirements of the RPT™ Credential as well as in the continuing education requirements. See Summary of Program Changes.

Program Intent

The intent of the APT Credentialing Program is to develop national standards for the competent practice of play therapy and the provision of play therapy supervision. We confer the Registered Play Therapist™ (RPT™), Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor™ (RPT-S™), and School Based-Registered Play Therapist™ (SB-RPT™) credentials upon those who meet these national standards to help consumers identify licensed clinical mental health professionals, with specialized training and experience in play therapy.

This is accomplished by integrating play therapy instruction, clinical experience, and supervision in a sequential three-phase approach that builds upon a completed graduate degree, and requires depth and breadth of play therapy instruction, experience, and supervision to ensure competencies in this specialty.

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.

Sequential Three-Phase Approach

APT has developed a three-phase approach for the appropriate obtention and documentation of play therapy instruction, clinical experience, and supervision that provides the optimal training experience (intentionality and integration) for developing well-rounded play therapy clinicians.

The three-phase approach is in line with the educational/developmental model of how psychotherapists develop in knowledge, skills, and personal capacities. To obtain competency in the practice of play therapy, direct instruction must be followed by periods of application to clinical cases accompanied by supervision.

Successful completion of the credentialing requirements demonstrates the following:

• Instructional, clinical experience, and supervision hours must be accrued in a time period of no less than two (2) years and no more than seven (7) years.
• Each phase requires the completion and documentation of a minimum number of hours in play therapy instruction, clinical experience, and supervision prior to progressing to the next phase.
• All three phases must be completed before submitting application.
This process is designed to aid in obtaining comprehensive knowledge of the theories and clinical skills required for the competent practice of play therapy.

**Application & Annual Fees**

Applications are welcome upon the completion and documentation of all credentialing requirements. An RPT™ application will remain open for a maximum of 12 months after submission. Once earned, the credential must be renewed annually (see Section 09 for renewal criteria and process).

Applicants must first apply for, be granted, and maintain the RPT™ credential in good standing for the three (3) most recent consecutive years prior to applying for the RPT-S™ credential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RPT™ Application Fee</th>
<th>RPT™ Annual Renewal Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Member</td>
<td>Non-Member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$140.00</td>
<td>$270.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Application fees:** The non-refundable application fee of $140.00 (or $270 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 Section 09 for renewal criteria and process). APT Membership is applied for, and billed separately from Credentialing fees.

**RPT™ Application Instructions**

1. Review the 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. Complete, sign, and date the application, including attestation.
3. Attach the following:
   a. License,
   b. Graduate Transcripts,
   c. Completed/signed **Criteria Verification Forms** with corresponding documentation for each phase.
4. Submit your completed application and all attachments to:

   Association for Play Therapy,
   401 Clovis Avenue, Suite 107, Clovis, CA 93612
   559-298-3400, info@a4pt.org

It is recommended that applications are submitted by mail or courier. Please do not submit incomplete applications.

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 in writing.

If after reviewing the Credentialing Standards you continue to have questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.
**Program Criteria Overview**

This chart summarizes the criteria that applicants must satisfy to earn the RPT™ credential. The criteria are designed to ensure well-rounded education and training in play therapy.

Successful completion of the credentialing criteria includes the completion and documentation of a minimum number of hours in play therapy instruction, clinical experience, and supervision in a three-phase approach. See Section 06 for additional information on the integration of these criteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Credentialing Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01 - License</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02 - Educational Degree</td>
<td>Required to hold a master's or higher clinical mental health degree in one of the following disciplines: counseling, marriage and family therapy, psychiatry, psychology, or social work with demonstrated coursework in: child development; theories of personality; principles of psychotherapy; child &amp; adolescent psychopathology; and ethics.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 03 - Play Therapy Instruction | Required to include documentation of at least 150 hours of play therapy specific instruction, accrued in a time period of no less than two (2) years and no more than seven (7) years from institutions of higher education or APT Approved Providers. Limits to the number of non-contact hours and additional stipulations are listed in Section 03.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Instruction Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>35-55 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>55-70 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>45-60 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Section 03 for primary areas that must be covered within each phase.

| 04 - Supervised Play Therapy Experience | Required to include documentation of a minimum of 350 direct client contact hours, under the supervision of a Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor (RPT-S).  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Experience Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>50-75 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>100-150 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>100-175 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Section 04 for additional information on the appropriate acquisition of play therapy experience.

| 05 - Play Therapy Supervision | Required to include documentation of a minimum of 35 hours of play therapy supervision and **five (5) session observations** during the accumulation of the supervised play therapy experience.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Supervision Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>5-10 hours and supervisor must view/observe at least 1 session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>10-15 hours and supervisor must view/observe at least 2 sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10-20 hours and supervisor must view/observe at least 2 sessions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Section 05 for additional information on supervision guidelines.
Section 01 - Applicant Information and License Verification

Applicant Information
Provide your current contact information and indicate the best way to reach you. To avoid delays in the processing of your application, please notify APT when any changes occur to your contact information. In addition, this information will be listed on our website once approved.

Application Fee and Payment
A nonrefundable fee is required at the time application is submitted. Payment may be submitted via check or credit card (Visa and MasterCard only).

Nonmembers interested in joining APT may include membership fees with this application.

Foundation contributions may also be included with your application. The Foundation for Play Therapy accepts tax-exempt donations to support play therapy research and promotion.

Complete the application fee and payment section of the application by entering the applicable amounts, and entering the amount in the total enclosed box.

If paying by credit card, please complete all information requested. APT does not maintain credit cards numbers on file.

Verification of License
Attach a copy of your 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.

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.

A clinical license should include two (2) years and 2,000 direct client contact hours of supervised clinical mental health experience.

APT confers "practitioner credentials." If you are a practitioner, you must maintain an active license in the state in which you practice. It is your responsibility to update the licensure expiration date in your credentialing profile upon renewal of your license.

If you are not currently practicing, you must hold an active license issued by a state licensing board whether or not you are practicing or residing in that state in order to maintain the RPT™ credential.
Section 02 - Verification of Graduate Degrees and Core Content Coursework

Applicants must hold a master’s or higher clinical mental health degree in one of the following general practice disciplines: counseling, marriage and family therapy, psychiatry, psychology, or social work. Please note, add-on specialties (e.g.: addictions, art therapy, dance/movement therapy, etc.) are not acceptable in lieu of a clinical mental health degree in any of the aforementioned general practice disciplines. Attach a copy of your graduate transcript(s) issued by an institution of higher education and list specific courses that meet each of the core areas on the credentialing application. The date your graduate degree was conferred must be clearly visible.

Your transcripts must indicate that you have completed coursework in these five (5) required core areas:
1. Child Development
2. Theories of Personality
3. Principles of Psychotherapy
4. Child and Adolescent Psychopathology
5. Legal, Ethical, and Professional Issues

The core content areas may be covered in single or multiple courses. The class titles may differ from APT’s core area titles. The table below provides examples of possible graduate course titles and descriptions for each content area.

Table 2.1 – Core Content Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Core Content Area</th>
<th>Course Descriptions and Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Development</td>
<td>This content area on lifespan development covers how humans learn, mature, and adapt from infancy to adulthood to elderly phases of life (e.g., Life Span Development, Human Behavior in Social Environment – HBSE I).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theories of Personality</td>
<td>This content will cover a variety of personality theories, their history, and applications (e.g., Counseling Theories, HBSE I).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychotherapy</td>
<td>In this content area, the counseling process and skills are discussed through an array of theories (e.g., Counseling Process &amp; Skills, Social Work Practice, Pre-practicum).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child &amp; Adolescent Psychopathology</td>
<td>The types and symptomology of mental disorders, their assessment, treatment, and related research in psychotherapy for the disorders are covered in this content area (e.g., Abnormal Psychology or Behavior, HBSE III, DSM, Diagnosis &amp; Treatment, Mental Emotional &amp; Behavioral Disorders).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics</td>
<td>This content area introduces ethical principles, professional guidelines, and issues pertaining to special groups (e.g., Intro into the Profession, SW Policy and Issues).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you would like assistance in determining whether or not your academic program covered the five (5) content areas list above prior to submitting your application, please complete the Transcript Review form available on our website.
Section 03 - Verification of Play Therapy Instruction

Applicants are required to complete 150 hours of play therapy specific instruction in four (4) primary areas, during the simultaneous or sequential completion of both play therapy experience and supervision, in a three-phase approach. See Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 – Play Therapy Primary Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Areas</th>
<th>Minimum number of hours</th>
<th>Must be completed in Phase 1</th>
<th>Must be completed in Phase 2</th>
<th>Must be completed in Phase 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 - Play Therapy History</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Play Therapy Seminal or Historically Significant Theories</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>10-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Play Therapy Skills and Methods</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td>15-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Play Therapy Special Topics</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>20-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant’s Choice</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>The remaining 15 hours may be completed in any of the categories, during any phase.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seminal Theories and their Derivatives
In order to preserve and strengthen the credentialing program, APT wishes to distinguish seminal theories and historically significant theories that were derived from them, which have had a lasting impact and have stood the test of time, from newer theories or approaches that have emerged in more recent years and have not yet proven their significance, though they may at some point with more time and empirical evidence.

Play Therapy - Seminal Theories and Historically Significant Theories
APT recognizes the following three major branches as seminal theories to the field of play therapy: Cognitive-Behavioral, Humanistic, and Psychodynamic.

APT recognizes the following 10 historically significant theories to the field of play therapy:
1. Adlerian
2. Child-Centered
3. Cognitive-Behavioral
4. Developmental (Viola Brody)
5. Ecosystemic
6. Filial – although not a theory, this approach is historically significant.
7. Gestalt
8. Jungian
9. Object-Relations
10. Theraplay – although not a theory, this approach is historically significant.
To ensure instruction, clinical experience, and supervision are integrated:

- Instruction should be ongoing and in conjunction with (simultaneous or sequential) play therapy experience and supervision in each phase.
- Instructional hours must be accrued in a time period of no less than two (2) years and no more than seven (7) years.
- Applicant’s play therapy coursework and trainings must demonstrate a well-rounded education in more than one play therapy seminal or historically significant theory.
- Hours earned in skills and methods should be based on the theoretical model studied.
- A maximum of eight (8) hours of instruction per day will be accepted.
- Effective July 1, 2022, the required 150 hours of play therapy instruction may be earned via contact training (in-person only), non-contact training, and live webinars. See Terms for definition of each.
  - Of the 150 hours of play therapy instruction, a minimum of 75 hours must be met by contact/in-person training.
  - A maximum of 75 hours may be met via live webinars and of those 75 hours, no more than 40 hours may be met via non-contact trainings.

**Play Therapy Graduate Coursework and Continuing Education**

To meet this requirement, APT accepts graduate coursework from institutions of higher education and play therapy continuing education from APT Approved Providers. See Table 3.2.

APT accepts graduate coursework specific to play therapy from institutions of higher education when the applicant is a matriculated student at the university. If applicant is not a matriculated student, hours are counted as continuing education.

APT only accepts continuing education specific to play therapy from APT Approved Providers in good standing at the time of the CE workshop.

**Table 3.2 – Play Therapy Instruction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graduate Coursework</th>
<th>Continuing Education from an APT Approved Provider</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Each graduate course semester credit equals 22.5 hours of play therapy instruction.</td>
<td>One hour of instruction equals one clock hour.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not more than 135 clock hours may be earned from the same instructor.</td>
<td>Not more than 100 clock hours may be earned from the same instructor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A copy of course syllabus is required for all play therapy graduate courses you wish considered towards this requirement.</td>
<td>Completion certificate must display the sponsor’s APT Approved Provider number (i.e., APT Approved Provider XX-XXX).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Items not eligible for instructional credit include but are not limited to:

1. Presentations and/or coursework taught or written by applicant.
2. Clock hours earned from graduate internships and practicum (may be included in Section 04).

See Section 06 for detailed instructions on the documentation of play therapy instruction.

APT reserves the right to require the completion of additional play therapy specific training should applicant not document adequate instruction in the four (4) primary areas: play therapy history, play therapy seminal or historically significant theories, play therapy skills and methods, and play therapy special topics.
Section 04 - Verification of Supervised Play Therapy Experience

Play therapy experience must be obtained under the supervision (or consultation – see Terms) of an RPT-STM who is recognized by their licensing boards as eligible to supervise; expected to know and abide by their respective ethics and standards; subject to disciplinary action by their respective licensing boards and accountable for the actions of their supervisees. See Table 4.1.

In order to ensure instruction, clinical experience, and supervision are integrated:
- Applicants must complete a minimum of 350 hours of direct play therapy experience and 35 hours of simultaneous supervision in three phases.
- Supervised play therapy experience hours must be accrued in a time period of no less than two (2) years and no more than seven (7) years.
- Through the supervised play therapy experience, applicants are expected to demonstrate play therapy competencies (competencies listed in Section 05).

Table 4.1 – Play Therapy Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervised Play Therapy Experience</th>
<th>Must be completed in Phase 1</th>
<th>Must be completed in Phase 2</th>
<th>Must be completed in Phase 3</th>
<th>Minimum number of hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Client Contact Hours required in each phase</td>
<td>50-75</td>
<td>100-150</td>
<td>100-175</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The three-phase approach permits the applicant to adequately absorb and synthesize play therapy instruction obtained into their supervised play therapy experience at a more manageable pace.

To obtain competency, assessment of the supervisee’s play therapy knowledge and skills is essential. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to share with their supervisor attendance certificates or graduate transcripts for play therapy instruction received while under supervision. This interchange helps inform the supervisory process and aids in the integration of the acquired knowledge through demonstrated practice. Attendees are encouraged to seek play therapy-specific education which supports and integrates material related to APT’s core competencies.
Section 05 - Verification of Play Therapy Supervision

To provide play therapy supervision, supervisors must hold the RPT-STM credential; be recognized by their licensing board as eligible to supervise; expected to know and abide by their respective ethics and standards; subject to disciplinary action by their respective licensing boards and accountable for the actions of their supervisees. In some situations, peer supervision or ongoing consultation may be used to meet this requirement. Play Therapy Supervision is required to occur in three separate but integrated phases.

To ensure instruction, clinical experience, and supervision are integrated:
- Applicants must complete a minimum of 35 hours of play therapy supervision and 350 hours of simultaneous play therapy experience.
- Play Therapy Supervision hours must be accrued in a time period of no less than two (2) years and no more than seven (7) years.
- Supervision should be received at a ratio of 1 to 10. One hour of supervision for every 10 hours of play therapy experience.
- A minimum of five (5) session observations are required in order to meet the supervision requirement.

Table 5.1 – Play Therapy Supervision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play Therapy Supervision</th>
<th>Must be completed in Phase 1</th>
<th>Must be completed in Phase 2</th>
<th>Must be completed in Phase 3</th>
<th>Minimum number of hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hours required in each phase</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session observations required in each phase</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Play Therapy Supervision**

**Types of Supervision:**
1. **Individual Supervision:** Consists of one supervisor and one supervisee.
2. **Group Supervision:** Consists of one supervisor and at least two but not more than 10 supervisees. Maximum group hours accepted is 10 of the 35.
3. **Individual in Group Supervision:** You may obtain individual supervision hours within a group only if focus was on your play therapy case notes, reports, or session video and does not exceed 10 supervisees. There is no limit to the number of hours that may be obtained in this manner.
4. **Contact or In-Person Supervision:** Occurs when you meet in-person with your supervisor to discuss case notes, reports, session video, or by simultaneously but separately watching and discussing your session video. There is no limit to the number of hours that you may obtain in this manner.
5. **Non-Contact or Distance Supervision:** Occurs when you meet with your supervisor via telephone or online to discuss your play therapy case notes, reports, or session video. There is no limit to the number of hours that you may obtain in this manner.

**Play Therapy Consultation**

Consultation differs from supervision in that the ‘supervisor’ and ‘supervisee’ both hold individual clinical mental health licenses issued by their respective state licensing boards that permit for independent practice. In consultation, the ‘supervisor’ is asked to share expert advice specific to play therapy to the existing competent care being provided by the ‘supervisee’. This type of ‘peer supervision’ or on-going consultation may meet APT Credentialing requirements.

**Supervisor Observations**

Supervisor observations are necessary to assess the supervisee’s competencies, qualifications, professionalism, and other matters germane to the practice of play therapy. A **minimum of five (5) session observations are required for the successful completion of the supervision requirement.** See Table 5.1 for specific phase requirements.
It is beneficial to both supervisor and supervisee if observations take place at different stages during the therapeutic relationship. Supervisors providing five (5) or more hours of supervision must observe at least one (1) play therapy session.

The observation requirement may be met via in-person observation, two-way mirror, videotaped, audiotaped, telehealth, transcribed session, or mock/role-play session.

**Supervisee Required Competencies**

It is the supervisor’s 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 is achieved through the formal assessment of supervisees’ play therapy competencies. Multicultural orientation is of specific importance because it allows for the provision of play therapy services to underrepresented or marginalized groups.

APT identifies the following areas of competencies as essential to the competent practice of play therapy, irrespective of theoretical orientation:

**Competency 1: Knowledge & Understanding of Play Therapy**

The play therapist will:

1a. Demonstrate knowledge of the history of play therapy  
1b. Demonstrate understanding of the therapeutic powers of play  
1c. Demonstrate knowledge of the therapeutic relationship in play therapy  
1d. Demonstrate knowledge of seminal/historically significant play therapy theories and models  
1e. Apply theories and stages of childhood development in play therapy  
1f. Identify and apply ethical practices in play therapy  
1g. Demonstrate an understanding of the play therapy treatment process (e.g., treatment goals and plans, documentation, intake/termination, and tracking of treatment progress)  
1h. Demonstrate knowledge of family & systemic theories in play therapy  
1i. Demonstrate knowledge of childhood-related problems and mental health diagnosis/disorders  
1j. Demonstrate an understanding of the diverse impacts of childhood trauma (e.g., neurobiological, systemic, social) and the implications in play therapy  
1k. Demonstrate knowledge of assessment in play therapy

**Competency 2: Clinical Play Therapy Skills**

The play therapist will:

2a. Apply and articulate the therapeutic powers of play  
2b. Demonstrate relationship and rapport building skills (e.g., empathy, safety, unconditional positive regard) by utilizing ‘self’ in relationships with children, caregivers, stakeholders in play therapy  
2c. Apply assessments that highlight various aspects of the child and/or system and the play therapy process (e.g., conceptualization, diagnosis, family dynamics, treatment suitability and effectiveness, termination)  
2d. Articulate and explain the play therapy process  
2e. Demonstrate basic play therapy skills (e.g., tracking, reflection of feeling, limit setting, pacing with the client)  
2f. Identify play dynamics (e.g., types of play, themes, stages) and incorporate clinical considerations in treatment  
2g. Develop play therapy treatment goals and plans congruent with theoretical orientation  
2h. Demonstrate understanding of own cultural and social identity and its influence in the play therapy process  
2i. Exhibit multicultural orientation to diversity, equity, and inclusion through a culturally and socially diverse playroom and play therapy process  
2j. Demonstrate play therapy treatment skills congruent with theoretical orientation (e.g., conceptualization, interventions)
Competency 3: Professional Engagement in Play Therapy

The play therapist will:

3a. Maintain play therapy credentials and involvement in professional play therapy organizations
3b. Consistently evaluate and adjust play therapy practices to meet state and discipline ethical guidelines and codes
3c. Apply ongoing integration of APT’s guidelines within the Best Practices and Paper on Touch
3d. Recognize and adhere to the limits of professional scope of competence in play therapy
3e. Seek and integrate play therapy-specific continued education, research, and literature
3f. Seek and integrate play therapy-specific supervision and consultation
3g. Practice self-care to maintain quality play therapy services
3h. Seek and integrate ongoing knowledge regarding cultural and social diversity in play therapy

During each phase, supervision should include discussion and assessment based on these competencies. Applicant should meet all competencies by the completion of Phase 3.
Section 06 - Integration of Play Therapy Instruction, Experience and Supervision

APT believes in the importance of providing competent care to clients and ensuring that the RPT™ credentials represent quality play therapy services by the holder. To these ends, the three-phase approach was developed to accomplish two outcomes. First, to provide a process for applicants to obtain play therapy competency through the intentional integration of direct instruction (Section 03) followed by periods of application to clinical cases (Section 04) accompanied by supervision (Section 05). Second, to provide a process for documenting the successful achievement of these criteria (RPT™ Credentialing Application).

Therefore, applicants must demonstrate through documentation on the Criteria Verification Forms found in the RPT™ Credentialing Application that play therapy instructional, clinical experience, and supervision hours were earned:

- in a time period of no less than two (2) years and no more than seven (7) years;
- in three distinct, but sequential phases with a minimum number of hours in each criterion met prior to progressing to the next phase;
- in the primary and competency areas outlined in each phase; and
- all three phases must be completed before submitting application.

Table 6.1 provides specific information on the required hours in each criterion per Phase. Applicants may document additional hours per Phase, but APT will accept no more than the maximum hours allotted per criterion as indicated in Table 6.1.

Instructions for Completion of Criteria Verification (CV) Form

Applicant must use the appropriate Criteria Verification Form in the RPT™ Credentialing Application to document the necessary hours completed for each criterion during each of three phases. No more than the maximum number of hours indicated in each criterion will be accepted. “Applicant’s Choice” provides an option of obtaining 15 hours of play therapy instruction in any of the Primary Areas of the applicant’s choosing.

- Applicant’s name must be included on each phase form.
- Date range should identify the time period in which the play therapy instruction, experience, and supervision was completed by applicant. The date range on each Criteria Verification form may not overlap.
- Section A – Play Therapy Instruction: To be completed by applicant. This section includes all play therapy instruction obtained during the date range specified. Applicants must complete the table in section A and attach copies of transcripts and training certificates issued by institutions of higher education and Approved Providers, respectively, to demonstrate that you earned the required number of hours during each phase.
- Sections B and C – Play Therapy Experience & Supervision: To be completed by applicant and verified by supervisor. See chart on page 4 for the acceptable minimum and maximum number of hours of experience and supervision accepted within each Phase.
- Section D – Play Therapy Competencies: To be reviewed and discussed with applicant. Applicant should meet all competencies by the completion of Phase 3.
- Section E – Supervisor Attestation: To be completed by supervisor. This section serves as verification for the information documented in Sections A-D. The supervisor must also verify that the required number of observations have been met during each phase and indicate their role in the relationship as either that of supervisor or consultant.

Disclaimer: The breakdown of hours in the three-phase approach was designed to serve as a guide and should not substitute the clinical judgment of the applicant or the applicant’s supervisor. Should additional hours be deemed necessary in any or all of the three criteria due to observed deficiencies in competence, APT expects that the additional hours will be obtained and documented in the credentialing application. Exceeding the minimum hours required in each criterion is encouraged, but not required.

Hours Earned Prior to January 1, 2020

Use Appendix I of the Credentialing Application to document play therapy experience and supervision hours earned prior to January 1, 2020.
Applicants must submit three **Criteria Verification forms**, one for each Phase with their application materials, documenting the requirements outlined below. Each form must be completed in its entirety and all requirements met.

### Table 6.1 – Integration of Required Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Play Therapy Specific Instruction (Section 03)</th>
<th>Experience (Section 04)</th>
<th>Supervision (Section 05)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hours Required:</strong></td>
<td>35-55</td>
<td>At least 50, but no more than 75 hours of Supervised Play Therapy Experience must be completed during Phase 1.</td>
<td>At least 5, not more than 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1 only:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Note: Of the required 35 hours, no more than 10 group supervision hours will be accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seminal or Historically Significant Theories</td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Observe 1 play therapy session.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skills &amp; Methods</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Special Topics</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Any Phase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• History</td>
<td>up to 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Applicant’s Choice</td>
<td>up to 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hours Required:</strong></td>
<td>55-70</td>
<td>At least 100, but no more than 150 hours of Supervised Play Therapy Experience must be completed during Phase 2.</td>
<td>At least 10, not more than 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 2 only:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Note: Of the required 35 hours, no more than 10 group supervision hours will be accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seminal or Historically Significant Theories</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Observe 2 play therapy sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skills &amp; Methods</td>
<td>25-30</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Special Topics</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In Any Phase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• History</td>
<td>up to 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Applicant’s Choice</td>
<td>up to 15</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phase 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hours Required:</strong></td>
<td>45-60</td>
<td>At least 100, but no more than 175 hours of Supervised Play Therapy Experience must be completed during Phase 3.</td>
<td>At least 10, not more than 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase 3 only:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Note: Of the required 35 hours, no more than 10 group supervision hours will be accepted.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Any Theory</td>
<td>10-15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Observe 2 play therapy sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Skills &amp; Methods</td>
<td>15-20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Association for Play Therapy, Inc.
Section 07 - Attestation by Applicant

A comprehensive attestation is included in the 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.

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.
Section 08 - Documenting Hours Acquired Prior to 1/1/2020

In most cases, hours obtained in play therapy instruction, experience, and supervision prior to January 1, 2020 may be counted toward the credentialing requirements and documented on Appendix I of the Credentialing Application. Play therapy supervised experience and supervision earned after January 1, 2020 must be under the supervision of an RPT-S™ and documented on the Phase Forms.

Play Therapy Instruction
Use Section 1 of the Appendix I form to document, in date order, any play therapy instruction earned prior to January 1, 2020 received from graduate coursework or continuing education from APT Approved Providers. Attach a copy of your graduate transcript and/or certificate of attendance to the Appendix I form.

To meet this requirement, APT accepts graduate coursework from institutions of higher education and play therapy continuing education from APT Approved Providers. See Table 3.2 on page 9.

APT accepts graduate coursework specific to play therapy from institutions of higher education when the applicant is a matriculated student at the university. If applicant is not a matriculated student, hours are counted as continuing education.

APT only accepts continuing education specific to play therapy from APT Approved Providers in good standing at the time of the CE workshop.

For additional information on graduate coursework and continuing education training requirements, see Section 3.

Supervised Play Therapy Experience & Supervision
If your supervisor was an RPT-S™, please document no less than 335 hours of play therapy experience and 35 supervision hours (max 15 group supervision) on Appendix I of the Credentialing Application.

If your supervisor was NOT an RPT-S™, please document no less than 500 hours of play therapy experience and 50 supervision hours (max 20 group supervision) on Appendix I of the Credentialing Application.

Any Supervisor who provided 10 or more hours of supervision must observe at least one (1) play therapy session during supervision. Failure to meet the required observation will void the supervised experience hours.

For additional information on supervised play therapy experience and supervision requirements, see Section 4 and Section 5, respectively.

Applicants are encouraged to contact APT directly with any questions.
Section 09 - Renewal of the RPT™ Credential

These renewal requirements are applicable to individuals who received their RPT™ approval on January 1, 2020 or after, with continuing education due in 2023 or after.

To maintain an active credential, please adhere to the processes outlined below. It is important to note that credentialing renewal invoices and all other communications are primarily sent via email. Please make sure your member profile is updated and/or notify APT when changes occur.

APT expects all registrants to be aware of the credentialing standards and requirements of holding a credential from the Association for Play Therapy (APT).

All Individuals that hold the Registered Play Therapist™ credential must:

1. **Renew their credential annually.** Every 12 months you will receive an RPT™ Renewal Notice at least 30 days prior to your renewal date. To maintain an active credential, a completed renewal form, signed attestation, and renewal fee must be submitted by your renewal date. APT will accept renewals up to two months early.
   - Save time and money by renewing your RPT™ credential for three years. This option is only available for current APT members, at the time their CE is due (every 36-months).

2. **License Update.** All credentialed play therapists are required to hold and maintain a current and active individual state license to independently provide clinical mental health services. It is the responsibility of all credentialed play therapists to ensure that current licensing information is updated annually (or when a state license is renewed), and that information is accurately reflected in their member profile. Non-members must submit documentation of license and all subsequent licensure renewals to info@a4pt.org.

3. **Continuing Education.** In addition to the annual requirements, all credentialed play therapists must also earn at least 24 clock hours of post graduate-level play therapy CE every three-years. CE must be earned from institutions of higher education or APT Approved Providers, and must be presented by graduate-level instructors.
   a. Of the 24 hours of play therapy CE:
      (1) a minimum of 12 hours must be contact hours, the additional 12 hours may be non-contact hours or webinars, and
      (2) two (2) hours must be in cultural & social diversity specific to play therapy.
   b. Not more than 18 of the 24 hours may be earned via one or more of these 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,
          • 51-plus pages equals six (6) clock hours. Limit 12 hours.
   c. Excess clock hours may not be transferred to the next 36-month CE cycle.

**Audit**

APT conducts audits of no more than 10% of credentialed play therapists annually. If audited by APT, you must provide copies of transcripts from institutions of higher education or certificates from APT Approved Providers. APT reserves the right to:
   a. request copies of course syllabi or CE certificates,
   b. review and reject the sponsor, content, and presenter of any education or CE 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.
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3. **Continuing Education.** In addition to the annual requirements, all credentialed play therapists must also
earn at least 18 clock hours of post graduate-level play therapy CE every three-years. CE must be earned
from institutions of higher education or APT Approved Providers, and must be presented by graduate-level
instructors.
   a. Of the 18 hours of play therapy CE:
      (1) a minimum of **9 hours must be contact hours**, 
      (2) the additional 9 hours may be **non-contact hours or webinars**.
   b. Not more than **12 of the 18 hours** may be earned via one or more of these 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 (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,
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