



Frequently Asked Questions:

Registered Play Therapist (RPT) & Supervisor (RPT-S)

Terms

1. **What does “RPT/S” mean?**

“RPT/S” is a combined acronym that refers to both our Registered Play Therapist™ (RPT) and Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor™ (RPT-S) credentials.

2. **What is the SB-RPT?**

SB-RPT is the acronym for the School Based-Registered Play Therapist™ credential. The SB-RPT credential is intended for professionals who hold a current and active individual state license or certificate from their state’s department of education to independently practice as a school counselor or school psychologist. Applicants licensed by their state mental health board (i.e. LPC, LCSW, LMFT, etc) are ineligible for the SB-RPT, but may be eligible for the Registered Play Therapist™ (RPT) or Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor™ (RPT-S) credentials. Registrants may not hold more than one APT credential at any given time. For additional questions, please consult the [SB-RPT Guide](#), or the SB-RPT Frequently Asked Questions, found under the Play Therapy Credentialing tab on the APT website, and/or [contact APT](#).

Benefits of the RPT/S Credentials

3. **What are the benefits of having the RPT or RPT-S credential?**

Your RPT or RPT-S credential conveys your play therapy knowledge and experience to the general public, schools and universities, parents and children, and other mental health professionals. It lends credibility and visibility to your specialized training and provides you with a community of likeminded individuals who believe in the therapeutic power of play.

Verification of License (Guide, Section 0300)

4. **Does my international license/credential meet the RPT/S licensure requirement?**

Applicants must have a current and active clinical mental health license that permits for independent practice. The licensing board must be the government agency assigned to regulate and investigate the mental health profession regulated by an established mental health act. Membership to mental health associations do not meet the credentialing requirements for licensure. Please contact the office, should you continue to question whether or not your license/credential meets the RPT/S licensure requirement.

Verification of Graduate Degrees and Core Content Coursework (Guide, Section 0400)

5. **What are the basic educational requirements to become an RPT or RPT-S?**

You must have earned a graduate degree in a mental health discipline with demonstrated coursework in five (5) core areas (i.e. child development, theories of personality, principles of psychotherapy, psychopathology/DSM, and legal/ethical issues).

6. **I’m not sure my graduate program addressed the five (5) core content areas, will APT review my academic transcripts before I submit my application?**

Yes. Simply complete and submit the [Transcript Review](#) request form with the fee (\$50) and a copy of your transcripts to APT. For Advanced Standing social work applicants, please include a copy of your undergraduate transcripts with your graduate transcripts. If you are not interested in a transcript review but continue to have questions regarding the five (5) core content areas, please submit a copy of the syllabus for each course you believe satisfies this requirement with your completed application.

Verification of Clinical Experience (Guide, Section 0500)

7. How do I verify the two years and 2,000 direct client contact hours of supervised clinical experience requirement?

This requirement refers to the post-graduate hours required to obtain full clinical licensure by your state mental health board (LCSW, LPC, LMFT, etc.). These hours may be verified by either completing Form A, Section 1a. OR submitting a copy of your state licensing board's requirement for supervised experience, which can be found on your state board's website.

8. On Form A of the RPT/S application, Section 1b indicates three years and 3,000 hours of clinical experience after initial licensure. What does this mean?

This requirement is for the RPT-S credential only and requires RPT-S applicants to have three years AND 3,000 direct client contact hours of clinical experience after initial licensure (initial licensure is defined as the highest level of licensure for your discipline and does not include dependent licenses).

Verification of Play Therapy Coursework & Trainings (Guide, Section 0600)

9. How and from whom may I earn the 150 hours of play therapy instruction?

You may complete graduate play therapy courses at institutions of higher education (transcripts) and/or workshops by APT Approved Providers of Play Therapy Continuing Education (certificates). Certificates that do not bear the APT Approved Provider number will not be eligible for APT CE's. Play therapy graduate courses must appear on a university transcript, whether taken for credit or audited. If the term "play therapy" is not found on the course title, please submit a copy of the course syllabus and/or a letter from the instructor attesting to the hours of play therapy specific content the course offered. Audited play therapy courses must be accompanied by a letter from the instructor attesting to the student's successful completion of all coursework required to receive a passing grade. In addition, documentation must support a well-rounded training, which includes instruction in more than one play therapy approach. Presentations and/or coursework taught or written by applicant are not eligible.

10. What is considered contact training?

Trainings where attendees can have interaction with the instructor in real time (ask questions during the training and the instructor responds) are considered contact hours (e.g.: conference workshops, live webinars, etc.). However, effective January 1, 2020, contact hours will be defined as in-person instruction and non-contact hours will consist of recorded webinars, book studies, live webinars, recorded audio programs, etc. Read more about these changes [here](#).

11. How many of the 150 hours of play therapy instruction may be non-contact or distance learning hours?

No more than 50 of the 150 hours may be non-contact (e.g., APT E-Learning Center, pre-recorded webinars, etc.).

12. Is there a time limit for achieving the 150 hours of play therapy instruction?

APT support an integrative process of achieving the required play therapy education, clinical experience, and a supervision in a manner that promotes cumulative/collective learning and allows for the integration of education within clinical work. Applicants may be asked for additional information in the event their application does not demonstrate this type of integrative learning process. The necessary skills to practice play therapy competently are not acquired in a short period of time – this includes training, supervision, and experience.

Verification of Supervised Play Therapy Experience & Supervision (Guide, Section 0700)

13. How many hours of play therapy experience (direct client contact hours) must I accrue?

RPT applicants must accrue at least 500 direct client contact hours of supervised clinical play therapy experience. RPT-S applicants must accrue at least 1,000 hours, 500 of which must be supervised. If supervised

by an RPT-S, 335 hours at minimum are required. These hours are calculated at a higher rate (1.5). For example, 335 hours of play therapy experience under an RPT-S are multiplied by 1.5, which results in 502.5 hours (eg: $335 \times 1.5 = 502.5$). Hours completed under a non-RPT-S are multiplied by 1.0. Please note that any supervised play therapy experience hours accrued beginning January 1, 2020, must be under an RPT-S (with a minimum of 350 hours of experience and 35 hours of supervision).

14. How many supervision hours in play therapy must I complete?

RPT and RPT-S applicants must accrue at least 50 hours of play therapy supervision while accruing their supervised clinical play therapy experience. If supervised by an RPT-S, 35 hours at minimum are required. These hours are calculated at a higher rate (1.5). Therefore, 35 hours of play therapy experience under an RPT-S are multiplied by 1.5, which results in 52.5 hours (e.g.: $35 \times 1.5 = 52.5$). Hours completed under a non-RPT-S are multiplied by 1.0.

15. Must my clinical supervisor be an RPT-S?

If your supervised experience hours were accrued prior to January 1, 2020, APT will accept hours under either an RPT-S or a non-RPT-S who is fully licensed and permitted to supervise according to their state mental health board. Any supervised play therapy experience hours accrued beginning January 1, 2020, must be under an RPT-S (with a minimum of 350 hours of experience and 35 hours of supervision). Should you want or need to receive supervision from an RPT-S, here is the link to our [Find a Registered Play Therapist Directory](#).

16. Is there any benefit to using an RPT-S rather than a non-RPT-S?

We think so. Not only do applicants require less hours for play therapy experience and supervision (see question #13), RPT-S's have been vetted by APT as meeting a set of standards for play therapy education and training.

17. How do I document my play therapy experience and supervision?

Use Form A (the last page of the application). It is the applicant's responsibility to post the dates and hours of his/her supervised play therapy experience in Section 2. Indicate the number of individual supervision hours in Section 2b labeled "Individual" and put group supervision hours in Section 2b labeled "Group." Have your supervisor(s) sign the form under the section labeled "Verifier."

18. Is there a limit to how many group supervision hours I can submit?

Yes. No more than 20 hours under a non-RPT-S and 15 hours under an RPT-S of group supervision are accepted.

19. Are dyadic supervision sessions considered "individual" supervision?

If the focus of the supervision was on your individual cases, then you may count only the time spent discussing your individual cases toward the "individual" supervision requirement.

20. Can I use internship or practicum hours from my graduate program towards the 500 hours of play therapy experience requirement?

Yes. You may accrue such hours via your graduate play therapy practicums, internships, externships, etc. Please make sure to have your supervisor sign off on your play therapy experience hours on Form A, Section 2.

21. Do I have to complete my play therapy training (instruction hours) before I can begin accruing my play therapy experience hours (direct client contact hours)?

Although APT does not specify on this matter expressly, it is expected that applicants adhere to their Boards' ethics and scope of practice. If the applicant believes s/he is competent to treat clients using play therapy, then they may count said hours.

Verification of Supervisor Training (RPT-S APPLICANTS ONLY – Guide, Section 0800)

22. What are the supervisor training requirements for the RPT-S credential?

Applicants must complete six (6) hours of play therapy specific supervisor training AND 1) demonstrate completion of either state board requirements for supervisor training (evidenced by a copy of their state board requirements accompanied by approval letter or certificates of attendance) OR 2) complete APT's supervisor requirements (24 hours of supervisor training) These hours may be contact or non-contact hours and offered by APT Approved Providers or graduate play therapy course visible on graduate transcript.

23. Can I use my play therapy supervisor training CE's for both the 150 hours of play therapy instruction and the 6 hours of play therapy supervisor training?

No, supervisor training hours may not be used towards both requirements at the same time. You may use them towards the initial 150 clock hours of play therapy instruction or play therapy supervisor training.

Renewal of RPT & RPT-S Credentials (Guide, Section 01100)

24. Once I earn my RPT or RPT-S credential, what additional play therapy continuing education is required to maintain it?

You must earn 18 hours of play therapy specific training during each subsequent 36-month continuing education cycle. Not more than 9 of the 18 hours may be non-contact. RPT-S registrants must complete 6 hours of supervisor training in addition to the 18 play therapy hours above. These clinical or play therapy specific supervisor training hours may be contact or non-contact.

25. When do I renew my RPT or RPT-S credential?

Renew annually 12 months after approval. APT will notify you via email (please maintain your information current). Be sure to earn 18 hours of play therapy training during each 36-month continuing education cycle. RPT-S registrants must earn an additional 6 hours of supervisor training.

26. How many hours of supervisor training do I need for my RPT-S renewal?

If you were approved before 12/31/2013 – you will complete three (3) hours of supervisor training in your next 36-month CE cycle and thereafter. If you were approved after 1/1/2014 – you will complete six (6) hours of supervisor training in each first and second CE cycle over the next six years. Then complete three (3) hours of supervisor training each 36-month CE cycle thereafter

Transitioning from the RPT to the RPT-S

27. I am a current RPT. What do I need to do to obtain the RPT-S credential?

Please submit a [Transition Request](#) form from our website found under the Play Therapy Credentials tab. After receipt of your request, a review of your file will be completed and an email sent to you outlining the necessary requirements you will need to transition.

Miscellaneous

28. What are the most recent changes made to the RPT/S program?

- Effective January 1, 2020, hours earned toward the supervised play therapy experience and supervision requirements for the RPT and RPT-S applications must be under the supervision of an RPT-S only. Any supervised play therapy experience and supervision hours accrued prior to January 1, 2020 will be accepted provided they fall under the current guidelines. For additional information on the changes scheduled for 2020, read this [article](#) or refer to the [Guide](#) for further instruction. If you were conferred the RPT or RPT-S credential prior to January 1, 2020, this change will NOT affect you.
- Effective April 1, 2016, RPT-S applicants must complete six (6) hours of play therapy specific supervisor training AND either 1) have completed their state board supervisor training requirement OR 2) completed

APT's 24 hours of supervisor training. If your state board does not require supervisor training then you must complete APT's requirement of 24 hours, plus the six (6) hours of play therapy supervisor training.

- In January of 2016, APT launched its new credential, the School Based-Registered Play Therapist (SB-RPT). The SB-RPT credential is intended for professionals who hold a current and active individual state license or certificate from their state's department of education to independently practice as a school counselor or school psychologist. Applicants licensed by their state mental health board (i.e. LPC, LCSW, LMFT, etc) are ineligible for the SB-RPT, but may be eligible for the Registered Play Therapist™ (RPT) or Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor™ (RPT-S) credentials. Registrants may not hold more than one APT credential at any given time.

29. Do I have to apply for the RPT credential before I can apply for the RPT-S credential?

No, you may apply for either credential at any point you believe you have met the requirements of said credential.

30. I am a current RPT and would like to obtain the SB-RPT as well. Does APT confer multiple credentials to an individual?

No, registrants cannot hold more than one APT credential at any given time (so you are either an RPT or an RPT-S or an SB-RPT).

31. Is it true that some states do not permit you to use the RPT acronym?

Yes. Please review the [list of states](#) (at the bottom of page) that do not permit you to use the RPT acronym as it is already in use for registered physical therapists. In these states, registrants must spell out their credential.

32. Does the RPT or RPT-S credential replace my state mental health license?

No. The RPT/S credentials are secondary credentials and do not legally permit you to practice without a state mental health license. In fact, applicants are not eligible for the RPT/S credentials without a state mental health license.

For questions or assistance, please contact:

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