



Approved Center Guide: Approved Center (AC) Of Play Therapy Education Program

Mission

The mission of the Association for Play Therapy™ (APT), a national professional society formed in 1982, is to promote the value of play, play therapy, and credentialed play therapists.

Purpose

APT acknowledges both the importance of effective communications with and mental health treatment for children, teens, and adults, and the consumer's right to make informed choices, particularly the choice of the play therapy modality as one treatment option.

APT confers its Registered Play Therapist™ (RPT) and Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor™ (RPT-S) credentials upon licensed mental health practitioners and the School Based-Registered Play Therapist (SB-RPT) credential upon licensed or certified school counselors or school psychologists in order to better help consumers identify professionals with specialized training and experience in play therapy. The complete RPT/S Guide and Application are available at a4pt.org.

APT bestows the designation, Approved Center of Play Therapy Education (AC), to institutions of higher education offering Master's or Doctoral degrees in the mental health field in order to enhance and promote the credibility of play therapy by:

- Generating more play therapy instruction, supervised clinical experience, supervisor training, and faculty members with play therapy expertise and RPT/S credentials.
- Producing more original play therapy specific research, especially research advancing evidence-based play therapy practice, and the publication of such in professional peer-reviewed publications within and outside of the play therapy community.
- Contributing to the advancement of play therapy and the growth of the play therapy community.

Application & Renewal

Application/renewal instructions, specific words and terms, and program policies are addressed in this **APT Approved Center Program Guide**. APT reserves the right to revise program guidelines and criteria with reasonable advance notice. To become and remain an Approved Center of Play Therapy Education, each applicant must complete and return an Approved Center Application with the applicable fees to APT.

General Instructions

1. Review the **APT Approved Center Program Guide**.
2. Contact the APT Continuing Education Coordinator for clarifications or assistance if necessary.
3. Complete, sign, and date the Initial or Three-Year Renewal application.
4. Attach (if check) or include (if credit card) application fee.
5. Submit your application to:

Jaqueline Rosales, Coordinator, Education & Training
Association for Play Therapy
401 Clovis Avenue, Suite 107, Clovis, CA 93612
559-298-3400 ext 313 * Fax 559-298-3410 * jrosales@a4pt.org

6. APT will notify applicants within 4-6 weeks regarding the status of their Approved Center application.
7. Once approved, AC enters a three-year approval period starting on the date of approval.
8. Approved AC's will be included in the Find Approved Center Directory on the APT website.
9. At the end of each three-year approval period, AC submits a renewal application which includes a section for reporting how Center requirements were met during the previous 3 years, and a section for forecasting the next three-year approval period requirements.

Approved Center Application Overview

This chart summarizes the criteria that applicants must satisfy to earn the Approved Center of Play Therapy Education designation.

Review the Approved Center Guide for details.

| # | APPLICATION CRITERIA | NEW | RENEWAL |
|-----|---|--|--|
| A.1 | Degree/Certificate | Confer Master's or higher degrees accepted by the state in which the AC resides for licensure or certification of mental health practitioners. | Same as New AC |
| A.2 | Student Access to Program | Offer access to mental health students enrolled in university departments other than the department hosting the AC. | Same as New AC |
| A.3 | RPT-S | Have an active Registered Play Therapist Supervisor (RPT-S) review and endorse all play therapy programs and services offered by AC. | Same as New AC |
| A.4 | Promotion | Educate students and other faculty about play therapy and APT, in particular its credentialing program. | Same as New AC |
| A.5 | Play Therapy Instruction | Offer at least 9 credit hours of graduate level play therapy instruction during the first three-year approval period. | Offer at least 18 credit hours of graduate level play therapy instruction during the three-year approval period. |
| | | | Must earn at least 12 additional points from the three options below: |
| C | Scholarship | Not required for initial applications. | Must earn three (3) or more points from these options. |
| D | Graduate Education & Clinical Training | Not required for initial applications. | Must earn two (2) or more points from these options. |
| E | Other | Not required for initial applications. | Can earn up to five (5) additional points from these options. |

Terms

To ensure clarity of understanding, the meaning of these words and phrases are described below:

1. "Academic Year" refers to the 12-month period defined as the "academic year" by each institution.
2. "Approval Period" refers to the three consecutive years (or 36 months) from your Starting (or Renewal) Date.
3. "Approved Centers (AC)" refers to APT-approved university centers providing play therapy graduate education, supervised experience, supervisor training, research, etc. This program parallels the Approved Provider program.
4. "Approved Providers (AP)" refers to APT Approved Providers of Play Therapy Continuing Education. If you also wish to be designated by APT as an Approved Provider (AP) of Play Therapy Continuing Education, you should complete and submit the Approved Provider application to APT. If you are already designated as an AC by APT, then you may reduce your three-year AP fee by 50%.
5. "APT" refers to the Association for Play Therapy, a national professional society in the United States.
6. "Code of Ethics" refers to the specific code of ethics promulgated by a primary mental health disciplinary board or organization and observed by Approved Centers, individuals who present their play therapy programs, and the Registered Play Therapists (RPT) and Supervisors (RPT-S) who review and approve their play therapy programs.
7. "Continuing Education (or Training)" refers to graduate-level continuing education and training experience designed to provide Master's or higher play therapy knowledge and skills.
8. "Credit Hour" refers to 15 seat hours completed during a graduate course offered by institutions of higher education.
9. "CE Hour" refers to 60 minutes of continuing education or training credit earned by mental health professionals via programs offered by Approved Providers.
10. "President & CEO" refers to the President & CEO of the Association for Play Therapy.
11. "Graduate" generally refers to play therapy and supervisor continuing education programs offered at a level that builds upon a Master's or higher mental health degree.
12. "License" refers to an individually issued current and active clinical mental health license to independently provide clinical mental health services. Also deemed the highest level of practice for that particular field and is generally termed "independent", "clinical", or Independent clinical." Examples of licenses are Licensed Clinical Psychologist (LCP), Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC), Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT). Excluded are temporary and learning licenses issued to interns, associates, and to those engaged in clinical practice under supervision or another's license.
13. "Mental health degree" refers to earning a Master's or higher mental health degree from an institution of higher education.
14. "Multicultural Competency" refers to the ability of play therapists to 1) become and remain aware of their own cultural backgrounds, influences, and biases (including but not limited to religion, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and race), 2) acquire and continuously seek knowledge about how cultural backgrounds, influences, and biases operate in the lives of their clients, and 3) demonstrate culturally-appropriate therapeutic skills.
15. "Play Therapist" refers to those mental health professionals trained to systematically use a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein the therapeutic powers of play is applied to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development.
16. "Play Therapy" refers to "the systematic use of a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein trained play therapists use the therapeutic powers of play to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimal growth and development."
17. "Play Therapy Credit" refers to play therapy credit conferred by APT for graduate-level play therapy education and continuing education programs that are play therapy specific in content by demonstrating evidence of

EITHER a systematic use of a therapeutic model, the establishment of an interpersonal process using the therapeutic powers of play, OR content that enhances the specific professional proficiency of mental health practitioners who are engaged in the clinical practice of play therapy, the supervision of play therapists, or the instruction of play therapy. Education and continuing education programs not specifically applicable to the practice of play therapy but generally applicable to mental health practitioners are ineligible for play therapy credit.

18. "Renewal Date" refers to the month and year that your three-year Approval Period expires.
19. "RPT/S" refers to both the Registered Play Therapist (RPT) and Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor (RPT-S) credentials conferred by APT.
20. "SB-RPT" refers to the School Based-Registered Play Therapist credential conferred by APT.
21. "Starting Date" refers to the month and year that your three-year Approval Period begins.

Application

01. General Criteria

A. **Approved Center Requirements.** During each three-year approval period, AC must satisfy these minimum criteria to earn and maintain its "Approved Center for Play Therapy Education" designation:

1. **Degree.** The university confers Master's or higher degrees accepted by the state in which it resides for licensure or certification of mental health practitioners. List these degrees in your initial and renewal applications.
2. **Student Access to Program.** Access to AC instruction and activities (trainings, resources, etc.) is available to mental health students enrolled in university departments other than the department hosting the AC. Include in the attestation in your initial and renewal applications.
3. **RPT-S.** All play therapy specific programs and services offered by the AC are reviewed and endorsed by an active Registered Play Therapist Supervisor (RPT-S) who is preferably a faculty member (full-time, part-time, or adjunct) employed by the AC. This endorsement by a licensed mental health professional with an RPT-S credential is the means by which APT is assured that its play therapy standards are observed. List the name and credentials of your RPT-S in your initial and renewal applications.
4. **Promotion.** AC educates students and other faculty about play therapy and APT, particularly its RPT/S and SB-RPT credentialing programs. AC may show a video, distribute APT brochures, and assist students and other licensed mental health professionals to learn about and perhaps earn the RPT/S credentials. Describe such promotion in your initial and renewal applications.
5. **Play Therapy Instruction.**

Initial Approval period. In order to support its creation and establishment, a start-up AC must offer at least nine (9) credit hours of graduate-level play therapy instruction over the course of its initial three-year approval period.

Every Renewal period. Thereafter, AC must offer at least eighteen (18) credit hours of graduate-level play therapy instruction during each three-year approval period, a criterion that is normally satisfied by offering two three-hour courses per academic year. This course work offered over three years may be in any configuration as long as course offerings total 18 credits over that time span. The same course may not be counted more than three times during the three-year period. Institutions not observing semesters must demonstrate equivalent instruction. List the title and number of hours of each course in your initial and renewal applications. Post all additional courses beyond the initial 18 hours in Section D.3. A one-hour quarter course x .66 = one-hour semester course.

B. **Additional Criteria.**

Initial Approval period. During its initial three-year approval period AC is not required to earn any additional points in these areas.

Every Renewal period. Thereafter, during each three-year approval period and in addition to the minimal eighteen (18) graduate semester credit hours of play therapy instruction, AC must earn at least 12 additional points as described in these options:

- C. **Scholarship.** For renewal applications, a minimum of three (3) points are required from these options:
1. **Published Books.** AC may earn three (3) points for each play therapy specific book authored by AC faculty or students that has been published traditionally (e.g, established publishing house). Cite number of published books in your renewal applications. *Example:* Two books x 3 points = 6 points. Limit six (6) points.
 2. **Published Chapters.** AC may earn two (2) points for each play therapy specific book chapter authored by AC faculty or students that has been published traditionally (e.g, established publishing house). Cite number of published chapters in your renewal applications. *Example:* One book chapter x 2 points = 2 points. Limit four (4) points.
 3. **Magazine Articles.** AC may earn one (1) point for each play therapy specific article authored by AC faculty or students and published in the quarterly *Play Therapy* magazine produced by APT or in another nationally-distributed magazine published for the general public or the members of another prominent national mental health organization. Cite number of planned or published articles in your initial and renewal applications. *Example:* Two magazine articles x 1 point = 2 points. Limit three (3) points.
 4. **Peer-Reviewed Published Manuscripts.** AC may earn points for each play therapy-specific manuscript authored by AC faculty or students and published in the *International Journal of Play Therapy* or other prominent peer-reviewed mental health publications as follows:
 - Two (2) points if non-research based or conceptual (this type of manuscript is theoretically based or is practice and application). Cite number of planned or published peer-reviewed articles in your initial and renewal applications. *Example:* One planned or published manuscript in a peer-reviewed publication x 2 points = 2 points. No points limit
 - Three (3) points if based on original play therapy research in the form of qualitative (phenomenological, narrative, etc.) or quantitative studies (such as survey studies, single case design, etc.) or any original research study that generates analyzable data. Cite number of planned or published peer-reviewed articles in your initial and renewal applications. *Example:* One planned or published manuscript in a peer-reviewed publication x 3 points = 3 points. No points limit.
 - Five (5) points if original research that includes experimental design (random assignment, a treatment group and an active control group), or quasi-experimental design (a treatment group and an active control group) which can add to the evidence base research. Cite number of planned or published peer-reviewed articles in your initial and renewal applications. *Example:* One planned or published research manuscript supporting evidence-based play therapy practices in a peer-reviewed publication x 5 points = 5 points. No points limit
 5. **Presentations.** AC may earn one (1) point for each play therapy specific presentation by AC faculty or students at another prominent mental health organization's conference or workshop. Cite number of planned presentations in your initial and renewal applications. *Example:* Two presentations x 1 point = 2 points. Limit two (2) points.
- D. **Graduate Education & Clinical Training.** For renewal applications, a minimum of two (2) points are required from these options:
1. **Supervised Play Therapy Experience.** AC may earn two (2) points for each 3-credit hour course of play therapy specific supervised practicum, internship, or externships provided to University enrolled students. Include course number, semester, and credit hours on renewal applications. *Example:* One 3-credit hour course x 2 points = 2 points. Limit six (6) points.
 2. **Play Therapy Supervisor Training Graduate Course.** AC may earn two (2) points for each credit hour (15 instructional hours) of play therapy specific supervisor training. Include course number, semester, and credit hours on renewal applications. *Example:* 30 seat hours = 2 credit hours x 2 points = 4 points. Limit six (6) points.
 3. **Play Therapy Instruction.** In addition to the required minimum eighteen (18) credit hours of graduate-level play therapy specific instruction required every 3-year period, AC may earn two (2) points for each additional increment of three (3) credit hours of graduate-level play therapy instruction. List number of additional planned or actual semester credit hours of play therapy graduate courses in your initial and

renewal applications. *Example:* 6 semester credit hours / 3 = 2 courses x 2 = 4 points. Limit six (6) points.

- E. **Other.** For renewal applications, a maximum of five (5) additional points can be earned from these options:
1. **Resource Center.** AC may earn one (1) point for ensuring that at least 20 play therapy specific titles are accessible via the center, department, or campus library (including online library access), and may earn two (2) points for 50 or more play therapy specific titles. Cite the number of play therapy specific books, DVDs, videos, etc. that are accessible in your initial and renewal applications. Limit two (2) points.
 2. **Play Room.** AC may earn one (1) point for each safe and furnished on-site playroom. Cite number of on-site playrooms in your initial and renewal applications. Limit two (2) points.
 3. **Continuing Education.** AC may earn one (1) point for each increment of six (6) contact and/or non-contact hours of APT-approved play therapy specific continuing education (credit for co-sponsored continuing education is earned only by the Approved Provider whose number is displayed and cannot be shared). Include dates, APT Approved Provider number, and number of planned or actual increments of play therapy continuing education programs in your initial and renewal applications. *Example:* One annual 6-hour workshop x 3 years = 18 hours / 6 = 3 increments x 2 = 6 points. Limit six (6) points.
 4. **RPT-S Director.** AC may earn one (1) point if the Approved Center Director is a current and active Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor (RPT-S). Limit one (1) point.

02. Denial of Applications

If your AC application is not approved by APT, you may submit a written appeal that clearly and concisely states your rationale for approval to the APT Continuing Education & Training Coordinator who will render a decision within ten (10) days of receipt of the appeal.

If you wish to appeal the decision of the APT Continuing Education & Training Coordinator, may submit a written appeal that clearly and concisely states your rationale for approval and disagreement with that initial decision to the APT President & CEO who may or may not consult other institutional and non-institutional representatives and who will respond within ten (10) days. The decision of the President & CEO is final.

03. Basis for Probation, Suspension, or Revocation

- A. APT may deny, place on probation, suspend, or revoke an AC designation if the AC:
1. Has a disciplinary action, deemed relevant and serious by APT, taken against it by a licensing or certification authority or professional society,
 2. Is, or its representatives or program presenters are, convicted of a serious crime related to the provision of mental health services or the provision of education or continuing education programs, or a crime that would adversely affect the public credibility of play therapy or reputation of APT,
 3. Falsifies, by inclusion or omission, information on its initial or renewal application or any supporting documents, or
 4. Has an adverse resolution to a written complaint filed with APT by a complainant regarding the quality of or treatment received at one or more of its programs or activities.
- B. When encountering real or potential problems, AC should immediately consult APT.

04. Complaints & Appeals

- A. Complaints against an AC should first be filed with the AC. If satisfaction is not obtained, complainants may file a confidential written complaint against an AC with APT regarding activities of the AC when conducting programs and services as a designated AC.
- B. Within ten (10) days after receipt of the written complaint, APT will confidentially share a copy of the written complaint with and solicit a written response from the AC.
- C. If a written response is not received from the AC within thirty (30) days, APT will render a written resolution to the Complainant and AC regarding the continued designation of the latter. This resolution is final.

- D. If, however, a confidential and timely written response is received from the AC, within thirty (30) days of such receipt, APT will render a written resolution to both the Complainant and AC regarding the continued designation of the latter. APT may solicit additional information from the Complainant, AC, or both prior to rendering a resolution.
- E. Within thirty (30) days of the resolution rendered by APT, the Complainant or AC may file a written appeal to the APT President & CEO.
- F. Within thirty (30) days after receipt of the written appeal, the President & CEO will share a copy of the written appeal with and solicit a written response from either the Complainant or AC, as applicable, regarding the continued designation of the latter.
- G. If a written response is not received from the Complainant or AC as applicable within thirty (30) days, the APT President & CEO will render a written resolution to the Complainant and AC regarding the continued designation of the latter. This resolution is final.
- H. If, however, a timely written response is received from the Complainant or AC as applicable, within thirty (30) days of such receipt, the APT President & CEO will render a written resolution to the Complainant and AC regarding the continued designation of the latter. The APT President & CEO will first review the appeal and all relevant information and may consult the Complainant, AC, or other relevant parties. This resolution is final.
- I. Probable resolutions are that AC designation is:
 - 1. Continued;
 - 2. Placed on probation for six (6) or twelve (12) months with all rights and privileges;
 - 3. Temporarily suspended for six (6) or twelve (12) months without any rights and privileges;
 - 4. Permanently revoked; or
 - 5. A combination of more than one of the above.
- J. If the resolution is any of the latter three options, it will be published by APT.

05. Hold Harmless

- A. The AC, to the greatest extent allowed by the laws of the state in which the university resides and without waiving any of its legal defenses, hereby indemnifies and holds harmless APT from and against any and all claims, losses, actions, costs and expenses (including attorneys' fees) incurred by APT as a result of or arising out of:
 - 1. The acts or omissions of the university, its AC, directors, officers, members, employees, agents, representatives or presenters in the administration, presentation, the written contents or materials of its programs, or the handling of any complaint regarding any of its programs;
 - 2. Its failure to abide by the code of ethics and/or standards of practice by which its department, RPT/S, instructors, or program presenters must abide, laws and regulations, and other requirements promulgated by applicable authorities;
 - 3. Any falsification, including by omission or inclusion, of information on the AC's application or supporting documents; and
 - 4. Any other action or omission caused by the AC in its initial or renewal application or relating to its AC designation.
- B. If unable to comply with Section 05.A, the AC either a) is self-insured; b) will obtain and maintain general liability insurance for both personal and property injuries in amounts not less than \$100,000 per person and \$200,000 per occurrence, naming APT as an additional insured; or c) will comply with applicable law governing the AC with respect to the acts or omissions of the AC as described in Section 05.A. If applicable, the AC will provide a certificate of insurance to APT upon reasonable request.