

# 2026 Director Candidate Information

The APT Nominations Committee is pleased to present the APT membership with a recommended slate of candidates for the two open positions on the APT Board. The individuals elected will serve a three-year term on the APT Board of Directors. Professional members in good standing as of June 1, 2026 will receive a personalized link via email to cast their vote during the June 3 through June 16 election. More information will be shared weekly in our **Play Today** digital newsletter.



**Mary Morrison Bennett,**  
PhD, LPC-S, RPT-S™

- + Discipline:** Counseling
- + Position:** Private Practice, Austin, TX
- + Member Since:** 2000
- + Leadership Graduate:** 2007
- + APT Service:** Play Therapy™ Magazine Author • Published in *International Journal of Play Therapy*® • Annual APT Conference, Presenter
- + APT Committees:** Chair, Registration and CE Committee, 2024-Present • Task Force of Revoked Credentials, 2025 • Clinical Advisory Committee, 2025 • International Journal of Play Therapy® • 2024-Present • Ethics Committee, 2024-Present • Nominations Committee, 2015-2024 • Awards of Excellence Committee, 2018-2020 • Conference Committee, 2010-2012; 2014-15; 2020-21
- + Branch Service:** Texas APT, President 2009-2011 • Texas APT Past President, 2011-2012 • Texas APT, Research Committee, 2013-2018; 2025 • Texas APT, Conference Chair & President-Elect, 2008-2009 • Texas APT, Secretary, 2007-2008 • TX APT Presenter
- + APT Outcome Goals:** APT establishes standards of practice, providing credibility to play therapists and protecting the vulnerable. It serves both professionals and children, ensuring effective, ethical therapy practices.



**Parie Faridnia,**  
PsyD, LP, RPT-S™

- + Discipline:** Psychology
- + Position:** Private Practice, Irvine, CA
- + Member Since:** 2011
- + Leadership Graduate:** 2022
- + APT Service:** Play Therapy™ Magazine Author • Annual APT Conference, Presenter • Emerging Leader Service Award, 2023
- + APT Committees:** Ethics Committee, 2025-Present • Leadership Academy Committee, 2023-Present • Research Committee, 2023-Present • Task Force of Revoked Credentials, 2025 • Branch Task Force, 2022-2024
- + Branch Service:** California APT, President, 2021 • California APT, Immediate Past President, 2022 • California APT, President Elect, 2019-2020 • California APT, CE Manager, 2017-2019 • California APT, CE Committee Advisory Member, 2023-2025
- + APT Outcome Goals:** APT ensures play therapy is ethically practiced, publicly trusted, and equitably accessible, advancing mental health for children while supporting members and credentialed play therapists.



**Kara Carnes-Holt,**  
PhD, LPC, RPT-S™

- + Discipline:** Counseling
- + Position:** Department Chair & Professor, University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, CO
- + Member Since:** 2004
- + Leadership Graduate:** 2012
- + APT Service:** Published in *International Journal of Play Therapy*® • Annual APT Conference, Presenter
- + APT Committees:** Registration & CE Committee, 2025-Present • Conference Program Committee, Chair, 2019-2021; Member, 2013-2018 • Key Awards Committee, Chair, 2016-2017; Member, 2011-2018
- + Branch Service:** Wyoming APT, Board Member, 2011-2017 • Wyoming APT Conference Co-Sponsorship, 2010-2022
- + APT Outcome Goals:** APT exists to support professionals through training, research access, and credentialing, ultimately empowering children and families to thrive and live their best, healthiest lives.



**Julie Nash,**  
PhD, RPT-S™

- + Discipline:** Clinical Psychology
- + Position:** Owner, Riverside Psychological Associates, LLC, Chester, CT
- + Member Since:** 2008
- + Leadership Graduate:** 2014
- + APT Service:** APT Board of Directors, Member 2023-2026; Secretary, 2023 • Annual APT Conference, Presenter • Play Therapy™ Magazine Author
- + APT Committees:** Branch Task Force: 2022-2024 • Conference Program: 2016 - 2023, Chair 2021-22 • International Journal of Play Therapy®; Guest Reviewer: 2019 - present • Play Therapy™ Magazine Reviewer: 2012-2023 • Nominations Committee, 2015-2022
- + Branch Service:** New England APT, President 2018-22; Board of Directors: 2011-22 • New England APT, Newsletter Editor: 2011 - 18
- + APT Outcome Goals:** Trained and credentialed play therapists to provide effective, research-supported play therapy for the public and an engaging professional organization for play therapists.