



Fact Sheet – 2026 Class **Leadership Academy**

Purpose and Background

The APT Leadership Academy is designed to develop the leadership necessary to support the long-term growth and advancement of both APT and the field of play therapy. While the program does not focus on clinical play therapy practice, it centers on the “business of play therapy”—specifically, the governance, policy, and leadership strategies that sustain a vibrant professional community.

Established in 2004, the Leadership Academy was created to help members understand and effectively engage with the Policy Governance© Model (PGM), which the APT Board of Directors adopted in 2005.

The PGM clarifies the roles and responsibilities of governance (the Board), management (the CEO), and stakeholders (APT members). Each year since its founding, a new class of emerging leaders has graduated from the Academy.

Participation in the Leadership Academy offers both instruction and practical application of the PGM, in direct support of APT’s Ends policy:

“Because APT exists, mental health professionals can access the benefits of a highly engaged, vibrant, inclusive, and collaborative play therapy community.”

Leadership Academy Program Overview

The APT Leadership Academy is designed to prepare members for future leadership roles within the Association by focusing on organizational governance, professional responsibility, and ethical decision-making. Please note: **this program does not provide training in play therapy practice.**

The program runs from **February through May** and is limited to **30 participants**. The participation fee is **\$75**, which will be invoiced upon acceptance.

Program Requirements

The Leadership Academy consists of **four required assignments**, each with two components, and **six mandatory Zoom meetings** held throughout the program.

Assignment Components:

- **Part A – Content Review & Quiz:**
Participants are required to review assigned materials, including brief outside readings provided by APT, and complete an online quiz with a minimum score of 80% by the published deadline.
- **Part B – Zoom Meeting & Online Discussion:**
Each assignment includes a class Zoom meeting, followed by a **7-day online discussion**. Participants are expected to contribute meaningfully to discussions, often working toward **group consensus**.

Tips for Success

- Post early in the discussion week to help shape the conversation.
- Review your classmates’ posts daily.
- Aim to move the group discussion forward, especially when consensus is the goal.

Zoom Class Meeting and Q & A Calls

All participants are required to attend and participate in a 60-minute Introductory Meeting, via Zoom on **Monday, February 2, 2026 at 4:00pm (PST)**.

Additionally, participants are required to attend and participate in five (5) scheduled Leadership Academy calls, via Zoom. Calls are 75 minutes in length, with the first 30 minutes dedicated to current topic, followed by breakouts for the class to discuss the assignment. Call topics and dates are:

- **Wednesday, February 11, 2026 at 3:00pm (PT), Topic: APT & Leadership Qualities**
- **Wednesday, March 11, 2026 at 2:00pm (PT), Topic: Policy Governance Principles**
- **Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at 4:00pm (PT), Topic: Policy Governance: Stakeholders as Consumers**
- **Wednesday, May 6, 2026 at 3:00pm (PT), Topic: Policy Governance: Committee Participation**
- **Thursday, May 14, 2026 at 4:00pm (PT), Topic: Wrap-up and next steps**

Time Commitment & Expectations

- Plan to dedicate **3–5 hours per week** to review materials, attend Zoom meetings, and actively participate in discussion boards.
- **Active participation is required each day during the 7-day discussion period.** This includes contributing your own insights, reading your peers' posts, and engaging in meaningful dialogue through multiple responses to keep the conversation dynamic and evolving.
- **Deadlines are strictly enforced.** Late submissions or incomplete participation will result in removal from the program.

Participation Policy

- **100% participation** is required for all assignments, quizzes, Zoom meetings, and online discussions.
- All deadlines are considered **final and non-negotiable** to ensure the class moves forward together.
- Incomplete assignments or lack of participation will result in **dismissal from the program**.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of the Leadership Academy program, graduates will be able to:

- Articulate the core elements of APT, including its history, structure, programs, personnel, finances, and communications.
- Identify key Policy Governance© Model (PGM) vocabulary, principles, and processes.
- Differentiate between staff, board, and stakeholder roles and responsibilities according to PGM.
- Learn how members participate in APT as both governance and volunteer staff.
- Understand how APT conducts its daily business via email and Association forums, and how Stakeholders participate and concisely communicate.
- Describe the nature of leadership and key leadership attributes.
- Identify personal leadership qualities for further exploration and development.

2026 Schedule

Nov 20 - Dec 31:	Academy Registration open
January 5 - 9:	Committee review and evaluation of applicants complete
January 12:	Applicants notified of acceptance status
January 30:	Deadline for class to post self-introduction videos
Jan 30 - May 14:	Class completes academy program
October 2026:	News releases and photos with graduation certificates sent to media

Enrollment & Selection Criteria

The Leadership Academy has grown each year and continues to identify people who have amazing leadership qualities. To enroll in and successfully complete the Leadership Academy program, you must:

- Be a member of APT
- Be a mental health academic, practitioner, or graduate student.
- Submit a completed Leadership Application by **December 31.**
- All applications and the accompanying questions will be anonymously reviewed and evaluated by the Leadership Academy Committee.
- Of the large number of applicants received, a maximum of 30 will be selected for each class.
- Upon acceptance in the Leadership Academy, participants will receive an invoice for the registration fee in the amount of \$75. ***Invoices must be paid within five days.***
- Participate in 100% of assignments, including the written and online portions of each assignment by the indicated hard deadlines and the required zoom class meetings. If unable to satisfy this graduation criteria, enrollment may be once deferred to the next class.

2026 Leadership Academy Course Schedule

ASSIGNMENTS		ASSIGNMENT 1	ASSIGNMENT 2	ASSIGNMENT 3	ASSIGNMENT 4
Tasks		Association for Play Therapy & Leadership Qualities	Introduction to Policy Governance	Policy Governance: Stakeholders as Consumers	Policy Governance and Committee Participation
PART A	Readings Available/ Quiz Open	Tue, Feb 3	Tue, March 3	Tue, March 31	Tue, April 28
	Complete assigned readings, and take quiz	Tue, Feb. 10 (by 12:00pm) PT	Tue, March 10 (by 12:00pm) PT	Tue, April 7 (by 12:00pm) PT	Tue, May 5 (by 12:00pm) PT
PART B	Zoom Call	Wed, Feb 11 3:00 – 4:15pm PT	Wed, March 11 2:00 – 3:15pm PT	Wed, April 8 4:00 – 5:15pm PT	Wed, May 6 3:00 – 4:15pm PT
	Zoom call followed by class discussions	Thurs, Feb 12 – Thurs, Feb 19 (by 12:00pm) PT	Thurs, March 12 – Thurs, March 19 (by 12:00pm) PT	Thurs, April 9 – Thurs, April 16 (by 12:00pm) PT	Thurs, May 7 – Thurs, May 14 (by 12:00pm) PT
	Discussion Board Open				Final Zoom Call Thurs, May 14 4:00 – 5:00pm

Note: APT reserves the right to make small program tweaks during each program year to ensure that topics are relevant and conducted as effectively as possible. This schedule might be slightly revised if situations occur.

Participant Evaluation

Although no program grades are assigned, the Leadership Committee observes the progress of each class member during online assignments and shares its observations with the program administrator (APT CEO). Lack of participation **will** result in class member being removed from class, and deferred to the next class.

Leadership Academy FAQ's

1. What time commitment is required by the Academy? Graduation from the Academy requires that each individual participate in and complete four (4) assignments between February and May. Each assignment consists of two parts – part A requires responding to written questions based upon brief readings, and part B requires participating in a zoom call, followed by an online discussion. The former takes about 30-60 minutes to complete. Feedback from previous classes indicates that three (3) hours of class participation per week is needed for the successful completion of this program.

The latter requires enrollees to post substantive comments in the online discussion over a 7-day period. ***Academy participants should plan for continual involvement during this period. A daily review of class posts and/or responses in addition to your own posts, will keep you engaged in the discussion.*** Because participation in all assignments is mandatory, time management and organizational skills are critical.

2. Am I required to attend Zoom meetings? Yes. Participants are required to attend all six (6) Zoom calls.
3. How do I know what the assignment deadlines are? They are listed on this fact sheet and will be included with each assignment. It is your responsibility to calendar the deadlines and carve out some time to review and respond to discussion posts.
4. What if I miss an assignment? Class members who do not complete each exercise in all four assignments will be removed from the class.
5. What is meant by “Active participation is required each day during the 7-day discussion period.”
Active participation means consistently engaging in the learning community in a meaningful and thoughtful way. This includes:
 - Posting original responses that demonstrate reflection, insight, or application of content.
 - Reading and considering your peers' contributions, asking follow-up questions, offering alternative perspectives, or building on others' ideas.
 - Participating multiple times throughout the discussion period—not just posting once and stepping back.
6. Can I earn mental health or play therapy continuing education credit for completion of the Academy?
No. This is not a mental health or play therapy program. It is an orientation intended to improve the effectiveness of your participation in APT governance and programs and its content applicable to both play therapy and other aspects of your professional and community pursuits.
7. Why is class size limited to 30? The participant limit has been set based on feedback from previous classes with more than 30 participants. Larger class sizes are not as conducive to participation, engagement, and/or learning.
8. Should I enroll in the Leadership Academy since I plan to, or am currently serving, on my Branch Board?
The APT Leadership Academy focuses on leadership and the Policy Governance model, not play therapy. Although much of the information may be helpful from a leadership development standpoint, because state boards operate much differently than APT, this should not be the sole purpose of enrolling in the LA.
9. Does the \$75.00 registration fee cover all materials? Yes, including a graduation certificate.

Leadership Academy – Code of Professional Conduct

Participation in APT's Leadership Academy is a privilege. As emerging leaders in the field of play therapy, class members are expected to maintain the highest standards of professionalism, collegiality, and respect throughout the program. This Code of Professional Conduct outlines expectations for behavior and provides guidance for how conflict or misconduct will be addressed.

Expected Conduct

All Leadership Academy participants are expected to:

- Engage with one another in a professional, respectful, and constructive manner.
- Contribute to a learning environment that values diversity of thought, respect and psychological safety.
- Ask questions, request clarification, and offer differing viewpoints in a collaborative spirit.
- Manage disagreements or misunderstandings with professionalism, particularly when differences arise from cultural contexts of communication.

Unacceptable Behavior

APT maintains a zero-tolerance policy for harassment and discrimination. Unacceptable conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Harassment, intimidation, or discrimination of any kind.
- Offensive comments or behavior related to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, age, appearance, religion, or national origin.
- Inappropriate use of sexual language, images, jokes, or innuendo.

Digital Conduct & Discussion Boards

The Leadership Academy is a space for learning and professional growth. Online discussion boards are monitored by the Leadership Academy Committee for engagement, participation, and professional tone. All contributions must reflect your own original thinking and professional experience. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools or automated content generators to produce posts or responses is strictly prohibited and may result in dismissal from the program.

Recording Prohibited

To maintain confidentiality, respect the privacy of participants, and encourage open dialogue, recording of any kind—including audio, video, or screen capture—is strictly prohibited during Leadership Academy Zoom sessions. This policy applies to all participants and includes the use of external devices or software. Violations may result in dismissal from the program and/or referral to the APT Ethics Committee.

Participants are expected to:

- Communicate respectfully, even when expressing disagreement.
- Respect the voice (vote) of the majority.
- Allow space for class members to vote freely.
- Avoid inflammatory language, sarcasm, or dismissive behavior.
- Approach conversations with humility and curiosity.

Misunderstandings may occur. If a conversation becomes uncomfortable or unclear, participants are encouraged to engage respectfully, or pause and seek support. Conflicts that cannot be resolved within the group should be referred to the Leadership Academy Committee for assistance. If discussions become unproductive, escalate in tone, or violate the standards outlined above, the Leadership Committee reserves the right to lock threads to prevent further harm.

Consequences of Misconduct

Any conduct found to be in violation of APT guidelines will be referred to the APT Ethics Committee for review and determination of appropriate action. APT and the Leadership Academy Committee reserve the right to take appropriate action in response to violations of this Code, which may include:

- A private warning or redirection
- Dismissal from the Leadership Academy program

- Referral to the Ethics Committee for further evaluation or action and Licensing Boards as appropriate and warranted.
- Prohibition from future participation in APT leadership programming

Final Note

The Leadership Academy is a supportive, professional learning environment. While each participant brings a unique background, skill set, and perspective, professionalism is non-negotiable. Our collective growth depends on respectful dialogue, mutual accountability, and a shared commitment to APT's values.