

Credentialing: 2020 and Beyond



As the world continuously changes and technology progresses, APT is tasked with the challenge and responsibility of retaining professional curiosity and wonder while assuring program integrity and relevance. APT strives to embrace advancement and to strengthen its programs by evaluating what changes will honor the spirit in which its programs were initially created. APT members and registrants are at the heart of this evaluation! Your active participation in various APT committees (e.g., Registration & Continuing Education, Ethics, Research, etc.) is integral to the decision-making process and ensures that your voices are heard. Thus, members and registrants are the driving forces behind APT program changes.

APT has announced changes to the Credentialing program that will take effect on January 1, 2020:

1. Supervised play therapy experience may only be provided by an RPT-S.
2. Contact CE hours are defined solely as in-person. Live CE webinars are considered “non-contact.”

1. For new applicants: All play therapy experience hours accrued after December 31, 2019 must be supervised by an RPT-S. This does not impact current registrants transitioning to the RPT-S credential or new applicants whose supervised play therapy experience was accrued prior to January 1, 2020.

This change honors the spirit of the inception of the RPT/S credentials. In 1992, demand for play therapy-specific supervision was high, but there were not enough RPT-S registrants to meet this mandate. Today, APT boasts an ample number of RPT-S registrants, and technological advances allow play therapists to give and to receive HIPPA-compliant distance supervision. Although, many state mental health licensing boards recognize “cyber supervision” as a suitable alternative to face-to-face supervision, APT encourages

applicants and supervisors to consult their individual state licensing boards for specific rules and regulations regarding giving and receiving supervision via electronic means.

2. The term “contact hour” for play therapy credentialing and continuing education (CE) hours has been redefined as “in-person instruction” to honor the initial intent of the requirement. Please note that graduate play therapy courses are exempt from defining their training as contact or non-contact because they are held to national accreditation standards, where credit is obtained based on satisfactorily completing stringent requirements; successful completion is documented on the transcript.

APT initially expanded the definition to include “live CE webinars,” where instructors taught and interacted with the audience by electronic means in real time, to help rural applicants overcome challenges to meeting the in-person requirement. The accommodation inadvertently permitted applicants to complete all 150 hours of play therapy instruction with no in-person interaction, as live CE webinars took the place of all contact hours. This was neither the intended nor the desired outcome. The accommodation was meant to aid, but not to substitute for in-person instruction. The Approved Provider program has enjoyed growth similar to that of the Credentialing program. Accordingly, more approved centers and individual providers of play therapy training offer CE opportunities to rural applicants than ever before.

With these changes, APT demonstrates its commitment to bringing play therapist credentialing to a deeper level of credibility. RPT/S applicants and registrants may increase their play therapy knowledge and expertise by seeking training and supervision from highly qualified play therapy professionals. They may promote their practice with the recognition that earning the RPT/S credentials affords them to better serve the public using the therapeutic powers of play. 🙌