

2025 Director Candidate Information

The APT Nominations Committee is pleased to present the APT membership with a recommended slate of candidates for the three 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, 2025 will receive a personalized link via email to cast their vote during the June 4 through June 17 election. More information will be shared in our weekly **Play Today** digital newsletter.



Laura Fazio-Griffith,
PhD, LPC-S, LMFT, RPT-S™
Discipline: Counseling
Position: Associate Professor, Southeastern Louisiana University, Baton Rouge, LA
Member Since: 2000
Leadership Graduate: 2024
APT Service: Contributor to Play Therapy™ Magazine • APT Approved Provider • APT Approved University Center
APT Committees: Clinical Advisory Committee, 2025 – present • International Journal of Play Therapy® Editorial Board, 2021 – present • University Education Committee, 2016 – present • Ethics and Practice Guidelines Committee, 2005-2024 (Chair 2022-2024) • Registration and CE Committee, 2014-2024 • Nominations Committee, 2014-2021 +
Branch Service: Louisiana APT Grants Committee 2024-present • Louisiana APT Conference Speaker Chair, 2021-present • Louisiana APT Awards Committee, 2020-present • Louisiana APT President, 2017-2019 • Louisiana APT President-Elect, 2015-2017 • Louisiana APT Treasurer, 2008-2015
APT Outcome Goals: Advancement in the field of play therapy by supporting professional development opportunities, promote ethical practice, and increase the awareness of the value of play therapy.



Edward Franc Hudspeth,
PhD, LPC, RPT-S™
Discipline: Counseling
Position: Program Coordinator & Clinical Associate Professor, University of Mississippi, University, MS
Member Since: 2002
Leadership Graduate: 2011
APT Service: APT Board of Directors Member 2022 – present (2022-2023 Secretary) • Published in Play Therapy™ Magazine • Foundation Board of Directors 2011-2021, (Chair 2015-2021) • Published in International Journal of Play Therapy®, Editor 2014-2023 • Presenter at APT Conference
APT Committees: Registration and Continuing Education Committee, 2015-2022 • Conference Program Committee, 2011-2022 • Directors Nominations Committee, 2011-2022 • Key Awards Committee, 2011-2022 • Co-Chair, Public Awareness Taskforce, 2013-2015
Branch Service: Mississippi Association for Play Therapy, 2005-2011, (President 2007-2009; 2019-2022) • Arkansas APT 2013-2016, (President 2014-2016)
APT Outcome Goals: Strengthen membership engagement and involvement; Support transparency and member understanding of how APT and its Board function; strengthen practices that reflect diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Tony Lai,
LPC, RPT-S™
Discipline: Counseling
Position: Private Practice, McMinnville, OR
Member Since: 2001
Leadership Graduate: 2005
APT Service: APT Board of Directors Member, 2021-present • APT Conference Volunteer: 2002, 2003, 2005, 2009, 2018
APT Committees: Practice and Ethics: 2018-2021 • Conference Program: 2013-2015 • Nominations: 2012-2020 • Key Awards, 2007-2009
Branch Service: Oregon APT, President 2013-2016 • Oregon APT, Vice President 2016-2018 • Oregon APT, Treasurer 2018-present • Missouri APT: Board 2002-2004
APT Outcome Goals: Challenge groupthink to achieve rational and effective decisions; open to hear and learn all perspectives and bridge the gap to have a cohesive board.



Mandi Meléndez,
LMFT-S, LPC-S, RPT-S™
Discipline: Marriage and Family Therapy
Position: Private Practice, Nurture Family Counseling, Cedar Park, TX
Member Since: 2013
Leadership Graduate: 2019
APT Service: APT Approved Provider, 2024-present • Published in Play Therapy™ Magazine • Play Therapy™ Magazine, Clinical Editor, 2022-present • APT Conference, Keynote Panel Moderator, 2021 • Emerging Leader Service Award • APT Conference Presenter, 2020
APT Committees: Ethics Committee, 2024-present • Awards of Excellence, 2016-2017; 2022-present,
Branch Service: Texas APT, Immediate Past President, 2020 (President, 2019; President-Elect, 2018) • Texas APT Board, 2017 • Texas APT, Hill Country Chapter President, 2012-2014 • Speaker, HCC-TXAPT (5+) • Speaker, TXAPT (10+)
+ APT Outcome Goals: Collaborate to improve accessibility to and diversity within the field of play therapy so that our clinician population reflects the client population.