

Credentialing: Helpful Tips for the RPT™ Applicant

In order to best support future RPT™ applicants, APT has compiled a few helpful tips based on frequently asked questions regarding the credentialing application. After reading this, we highly encourage you to review the RPT™ Standards and Application, found on the APT Website, a4pt.org.

Step 1: Review the Credentialing Standards

- Simplify the process by first reviewing the five (5) main components you need, which are outlined in the Program Criteria Overview found on Page 4 of the RPT™ Standards.
 1. License
 2. Educational Degree
 3. Play Therapy Instruction
 4. Supervised Play Therapy Experience
 5. Play Therapy Supervision

Step 2: Review the Application

- While reviewing the application ask yourself, “Am I a Phase applicant, an Appendix I applicant, or a mix of both?”
- Appendix I is to document any play therapy instruction, experience, and/or supervision hours earned prior to January 01, 2020. Depending on how much you obtained pre-2020, the rest of your play therapy journey may need to be documented in either Phase 2 and 3, or just Phase 3.
- Obtained the majority of your 150 Play Therapy Instruction Hours via graduate play therapy courses? Your process may be front loaded with instructional hours, but have limited supervised experience hours. Or conversely, be back loaded with supervised experience but have limited instructional hours. Applicants in these situations are required to demonstrate through their application materials that all three requirements (instruction, supervised experience, & supervision) were integrated within each of the three phases. This may require you to lengthen the time period for an individual phase to permit the integration of the requirements to occur.

Step 3: Gather Your Material

- Don't wait to organize and document your material until the end of your journey. Past applicants found success in documenting their progress as they went, and keeping documentation in specific folders that align with the five (5) main components outlined in Step 1.



- Review your documentation carefully.
 - o Does my instruction, experience, and supervision material fit in the time period of no less than two (2) and no more than the 7 (seven) year timeframe?
 - o Are my instruction hours APT Approved? Certificate must include “APT Approved Provider XX-XXX” and the type of hours obtained (i.e. contact, non-contact, live webinar specialized).
 - o Do I have graduate coursework specific to play therapy from institutions of higher education? If you want to count it towards your 150 hours of play therapy instruction, APT requires a copy of the transcript and course syllabi. Graduate courses with the term “play therapy” in the title are eligible for up to 22.5 hours per graduate unit.

Step 4: Attend the Quarterly Credentialing Q & A Call

- The Credentialing Q & A Call is time set aside to talk to a Credentialing Department Staff Member via Zoom. Registration for a Zoom call allows you to submit questions about the process, requirement, or application prior to the call.

Step 5: Call the APT Office

- APT remains committed to providing support to current and future registrants. If you have questions or concerns, please call us at (559) 298-3400. Contacting APT directly ensures you are provided current and factual information. 📞

Credentialing Column

"If I am to be helpful to the child, I must make contact with the person of the child at all levels of experiencing."

(Landreth, 2012)

Landreth, G. L. (2012). *Play therapy: The art of the relationship*. Brunner-Routledge.



Two initial changes to the APT Credentialing Standards were announced in the June 2018 issue of *Play Therapy™ Magazine*. Beginning January 1, 2020, 1) supervised play therapy experience must only be provided by an RPT-S, and 2) contact CE hours are defined solely as in-person and Live Webinars are considered "non-contact". These changes were deliberated on and ultimately put into place after an extensive process of evaluation by various APT Committees in an attempt to strengthen and further validate the APT professional credentials. Four years later, the APT credentials are stronger than ever and the play therapy community continues to grow at an exponential rate.

One of the most common questions received by APT refers to the differences in documentation of hours accrued before and after 2020 on the new RPT Application. For those who began accruing hours before 2020, under the supervision of a clinician who did not hold the RPT-S credential, it is important to note that those hours will (most likely) not be lost! APT will count and evaluate the hours prior to 2020 based upon the credentialing standards that were in place at the time they were accrued. All play therapy training, supervision, and supervised play therapy experience obtained prior to 2020 should be documented on the Appendix I form, while all hours accrued after 2020 must be documented on the phase criteria verification forms.

For those who are just beginning to accrue hours toward the APT credential, finding an RPT-S to provide supervised play therapy experience is a crucial first step. Applicants are encouraged to utilize the Find a Play Therapist directory on the APT Website to explore their options and initiate a satisfactory supervisory relationship.

Of course, in 2018 when the new contact/non-contact changes were announced, no one at APT (or around the world) could have predicted

the many challenges that lay ahead in the wake of an unprecedented global pandemic. As the world began to adapt to the COVID19 pandemic in 2020, APT quickly worked to adjust its new standards to accommodate the sudden decrease of in-person CE training options. APT created the COVID19 Exception, which allowed specialized Live Webinars to be counted as "contact" credit if the Approved Provider met all the necessary criteria. The COVID19 Exception began on May 15, 2020 and continued through June 30, 2022.

APT defines Live Webinars as specialized online play therapy trainings when:

1. live synchronous instruction occurs in real time,
2. the presenter and attendees communicate with each other virtually,
3. there are no more than 50 attendees,
4. the webinar is a minimum of two hours in length,
5. attendees' cameras are on throughout the webinar, and
6. a post-test is required.

APT believes that in-person training is essential for mental health professionals working toward the play therapy specialty credential. While this belief has not changed, access to quality live online training has changed. Therefore, as of July 1, 2022, the standards were modified once again to address these ongoing circumstances. To meet the 150-hour requirement, APT now accepts play therapy instruction from the following three categories: Contact Training, Non-Contact Training, and Specialized Live Webinars. Rather than require a minimum of 100 hours of in-person contact training, as was initially set forth, the breakdown now requires a minimum of 75 hours of in-person training, allowing the remaining 75 hours to be earned either entirely from Specialized Live Webinar trainings (maximum of 75) or a combination of both live webinar and other non-contact training (maximum of 40 hours). 🧑

While accruing the 150 hours of play therapy instruction required for the initial RPT™ application, how many hours may be accrued in each category?

- **Contact Training** – a minimum of 75 hours is required to be Contact Training. There is no maximum, all 150 hours may be obtained in this category.

The remaining 75 hours may be obtained via:

- **APT Live Webinars (specialized)** – a maximum of 75 hours may be from APT Live Webinars that meet specialized conditions.
- **Non-Contact Training** – a maximum of 40 hours may be from Non-Contact Trainings (book studies, on-demand webinars, live webinars that do not meet the specialized conditions, etc.).

150-hour breakdown by Category	Required	Maximum
Contact	75	Unlimited
APT Live Webinar (specialized)	0	75
Non-Contact	0	40

Approved Providers offering specialized live webinars will provide statements on certificates of attendance in reference to: "This workshop meets APT's definition of Live Webinar," "APT Live Webinar," OR "APT Specialized Live Webinar."

Please note: APT will count hours obtained under the COVID-19 exception (between May 15, 2020, and June 30, 2022) as contact credit, if the Approved Provider met the COVID-19 exception criteria.

Credentialing: FAQ's About the RPT™ and RPT-S™ Application

APT is dedicated to addressing the most common questions from credentialing applicants. We understand that the credentialing process may sometimes feel overwhelming, so our goal is to provide you with clear, concise answers to help you navigate each step with confidence. In this edition, we've gathered a selection of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) to offer valuable insights and guidance. Whether you're starting your application or encountering specific challenges, APT is here to support you every step of the way.

Frequently Asked Questions for the RPT™

1. May I use my graduate courses to meet BOTH the Core Content area requirements and the 150 instructional hours?

No. Courses may only be counted once. Graduate courses may be used to meet either, 1) required courses included in the Core Content Area or 2) play therapy instructional hours. They are two separate requirements and courses may not be counted twice.

2. When do I use the Appendix I to document my play therapy instruction, experience and supervision requirements?

All hours (play therapy instruction, experience, and supervision) accumulated prior to January 1, 2020 must be documented on Appendix I.

3. What if I am an applicant with a mix of both Appendix I and Phase's?

Depending on how many hours were earned pre-2020 and included on Appendix I, the balance of your play therapy journey may be documented in either Phase 2 and 3, or just Phase 3.

4. Can I audit a graduate course from an accredited university and count it towards the 150-hour play therapy instruction requirement?

Yes, individuals may audit a play therapy specific course and receive credit; however, you must complete all coursework/exams in order to obtain full credit. Your application must include a letter from the instructor attesting to the aforementioned. Graduate play therapy courses are calculated by the following: One semester credit is equal to 22.5 hours of play therapy instruction and caps at 67.5 hours for any given play therapy course.

Frequently Asked Questions for the RPT-S™

1. I am due for my RPT™ renewal, do I proceed to renew my RPT™ even though I am applying for the RPT-S Credential?

Yes! Your RPT™ Credential must be in good standing for the three (3) most recent consecutive years, without lapse, at the time of your RPT-S™ application submission. The RPT-S™ application review can take up to 12 weeks, therefore it's important to ensure that your RPT™ credential does not lapse during this period.

2. How many hours of supervision training must be completed?

The RPT-S™ requires 30 hours of clinical supervisor instruction, six

(6) of which must be play therapy specific and sponsored by an APT Approved Provider. The remaining 24 CE's are not required to be APT Approved, and may be specific to play therapy supervision or general clinical supervision. If your state requires you to complete supervisor training, this satisfies the 24 CE hour requirement.

3. Can I use instructional hours from my RPT™ application or a past renewal?

No. The instructional hours must not have been previously used or submitted during either your RPT™ application or subsequent renewals.

4. How can I determine the required number of verification CE hours that need to be submitted?

To show ongoing professional development when transitioning from an RPT™ to an RPT-S™, applicants must submit verification of continuing education (CE) hours. The required number of CE hours is based on the length of time since the last CE cycle.

Length of time since last CE cycle	Number of CE hours due with RPT-S application
0-12 months	8 hours
13-24 months	16 hours
25-36 months	24 hours

Credentialing Update

Based on member feedback, committee recommendations, and as we continue to address both the cost and accessibility of the RPT™ credential, we are pleased to announce the following updates:

1. The current policy mandates that all play therapy coursework, experience, and education be completed within a minimum of two (2) years and a maximum of seven (7) years. Effective July 1, 2024, this time frame has been extended to a minimum of two (2) years and a maximum of ten (10) years, providing applicants with additional flexibility to fulfill the requirements.
2. The current policy requires 35 hours of supervision to be obtained from an RPT-S™, with a maximum of 10 hours of group supervision permitted. Effective July 1, 2024, APT will accept up to 15 hours of group supervision, with the remaining 20 hours required to be individual supervision.

We appreciate your feedback and ongoing support as we continue to uphold the high standards of the RPT™, RPT-S™, and SB-RPT™ credentials. 🙏