

# Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

Strengthening the mental health workforce. **Changing children's lives.**

## WHAT IS PCIT?

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is a specialized behavior management program for children ages 2 to 6 and their families.

- Appropriate for children who demonstrate **excessive or developmentally inappropriate behavioral and/or emotional difficulties**, including behaviors that are often associated with **trauma**
- Average length of treatment: **12-20 weekly hour long sessions**
- Through **live coaching**, parents/caregivers work together to implement skills designed to help children reach their full potential.

## SERVICE DELIVERY

PCIT is typically delivered in **clinic settings** (e.g., community agencies, outpatient clinics).

PCIT has also been successfully delivered in **alternate settings** (e.g., in home).

**Cost-based reimbursement rates** have been implemented in some catchment areas.

With funding from:



Mental Health,  
Developmental Disabilities,  
and Substance Abuse Services  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

<sup>o</sup>California Evidence Based Treatment Clearinghouse. *Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) Detailed Report*

<sup>1</sup> Finkelhor, D., Turner, H. A., Ormrod, R., & Hamby, S. L. (2010). *Trends in childhood violence and abuse exposure: Evidence from 2 national surveys.*

<sup>2</sup> Fang, X., Brown, D. S., Florence, C. S., & Mercy, J. A. (2012). *The economic burden of child maltreatment in the United States and implications for prevention.*

<sup>3</sup> Washington State Institute for Public Policy, 2015. *Benefit-Cost Analysis: Children's Mental Health, Benefit-Cost Analysis: Child Welfare.*

## OUTCOMES<sup>o</sup>

- **Improved parent-child relationships**
- **Decreased problematic behaviors**, such as defiance and aggression
- **Increased social skills** and cooperation
- **Increased attention**
- **Improved behaviors at home and school**
- **Decreased parental stress**
- **Reduced recidivism of child maltreatment**

## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

In the United States, 61% of children are affected by violence, abuse, or crime,<sup>1</sup> putting them at **increased risk** for **depression, academic problems, violent behavior, substance use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and other emotional-behavioral challenges**. Lifetime costs of childhood maltreatment are estimated at **\$210,012** per case.<sup>2</sup>

PCIT has shown a **benefit-cost ratio of \$2.29** and a **79% chance of benefits exceeding costs** for children with disruptive behaviors and a **benefit-cost ratio of \$12.99** with a **94% chance of benefits exceeding costs** for children in the child welfare system.<sup>3</sup>

**The North Carolina Child Treatment Program (NC CTP) offers two training cohorts per year in PCIT. Training cohorts are 15 months long and consist of face-to-face learning sessions and faculty consultation. Contact NC CTP for more information.**

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