

# Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

## **Target Population**

PCIT is a parent coaching model that requires active involvement from the caregiver in treatment. PCIT is appropriate for **children ages 2.5-7 years** with externalizing behavior problems, defiant behavior, excessive tantrums, attachment concerns, attention-seeking behaviors, or caregiver stress and difficulty managing behaviors.

## **Treatment Setting**

This is a clinic-based service. The clinic must have a special room set up that allows for caregiver and child to be observed by a clinician through a one-way mirror.

## **Length/Frequency of Treatment**

Sessions occur at least once per week, but can occur more frequently if appropriate. The average length of treatment is between 12-20 weeks.

## **Referral Process**

PCIT is delivered in an outpatient setting and can be accessed by calling providers listed in the provider directory.

## **Website:**

<http://www.pcit.org/>

## **Overview**

PCIT is a **parent coaching model for young children** with behavioral challenges. In PCIT, parents are taught specific skills to strengthen a nurturing and secure relationship with their child while teaching positive discipline and behavioral management techniques. This intervention can be used to support the development of effective parenting skills and avoid further involvement in the behavioral health and other child serving systems.

## **Core Components**

- The caregiver receives coaching and direct feedback from the clinician during session using an earpiece.
- This treatment has two phases: child-directed interaction (CDI) and parent-directed interaction (PDI).
  - During the CDI phase, parents learn nondirective play skills to strengthen the parent-child relationship.
  - During the PDI phase, parents learn to direct the child's behavior with clear, age-appropriate instructions and consistent consequences.
- In each phase, parents attend one didactic session to learn interaction skills and then attend a series of coaching sessions with the child to practice the skills.
- Interactions are coded and progress is tracked for mastery.
- Caregivers are expected to practice skills between sessions.

## **PCIT in the DBHIDS network**

Prior to 2016, several grant-funded projects supported the implementation of PCIT at provider agencies in Philadelphia. In 2016, DBHIDS launched a PCIT training Initiative for child outpatient providers. The PCIT Initiative providers are participating in a year-long intensive training and consultation that involves all levels of the organization (administrators, supervisors and clinicians).