Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is designed to promote positive parent-child relationships and interactions, and teach parents effective child-management skills. This is achieved through instructional coaching of parents as they interact with their children.

UC Davis launched its training program in 2000 with the California Office of Criminal Justice Planning. UC Davis was one of the first academic institutions to widely disseminate the information in a form that enabled other organizations to create PCIT programs.

UC Davis is a leader in implementing more than 150 PCIT programs at public mental-health and child-welfare agencies across the U.S. and in several countries.

UC Davis PCIT team will train mental-health providers in over 100 Los Angeles County agencies to effectively provide PCIT. UC Davis’ telehealth program is integral to training providers. Los Angeles County is the largest PCIT training site in the country.

UC Davis’ Trainer of Trainer (ToT) model has supported generations of PCIT-trained professionals who have continued to achieve successful outcomes.

How Parent-Child Interaction Therapy works

PCIT outcomes

Evidence is convincing that PCIT is an effective parenting program for high-risk and abusive families.

Reducing the effects of trauma

Parent psychological health

After completing PCIT, parents of traumatized children show a significant reduction in stress from feeling out of control in the parent role, according to their ratings on the Parenting Stress Index. This represents a shift from having clinical levels to normal levels of problems.

Children’s behavior problems

After completing PCIT, these parents report reductions in aggressive and defiant behaviors, according to ratings on the Child Behavior Checklist. This represents a shift from having clinical levels to normal levels of problems.

Children’s trauma symptoms

After completing PCIT, these parents report reduced intensity of trauma symptoms (from the clinical to normal range), like nightmares, intrusive thoughts, and avoiding people, places, and things associated with the traumatic event.

You can find out more about the PCIT Training Center and its free web course at pcit.ucdavis.edu.