Parent Child Interaction Therapy: PCIT

Colleen Cullinan, PhD
Pediatric Psychologist

Objectives

- What is PCIT? PCIT = Science!
- Child Directed Interaction (GROWTH!)
- Parent Directed Interaction (PRUNING!)
- Important take-aways
- Resources and referrals

PCIT is an *evidence-based* treatment associated with:

- Positive changes in child disruptive behavior problems
- Increases in parents' use of positive parenting skills
- Decreases in parents' use of negative parenting behaviors
- Decreases in child noncompliance
- Improvement in school behavior
- Reductions in maternal depression
- Improvements in parent-child attachment
- Reduced likelihood of re-abuse
- Continued maintenance of behavior for 3-6 years

What is PCIT?

Traditional PCIT Populations

- Children ages 2-6 with disruptive behavior disorders:
  - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
  - Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Additional PCIT Populations

- Children ages 2-6 with:
  - History of maltreatment/trauma
  - Autism
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Prenatal substance exposure

What is PCIT?

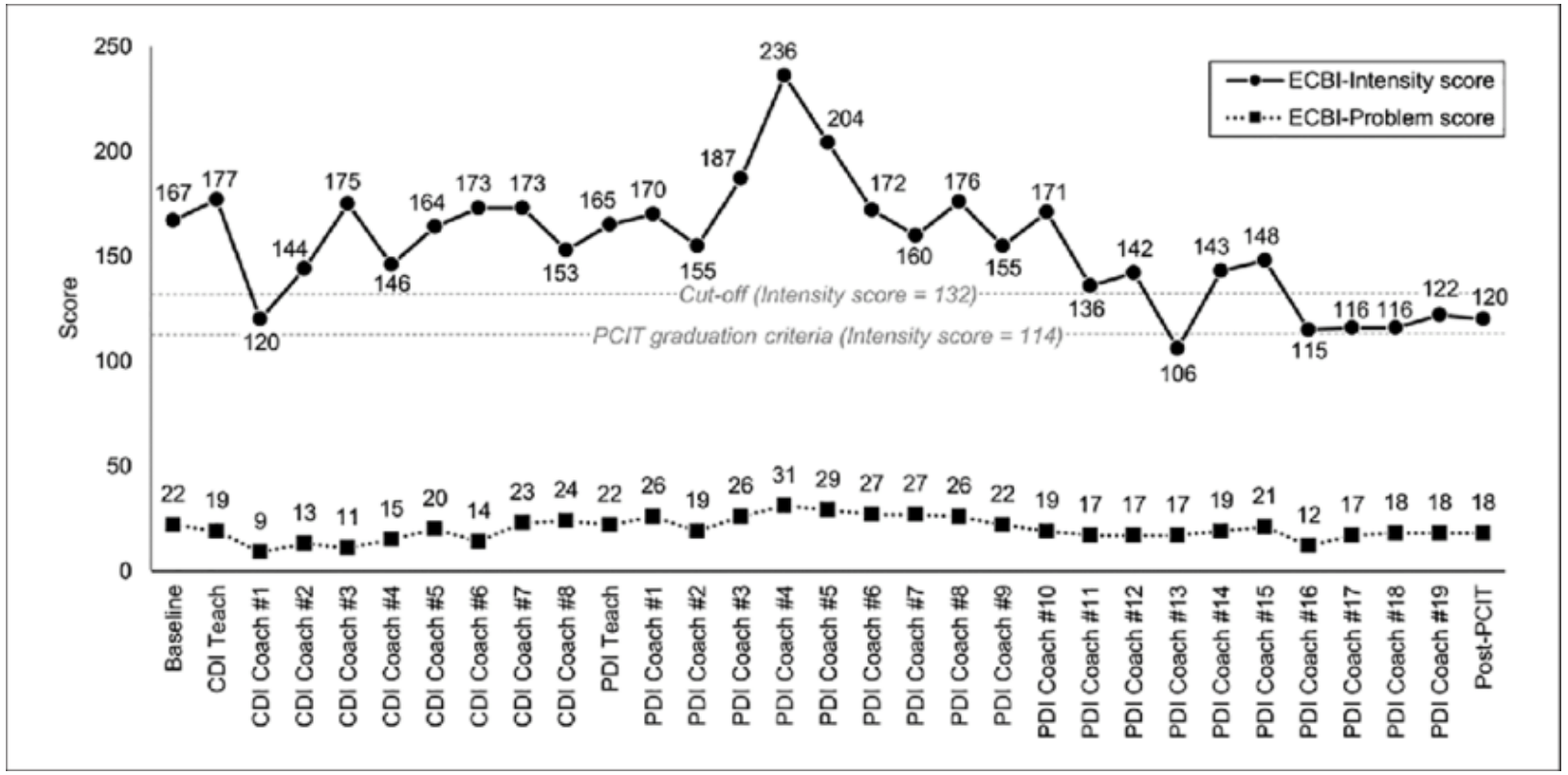
- PCIT is conducted through "coaching" sessions during which the caregiver and the child are in a playroom while the therapist is in an observation room watching the caregiver interact with the child through a one-way mirror and/or live video feed. Participants wear a "bug-in-the-ear" device through which the therapist provides in-the-moment coaching on skills while the caregiver is learning to manage the child's behavior.

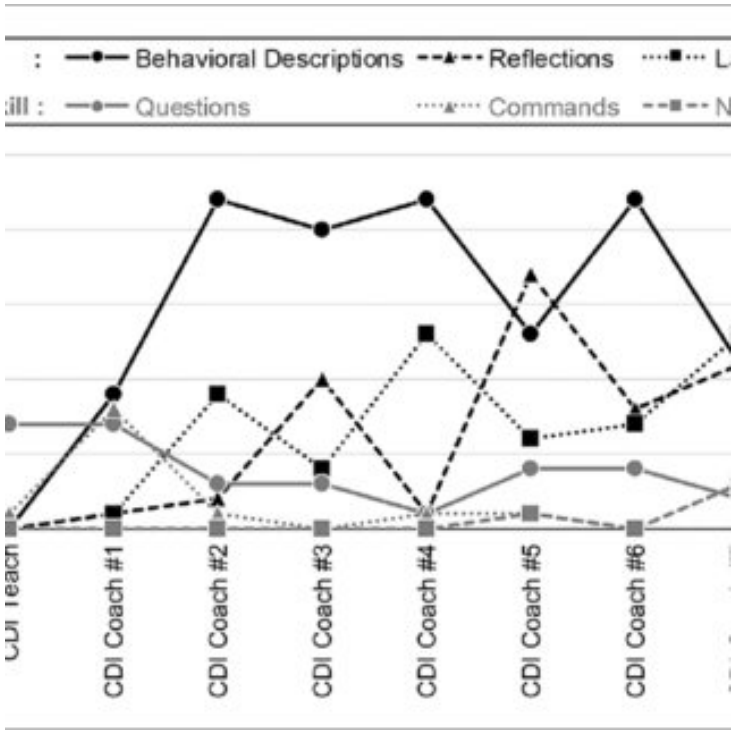
Core Components of PCIT

- PCIT is typically administered once a week, with 1-hour sessions, for 10-14 sessions total and consists of two treatment phases
  - Child-Directed Interaction (CDI)
  - Parent-Directed Interaction (PDI)
- The CDI component focuses on improving the quality of the parent-child relationship, which will help promote changes in behavior. GROWTH!
- This sets the foundation for the PDI stage, which continues to encourage appropriate play while also focusing on a structured and consistent approach to discipline. PRUNING!

PCIT = SCIENCE!

- Continual assessment, data-driven





Child-Directed Interaction (CDI): Do Skills

P – Praise

R – Reflect

I – Imitate

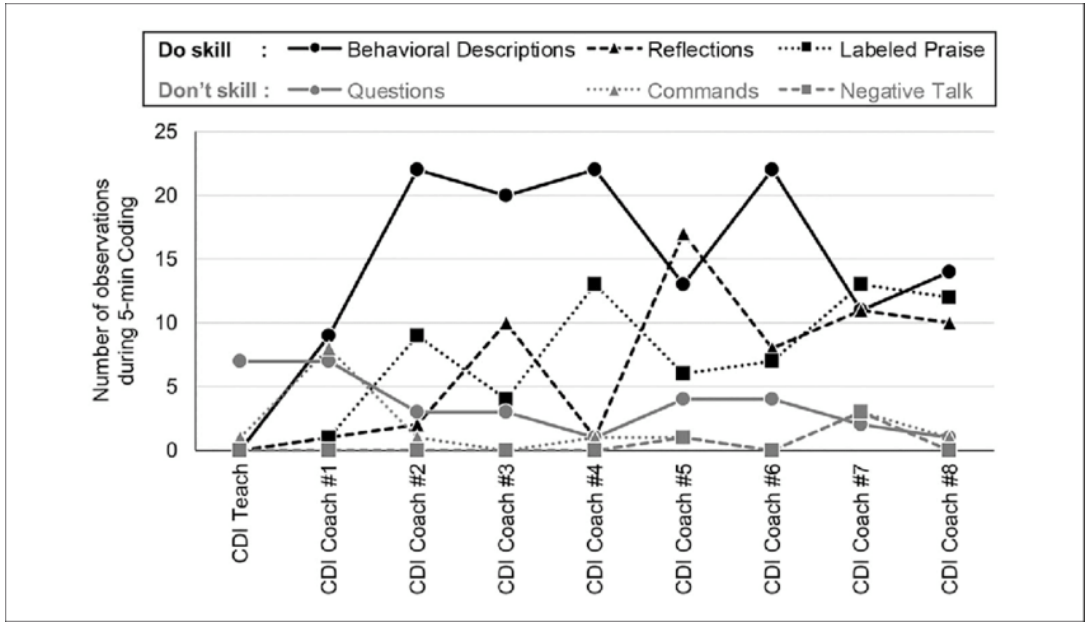
D – Describe

E – Enjoy! Enthusiasm!

Child-Directed Interaction (CDI): Don't Skills

- Questions
- Commands
- Criticisms

PCIT CDI Mastery



- In a five-minute play interaction:
  - CDI mastery criteria requires the parent to use 10 behavior descriptions, 10 reflections, and 10 labeled praises with no more than 3 commands, questions, or negative talk.
  - Caregivers should also be able to ignore inappropriate child behavior.

Parent-Directed Interaction

- The PDI Phase of PCIT teaches caregivers how to be consistent, predictable, and use the correct follow-through when telling a child to complete a task.
- How to give a command, how to determine compliance, how to respond to non-compliance, scripted time out.

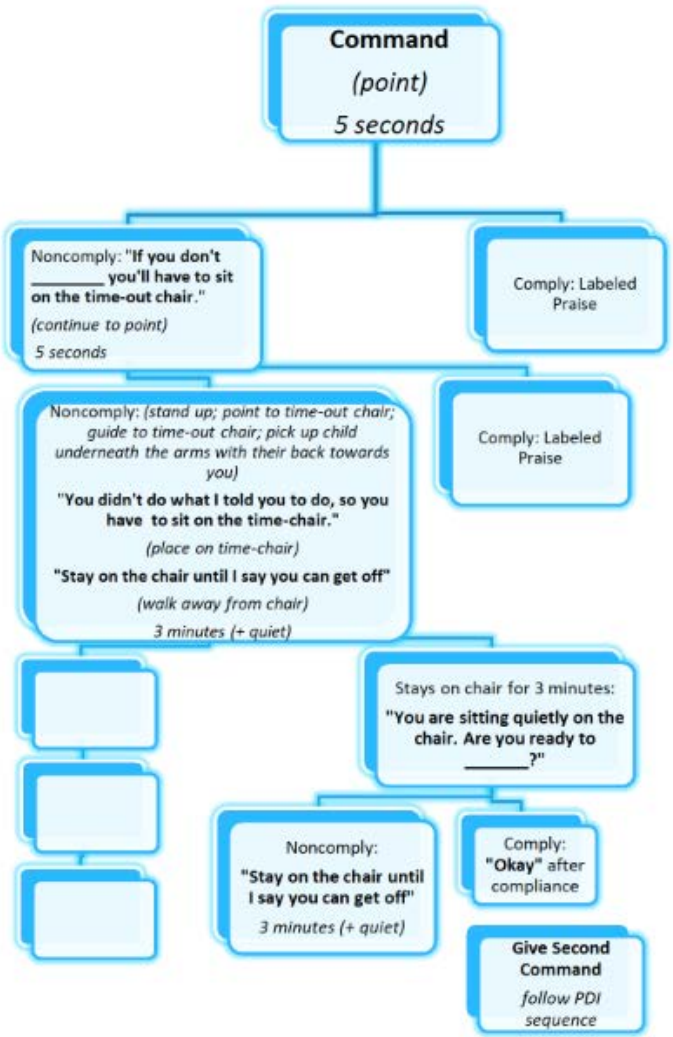
PDI CODING	TOTAL	COMPLIES	COMPLIES AFTER WARNING	FOLLOW-UP PRAISE	NOC
INDIRECT COMMANDS (IC)	III		II	I	
DIRECT COMMAND (DC)	IIII I	III	I	III	

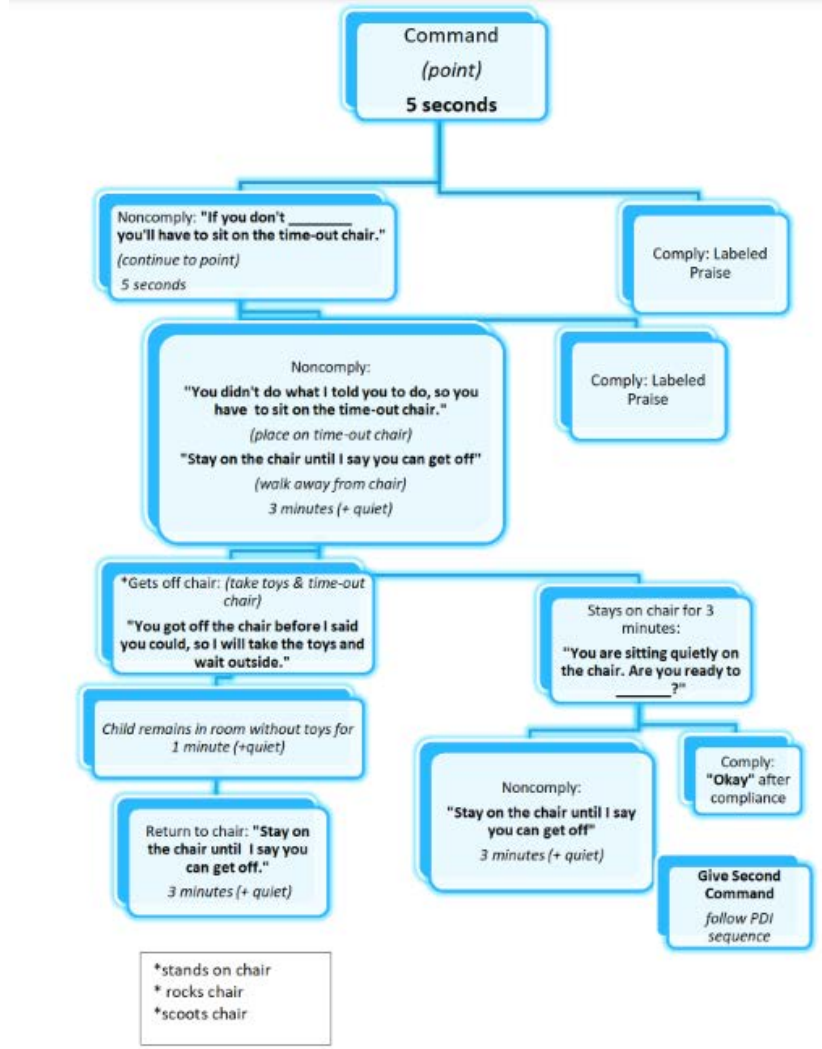
PDI SEQUENCE	COUNTING	WARNING	FOLLOW-THROUGH
CORRECT	I	I	I
INCORRECT	I	I	I

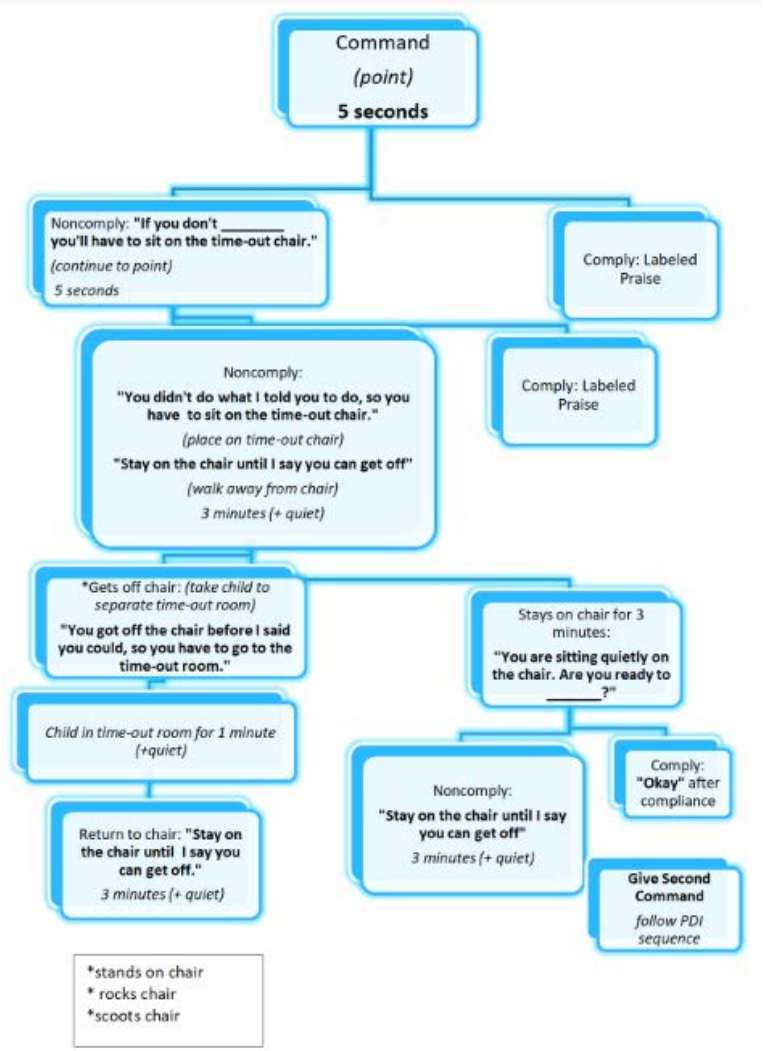
Parent-Directed Interaction

- Give caregivers a learning framework – this is compliance training (practice!)
  - Purpose of PDI is to teach child to follow directions
  - Teach child to take time-outs, teach child self-regulation skills
  - Teach child to follow house rules
- We are teaching during play; low stress and potentially high reward for compliance
  - These are the conditions to practice in!
  - We practice sports before the game, we learn lessons before the test, we rehearse before the recital

PDI Decision Trees – backups for backups!







PCIT PDI Mastery

- In a five minute play interaction:
  - At least 4 commands 75% of commands are effective
  - At least 75% appropriate follow-through
    - Compliance → labeled praise
    - Noncompliance → Warning → Time-out → Compliance with initial command → Second command

Dr. Tasha Brown
Clinical Psychologist, PCIT Therapist

PCIT: Pediatric Pearls

Assess	PCIT is driven by continual assessment – encourage parents to track behaviors, give assessments at med checks
PRIDE	*Everyone* can benefit from exposure to the PRIDE skills!
Be a time out robot!	Time outs don't have to be long 3 minutes + 5 *secs of silence*
Practice	Practice behavior change: conditions of low stress and high reward

Resources and Referrals

- www.pcit.org
- Find a PCIT provider – anywhere in the country!

Thank you again!

Colleen Cullinan, PhD

Pediatric Psychologist

colleen.cullinan@nemours.org

@colleencullinan