Summary of Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) – Caregiver Handout

Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) is a type of treatment designed to improve the relationship between a caregiver and his/her child. PCIT is also one of the most effective treatments known for children with behavior problems between the ages of 2 and 6 years. This 16-20 session treatment will teach you the skills that professionals (such as psychologists, special education teachers, and family therapists) use to improve child behavior.

The goals for PCIT are:

- Enhancing the relationship that you have with your child
- Improving your child's self-esteem
- Teaching your child new ways to manage and reduce their frustration and anger
- Helping your child develop new strategies for attending and organizing his or her work or play
- Helping your child mind you the first time you tell him or her to do something
- Teaching you alternative ways to manage your child's behavior now, and helping you problem solve ways to effectively manage your child's behavior in the future

PCIT is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on enhancing the relationship between you and your child, increasing your child's self-esteem, reducing your child's frustration, and helping your child with organizational skills. The second part focuses on teaching your child listening and minding skills, using age-appropriate techniques to deal with your child's behavior, and problem solving.

We recognize that many parents would like to start with the listening and minding skills. However, research and our experiences with families like yours suggest that behavioral parent training works better when the relationship building skills are practiced first and the listening and minding skills are practiced second. When the relationship building aspects of treatment are done first, children are more likely to listen and mind with a positive attitude in the second part because they have learned to enjoy interacting with their parent and they want to please the parent.

For more information and/or to be added to the PCIT services waitlist at the Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities, please contact Dr. Christina Warner-Metzger, PCIT International Certified Master Trainer, Clinical Psychologist, at 901-448-6536. Also, check out our website at http://www.uthsc.edu/pcit.

Adapted from Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) National Child Traumatic Stress Network www.NCTSNet.org