




## “Selling PCIT Homework”: Analogies to Engage Families

Being a PCIT therapist requires an extraordinary amount of working memory. You have to constantly keep in mind multiple factors such as the child’s primary care plan/treatment goal, what number coaching session is being held, what the ECBI scores are for this child, during check-in what did the caregiver report was the main problem, what did the child say to you during check-in, any shifts in behavior you have noticed that perhaps the caregiver has overlooked and this list only covers a few items, phew! Now tie all these factors into short, brief and clear coaching statements while being supportive of the caregivers’ acquisition of skills during both the Child-Directed Interaction (CDI) and Parent-Directed Interaction (PDI) phase of treatment. It is a very impressive task PCIT clinicians undertake and such a powerful treatment intervention.

A key factor that delays progress in treatment is lack of homework completion. Without regular use of the CDI and PDI skills during the week a great deal of valuable coaching time is spent focusing on skills previously discussed and coached. Analogies have proven to be effective learning tools for reinforcing thinking skills and conceptual understanding (Alvermann & Phelps, 1998). Therefore, in working with families how can we use this teaching strategy to help “Sell PCIT Homework” to busy and stressed caregivers who have many other responsibilities that require their time and attention in addition to their child’s treatment demands of “daily homework”? Through the use of analogies! Try to match a caregiver’s hobby/interest to the analogy.

Since creating analogies takes another part of your valuable PCIT working memory space the suggestions below were created to help “Sell PCIT Homework” to caregivers and serve as a clinical tool in how clinicians can approach the topic and critical importance of daily homework completion.

Visual Art	Comparison Topic	The Analogy
	Medical	Think of PCIT treatment like you would a cancer treatment. You have to go <b>WEEKLY</b> to the main office for your heavy chemotherapy dosage that requires monitoring because it’s new like our sessions here for PCIT with live coaching. <b>DAILY</b> you would take your chemo medication to keep your treatment moving forward like in PCIT you have 5 minutes DAILY homework to give your child enough dosing through the week to help behavior change for them and for you to remember the skills taught.
	Sports	Think of PCIT treatment like you would if playing a high school level sport. You need to practice <b>DAILY</b> to keep your skills sharp, remember all your game plan strategies and to work well as a cohesive team, like in PCIT we assign daily homework to give your child enough practice through the week to help behavior change for them and for you to remember the skills taught. Then you have <b>WEEKLY</b> games to test how far your skills have come, how well your game plans are working and for the glory of victory which in PCIT is our weekly sessions, tracking your child’s ECBI scores and your DPICS scores with the goal of obtaining mastery.
	Cooking	Think of PCIT treatment as if you were to become a great baker. Our <b>WEEKLY</b> therapy sessions are like providing the recipes and teaching about the list of ingredients learning what flavors pair best together which is why PCIT gives live coaching while you play and interact with your child as you are coached in pairing praises with behaviors. A true baker learns by practicing <b>DAILY</b> the perfect temperature water needs to be at before adding yeast and before long there is no need to refer to a recipe, like in PCIT we assign daily homework to give your child enough practice through the week to help behavior change for them and for you to remember the skills taught like memorizing a recipe by heart.