

Positive Expectations

Building hope and momentum in the first few sessions

Due to Past Experiences, Parents Can Have:

Skepticism about PCIT's helpfulness when nothing else seems to work.

Doubts about their capability to change their child's behavior, and fear of judgment.

Concern that their therapist won't be able to handle their child or know how to help.

Expectations Can Change!

Parents may come to PCIT feeling one way, but it doesn't need to stay that way. Research shows expectations can change, and what therapists say and do can really make a big difference.¹²⁻¹³



Engagement Baby Steps

On the following pages are strategies to use at the beginning of treatment. These are little nudges of encouragement to tip the scale towards parents coming back, trying out the skills, and seeing change for themselves.

HOPE
that PCIT will work
+ BELIEF
that it can
=
POWERFUL

Parents Might Arrive Thinking This:

Why will PCIT work if nothing else has?



Will this make any difference?

I haven't had any luck getting my child to behave, so I won't be so good at PCIT.



Will she think I screwed up my kid and I'm a failure as a parent?

Will she be horrified by my child just like everyone else?



Will she be able to handle him?

Will she let us down?

Aim for Them to Leave Feeling This:

I'm glad we're doing PCIT.



I think this is going to help.

This isn't the type of therapy where they tell me what I'm doing wrong.



If other parents did this, I can too.

I've got this.

I think she can help us.



I'm in good hands.

5 Ways to Help Parents Believe in PCIT

Share Success Stories

Talk about how other families in your agency have been helped and how you've seen it make a big difference. Bonus: Anecdotes can help parents feel that others have been in the same boat.

“I've really seen PCIT help families in profound ways.”



Paint a Picture of the Benefits

Talk about changes to expect, including improvements at home and school, and benefits for children and parents. Put these changes in the context of the family's life.

“You'll be able to bring him grocery shopping without a scene.”



TIP

Aim for Positive Yet Realistic Expectations

PCIT won't help much.



PCIT will take some hard work but will bring big changes.



PCIT will be an overnight miracle cure.



TIP

Explain and Thank

Explain the purpose and benefit of procedures rather than apologize for them.

“I know it's a lot of paperwork. I so appreciate it. It really gives us a sense of where he is.”

Uniqueness

Emphasize Highlight how PCIT is different. It's not like going to a parenting class or reading about discipline techniques. It's all about in-the-moment help.



Focus on Fit

Match PCIT up with the parent's concerns. When parents think treatment makes sense, they are more motivated to engage and willing to change.⁸

“This is perfect for PCIT. The research shows it's a really great fit for the things you're describing.”

Incorporate Science

Share the evidence: 300+ research studies with thousands of families show that PCIT works very well, even for serious behavior problems.

