

PARENT-CHILD INTERACTION THERAPY. AN EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENT FOR CHILDREN

Ferro García, R and Ascanio Velasco, L
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It is not the same to be shown a house by an employee of a real estate agent as by someone who lives in it. Its inhabitants will be able to show you what neither the eye of the newcomer nor that of the employee can see: the magic of the sunsets, or the unrepeatably mix of lights and aromas on a spring morning, the stories that are not seen in a five minute visit, but that can give you the key to know that you have found what you are looking for. This feeling is one that you experience when you read the book that Rafael Ferro and Lourdes Ascanio have created for us on Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT) in the publisher's summary: Throughout its eight chapters the authors invite us to a guided tour of the dependencies of a "home" unknown for many in our country, understanding it from the inside, in the first person. Those of us who work in the children's clinic, and have been grappling with the need to try to help change behavior in childhood, knowing the vital importance that parents will have in the process, we greatly appreciate the effort made by pioneering clinicians such as Rafael and Lourdes to systematize and provide the keys to encourage us to live in this house and to experience the advantages of a therapy which from its very name directs us towards the key variable in the genesis of behavior and in any attempt at change: the interactions between parents and their children.

Therefore, this is a magnificent review of the literature on PCIT, not from the perspective of the academic, but from the person who is using it. And this is a luxury that we are not accustomed to have simultaneously: scientific rigor coupled with habitual and professional practice (we can often find them separately, from the university on one hand and from the practice, on the other).

The first chapter is dedicated to the origin and development of PCIT, as well as the exposition of its most relevant characteristics. The second

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chapter begins by exposing the psychological principles of behavior that underpin PCIT before presenting the therapy itself to the reader, with its components and phases, time structure, etc., emphasizing the need for personalization of the intervention from this perspective. The following chapter presents an exhaustive review of the evaluation and intervention materials, with examples of application by the authors themselves.

In the fourth chapter, we find an excellent bibliographical review of the effectiveness, efficacy and efficiency of PCIT, data from which professionals can appreciate the scientific solidity that supports this therapy, also useful for students and teachers. This house seems to have solid foundations.

A fifth chapter, dedicated to the applications to the school, makes it useful for the collective of counselling and school professionals, who are increasingly exposed to having to deal with disruptive, negative and externalizing behavior in their professional field. And the following chapter presents the wide variety of contexts and problems in which PCIT has been successfully applied: anxiety and post-traumatic stress, global developmental delay, hospitalized children, depression in children, etc.

The house viewing ends with a guided tour of the neighborhood, and the authors place PCIT in relation to contextual and third generation therapies, about which they can speak with authority because Rafael Ferro is one of the most relevant figures in the Spanish context of these therapies, especially in Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP). And the final chapter, dedicated to the new directions of therapy, presents the exponential growth in its use, as well as its online application, which is certainly an interesting aspect and clearly shows its versatility.

It should not be surprising that this therapy works for so many children's problems (from disruptive behavior to language problems) and contexts (clinical, school, home, online, etc.), because the only thing that it shows is that intervening or improving the parent-child interaction, will improve a wide variety of aspects of children's behavior in which such interaction is relevant. The same can be said of the interaction between teaching staff and students and therapists and their clients. And I believe, together with the authors, that this is the secret of its great versatility and adaptability: the interaction is studied and intervention is carried out to change it. And in relation to this interaction between clients and therapists, in this book there is also an interesting reflection on therapeutic skills, which leads the authors to even talk about "therapeutic love" as a model of the relationship or alliance between the two.

Without a doubt, the visit to this house is getting interesting...

