



AutPlay® Therapy Certification Program

AutPlay® Therapy is a specialized play therapy approach for working with autistic children, neurodivergent children, and children with developmental disabilities. AutPlay® was created by Dr. Robert Jason Grant to address the unique needs of neurodivergent children and adolescents who enter into a therapeutic process with a licensed mental health practitioner.

AutPlay® is an integrative family play therapy approach with theoretical underpinnings in humanistic, family systems, developmental, and cognitive behavioral theories. Various play therapy theories (Child Centered Play Therapy, Filial Therapy, Theraplay, Cognitive Behavioral Play Therapy, and Family Play Therapy) are integrated into protocol, all of which incorporate evidence-based practices and empirical support for working with autistic children. More specific content and protocol of AutPlay® Therapy can be reviewed on the AutPlay® Therapy website – www.autplaytherapy.com. A current list of providers who have completed the AutPlay Therapy Certification Program is maintained and displayed on the AutPlay® website as well.

Completion of AutPlay® Therapy Certification Program signifies that the practitioner has met the requirements to be a Certified AutPlay® Therapy Provider. Certification in AutPlay® Therapy requires the practitioner to complete the following:

- 1) Complete a live or home study AutPlay® Therapy Two Day Intensive Training (16 CE Hrs). View training options on the live trainings or home study trainings pages and view the AutPlay pre-training form before attending a live training.
- 2) Read the AutPlay® Therapy book (Grant, R.J. (2017). *AutPlay Therapy for Children and Adolescents on the Autism Spectrum*. Routledge), and complete a post book reading exam. The book can be purchased on Amazon and other online retailers. The book post reading exam can be found in the AutPlay pre-training form provided upon registering for a training.
- 3) Watch the recorded webinar *Understanding Ableism and Neurodiversity in Play Therapy*. The recorded webinar can be found in the home study trainings page.
- 4) Watch the recorded webinar *Neurodiversity Affirming Play Therapy*. The recorded webinar can be found in the home study trainings page.

AutPlay® Certification Program coverage includes symptomology, special considerations, an overview of neurodivergent needs, an intensive examination of the AutPlay® protocol including the phases of therapy, assessment strategies, target therapy areas, parent involvement and training, and limit setting procedures. Completing certified provider requirements further involves learning about the AutPlay® Follow Me Approach (FMA) which is designed for children with higher needs and engagement struggles. Participants engage in experiential activities, role play practice, case conceptualization, and therapy planning as they complete their requirements to become a certified provider.

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Benefits of Becoming a Certified AutPlay® Therapy Provider:

- Becoming knowledgeable in a comprehensive approach to using the integration of play therapy approaches and interventions to improve the mental health of autistic children and adolescents and other neurodivergent children.
- Advancing knowledge of autism, neurodivergence, and developmental disabilities.
- Advancing knowledge in the concepts of neurodiversity, ableism and how to be neurodiversity affirming in mental health processes.
- Understanding and implementing a specific mental health protocol for addressing the variance of autism (children across the spectrum).
- Lifetime certification with access to continuing education, supervision, and consultation services.
- Name and contact information maintained in the AutPlay® database and displayed on the AutPlay® Therapy website.

Development of the AutPlay® Therapy Certification Program:

AutPlay® Therapy began as an effort to provide an effective evidence-based protocol for mental health professionals working with autistic/neurodivergent children and their families. A special focus involved providing a play therapy approach, which could be implemented in a community mental health clinic, to address the mental health needs of neurodivergent children.

At the time of the inception of AutPlay®, most established autism/neurodivergent focused therapies were not mental health based nor designed for mental health professionals. As AutPlay® formed, it became apparent that mental health professionals working with the autistic population would benefit from a formal certification program, not only to ensure a thorough understating of autism, but to provide validation as a professional with advanced training in addressing neurodivergent needs.

Before the AutPlay® Therapy Certification Program was official and ready to be offered to participants, the Association for Play Therapy (APT) was contacted to review the AutPlay® Therapy training materials and verify the training met the standards for receiving play therapy continuing education hours. APT is the governing body in the United States for the Registered Play Therapist and Registered Play Therapist Supervisor credentials. APT approved the content and process of the AutPlay® Therapy Certification Training for continuing education hours. www.a4pt.org

The International Board for Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES) was also contacted to review AutPlay® Therapy training materials to be approved for IBCCES continuing education hours. IBCCES is an international organization that governs autism related credentialing. IBCCES reviewed the AutPlay® training materials and process and approved the AutPlay® Therapy training as meeting the standard of IBCCES for continuing education hours related to autism. www.Ibcces.org

Becoming a Certified AutPlay® Therapy Provider gives an extra layer of accountability, reference, and professional identity that has been lacking in the mental health community regarding working with autistic and other neurodivergent children and their families. Beyond a competency expectation, certification is also designed to provide a level of confidence for the mental health professional and the ability to reference a specialize training experience. AutPlay® Therapy continues to grow and update as more evidence-based practices emerge and advances in neurodivergent mental health increases.

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