What is PCIT?
- An evidence-based behavioral parent training program designed for preschool-age children that emphasizes changing parent-child interaction patterns to improve child behavior and enhance the quality of parent-child relationships (McNeil & Hembree-Kigin, 2010).

2 Distinct Phases of PCIT
- Child Directed Interaction (CDI)
  - Parents are taught to follow the child’s lead and utilize “PRIDE” skills in practicing differential social attention (Eyberg & Child Study Lab, 1999)
- Parent Directed Interaction (PDI)
  - Parents are taught to use effective commands and specific consequences for compliance and noncompliance (Eyberg & Child Study Lab, 1999)

What is PCIT Used to Treat?
- PCIT is an evidence-based treatment for children experiencing externalizing behavioral and emotional problems such as Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Oppositional Defiant Disorder (Eyberg & Child Study Lab, 1999)
- In recent years, PCIT has been applied to other disorders such as Anxiety, Intellectually Disability, and most recently ASD.

What is Autism?
- ASD is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by persistent deficits in social communication and interaction along with restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

What are evidence based treatments for ASD?
- Wong et al. (2015) identified 27 evidence-based practices for the treatment of ASD. Many of these treatments include a behavioral component, however some interventions focus specifically on communication and social skills. The 7 most common interventions for ASD are listed below in Table 2.

- ASD Evidence-Based Interventions Description
  - Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Targets specific behaviors for intervention, either acquiring skills to address deficits or reducing problem behaviors
  - Discrete Trial Training (DTT) Employs repetitive practice in the structure of learning trials presented in block format
  - Naturalistic Teaching (IT) Creating an environment where students’ interests are easily fostered and nurtured
  - Millieu Teaching (MT) Manipulating stimuli in a preschool child’s natural environment that encourages the child to engage in a targeted behavior
  - Pivotal Response Teaching (PRT) Targets pivotal behaviors thought to produce broad improvements
  - Naturalistic Interventions (Nl) Applying principles of ABA during a learner’s everyday routines and activities in order to increase a target behavior or decrease an interfering behavior
  - Differential Reinforcement (DR) Application of reinforcement designed to reduce the occurrence of interfering behaviors

Why PCIT for ASD?
- The efficacy of PCIT in treating children with disruptive behaviors has been documented (Funderburk et al., 1998).
- PCIT efficacy studies have shown key changes in parents’ behaviors toward their children (Eyberg & Matarazzo, 1980).
- PCIT has been extended to other clinical populations and has been effective (Eyberg et al., 2001).
- PCIT addresses the clinical needs of families of children with ASD with benefits to the family and child (Marcus et al., 2005).

Similarities of PCIT and ASD Treatments
- Importance of family involvement across settings (McNeil, Wagner, & Quetsch, 2016)
- One-on-one parent-child interaction following the child’s lead (McNeil, Wagner, & Quetsch, 2016)
- Utilizing positive social reinforcement to increase prosocial behaviors (McNeil, Wagner, & Quetsch, 2016)
- Teaching compliance training (McNeil, Wagner, & Quetsch, 2016)
- Behavioral approach (Marcus et al., 2005)
- Relationship enhancement (Marcus et al., 2005)
- Parents as therapists (Marcus et al., 2005)
- Emotional support (Marcus et al., 2005)
- Conceptualization of the parent-child relationship as a transactional model established and maintained over time (Marcus et al., 2005)
- Individualization to the family’s and child’s specific needs (Marcus et al., 2005)
- Emphasis on collaborative parent-family relationships (Marcus et al., 2005)
- Naturalistic interaction methods (Kasari et al. 2006)

Benefits of PCIT for ASD
- Increased Parenting Competence
- Increased child compliance
- Improved Autism Symptomatology
- Stronger parent-child relationship

Conclusion
- I believe that PCIT is an effective treatment for ASD. Using the original protocol is beneficial to both the families and the children. To determine if PCIT can be an evidence-based practice for ASD, further research needs to be conducted.

References