



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FAQs ABOUT AAPT LEVEL 1 TRAINING AND BEYOND

Information about Animal Assisted Play Therapy®

Is there a good place to get lots of information about Animal Assisted Play Therapy® (AAPT)?

Here is the link to the International Institute for Animal Assisted Play Therapy®, where you can find out about the approach, the training program, how to become Certified, read the blog, and so much more: <https://iiaapt.org>

Questions about the Level 1 Animal Assisted Play Therapy® Training

How much time is needed for Level 1 AAPT training?

This is a 4 day in-person training. This link will lead you to the brochure for the training: https://iiaapt.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AAPT.1.2022.LEVEL1_-1.pdf

What else is needed for AAPT Level 1?

There are 2 online courses which are included in the fees. These are to be finished 3 weeks prior to the in-person training so we can spend more workshop time working alongside the horses and dogs. If you'd like to get a head start on the online courses, you can buy them now and get a refund of the course fees (not the texts) when you sign up for the training. Many people say that these courses help them get a head start in building stronger, more reciprocal relationships with their animals as they prepare to do AAPT.

<https://risevanfleet.com/shop/product/introduction-to-animal-assisted-play-therapy/>

<https://risevanfleet.com/shop/product/canine-communication-in-aapt/>

What extra purchases are needed for Level 1?

When you register, you will receive information about the online courses and the additional course texts and how to obtain them. To obtain them new, the costs typically are around \$100 USD.

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The current online course reading list follows.

For the Introduction to Animal Assisted Play Therapy online course:

- The award-winning book, ***Animal Assisted Play Therapy***, by Rise VanFleet and Tracie Faa-Thompson. Sold at Amazon as well as <https://risevanfleet.com/shop/product/animal-assisted-play-therapy-new/> (This store is available for international sales, but also indicates availability from booksellers in some other countries). The book is also available in the UK directly with lower shipping costs from Tracie at aaptbaseuk@mail.com.

For the Canine Communication in AAPT online course:

- The CD ***What Is My Dog Saying?*** by Carol Byrnes. You can buy the e-download of it from: <http://www.diamondsintheruff.com/rise-van-fleet-course>

or a hardcopy of the CD from Dogwise -

<https://www.dogwise.com/what-is-my-dog-saying-powerpoint-cd/>

- The book, ***Kids and Dogs: A Professional's Guide to Helping Families***, by Colleen Pelar. It's available from Amazon and as an e-book from Dogwise:

<https://www.dogwise.com/ebook-kids-and-dogs-a-professionalsguide-to-helping-families/>

- You might also want to check for second-hand copies at www.bookfinder.com or www.abebooks.co.uk

Are the online course texts available in audio format? Or as a PDF that I can have my computer read to me?

These materials currently are available in book/CD form and as downloads. We expect to have the *Animal Assisted Play Therapy* book in audio format in 2023. Questions about this can be directed to info@iaapt.org.

How long should it take to complete the online pre-requisites for Levels 1 and 2?

The online courses are 24 hours of learning for Level 1, and approximately 16 hours of learning for Level 2. These estimates include the reading of the textbooks and CD/e-download that's part of the course.

What if I am not a play therapist?

If you have not had considerable play therapy training, including some in nondirective play therapy, we ask that you familiarize yourself with the basics of play therapy. We ask you to complete the following online course:

<https://risevanfleet.com/shop/product/child-centered-play-therapy-onlinecourse/>

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The course above includes reading the book, *Child Centered Play Therapy* (VanFleet, Sywulak, & Sniscak, 2010, Guilford) as this will give you a better understanding of the model and our approach. The book is available in the U.S. and internationally at

<https://risevanfleet.com/shop/product/child-centered-play-therapy/>

The CCPT book is also available in the UK (save on international shipping fees):

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Child-Centered-Play-Therapy-RisëVanFleet/dp/1606239023/ref=nodl>

If you have any questions about your own background and the need for this, please contact your Level 1 Instructor (or if you are not yet registered, contact Risë at info@iiaapt.org).

What if I'm not a mental health therapist?

AAPT is a flexible method that can be easily adapted for allied health professionals as well as for educational purposes. You need not be a therapist to attend and learn to implement AAPT. We do ask that all attendees who have not had much play therapy training take the online course listed in the question immediately above prior to the Level 1 training. This will help you understand how play, playfulness, and lightheartedness can help with therapeutic and educational goals.

What options are available if I don't use Facebook to stay updated?

Major updates and offerings are made on the website at www.iiaapt.org.

Also, the active Facebook group is one of the early places to find news, but if you check in with the website, you will see updates there. This is the facebook group link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/AnimalAssistedPlayTherapy/>

After you complete AAPT Level 1, you are provided access to a special password protected area of the website called "Kirrie's Corner" where you can find all relevant materials, policies/procedures, and forms going forward.

When will I be able to begin to practice using AAPT?

In most cases, you will be able to begin to use AAPT after the Level 1 training, provided that you have an animal who is appropriate and ready to do this work. During Level 1 we will explain the different ways you can get your animals evaluated for this purpose.



May I promote myself as using AAPT after attending a Level 1 workshop?

There is a policy written on this that you will have access to in Kirrie's Corner after the workshop. The following segments are drawn from the policy:

1. Unless you are already certified, you should not be identifying yourself as an "Animal Assisted Play Therapist." Even though you haven't used the word "certified," this is confusing to others and the public.
2. It is fine to say or write that you **have completed the Level 1 training in Animal Assisted Play Therapy®** (or the Level 1 and 2 trainings in Animal Assisted Play Therapy®) **offered by the International Institute for Animal Assisted Play Therapy®**. This is only if what you are doing conforms with all the principles and ethical/welfare guidelines we have covered in our trainings and that are spelled out clearly in the AAPT book and training *and* that your animal has been determined to be ready for this work.
3. You may not say that you are an Animal Assisted Play Therapist® until you are fully certified, and you may not teach AAPT unless you are certified at the proper level in AAPT and follow the specified policy and procedures on that in Kirrie's Corner.

Will you consider my animals to attend Level 1?

No, this process is different from animal-assisted training programs for volunteer/visitation programs. We want attendees to focus on learning about the many facets of AAPT with animals they don't know and without the distractions of handling one's own animals. This also helps you learn about the relationship-building processes of AAPT. For each Level 1, the Certified AAPT Instructor provides the animals who are deemed appropriate for the workshop environment and activities. After Level 1 you will have a better idea of the types of animal characteristics and training needed as you consider your own animals' appropriateness and preparedness. Your animal will be considered for Level 2 when you are ready to attend.

What is the Level 1 schedule, and at what times are breaks and lunch taken?

Each Certified AAPT Instructor schedules their time a little differently. Level 1 (and Level 2) workshop hours are 9:00 am to 5:45 pm, and they include breaks, experiential times, and lecture/video times that vary depending on the needs of participants and the animals involved. There can be additional travel time to and from external sites for working with other animal species. Although a small amount of workshop time can be allotted for such travel, you might be asked to drive directly to/from the external site on your own time. We try to keep this additional travel to a minimum. Lunchtimes may vary due to learning experiences, and are typically worked out at the start of the training. The in-person workshops have 28 hours of actual contact time, not including breaks, lunch, etc. This is a requirement for us to be able to offer CE/CPD credits. If you have special needs in terms of this scheduling, please inform your instructor when you register.

Supervision After Completing the Level 1 Workshop

How do I arrange to get supervision?

AAPT is a highly specialized field requiring many competencies to be expanded or developed. Supervision is an important part of the process to ensure fidelity to model and work within the boundaries of training. Supervision is provided by highly experienced Certified AAPT Supervisors who have demonstrated additional competencies in providing supervision in AAPT. At the Level 1, you will be provided with the password to enter Kirrie's Corner of the website where you will find policies and procedures, as well as forms. You will want to read the policy on supervision and then complete the Supervision Application Form. This is submitted to Risë at info@iaapt.org, and a good supervisory match for you is made.

Why can't I pick my own supervisor?

There are many factors that impact which supervisor to whom you are matched. Some considerations related to supervisor selection include species-specific factors, time zones, schedules, availability, and therapeutic orientations, among others. All our Certified Supervisors are highly skilled in AAPT and in supervision, so you can be certain that you will receive excellent guidance.

What if I don't have clinical cases or students with whom I can begin using AAPT?

Because most people who wish to use AAPT are already licensed and/or have considerable experience in their field, we usually do not require that you obtain supervision with actual clients or students. Our focus is on your abilities to implement and stay true to the principles and recommended practices of AAPT that you learn in Level 1. Therefore, we permit therapists/educators to conduct the AAPT work with nonclinical cases, such as neighbors or family members. You are not conducting therapy with them, of course, but illustrating how you choose, introduce, conduct, and process AAPT sessions, while at the same time attending to the animals' needs and applying your animal-related skills.

What if I am not able to video tape any of my actual client sessions (for confidentiality reasons)?

Your supervisor can often help you develop the proper releases and way to approach clients about this. If you can't get client videos, you can do mock sessions with family or friends on video! The answer under the question, "What if I don't have clinical cases or students..." applies here as well.

May I start supervision prior to attending Level 1?

At this time, it works best that you start supervision and complete most of it between Levels 1 and 2. This process ensures that you get off to a good start involving your animal/s in your work. We do not advise that most people begin to work with their animals until they have had in-depth training.

How do I know I am ready for Level 2?

When you are ready for level 2, you and your supervisor will have talked about you and your animal/s' readiness for it. Dates are listed at www.iaapt.org. If you have questions about travel with your animal, what to expect in Level 2, attendance, whether or not to bring your dog, or possible future locations not on the website, you may ask Risë VanFleet (Instructor) at info@iaapt.org. After discussing with your supervisor, you register at the location best suited to you. You will receive information about the prerequisites for you and your dog to attend (which includes a short dog assessment). While bringing your dog is encouraged, the workshop can be stressful for some dogs. It is not mandatory that you bring a dog – we can supply one for you to work with or pair up participants. If you have questions about this, please discuss with Risë at the email above.

General AAPT Certification Questions

What are the requirements to pursue credentialing?

This is answered in the Certification Manuals published at www.iaapt.org. There are two main trainings that include in-person and online components. There are supervision requirements that can be completed individually, in small groups, or both. Most people opt for online group supervision in groups of 4 people. At the time of certification application there are some additional requirements to integrate what has been learned, including a Therapy Involvement Plan (TIP) for the animals, a case study, a short exam to assess fidelity to model, and videos of you and your animal as well as an additional session video for the credentialing application. Full information is in the manuals on the website. *There is also a flow-chart as well as a 2-page document that summarizes certification attached here.*

What is the investment in time, scheduling, and availability of requirements?

Many find they can complete the credentialing in two years. This has to do with the timing of attending your Level 1, getting started with supervision, attending Level 2, and then completing the requirements to apply to the AAPT International Certification Board (comprised of other therapists and animal specialists who have been certified in AAPT). Some have completed the process in 1-1/2 years, but the norm is 2 years, and some take longer due to work and personal schedules, not yet having an animal prepared to work, or other factors in their own lives that affect the scheduling of the trainings and supervision. You have 5 years allotted to complete the process after which some additional training can be required to stay abreast of developments in the field. This is one of the few programs that are based on actual competences being approved by an independent Certification Board. Some information about the 2020 formation of the Certification Board can be found here:

<https://iaapt.org/aapt-certification-board-information-on-the-process/>

This is a rigorous certification program. That is because AAPT is based on a transdisciplinary integrative approach, and because it takes considerable time for most people to become proficient and fluent in some of the competencies that relate to working with animals. Everyone who has gone through the program has said they are very pleased at the impact it has had on their relationships with animals and their own competence and confidence. It is highly regarded in the professional community as well.

There seem to be a lot of Level 1 courses, but not as many Level 2--Is it worth it to start but then be delayed on level 2 options?

A certain amount of supervision is required prior to taking the Level 2 so that attendees can get the most out of Level 2. Therefore, pursuing supervision is the best thing to do after completing Level 1. Level 2 workshops are held regularly in several locations each year, and these in-person workshops are now resuming after interruptions during the pandemic. When there are sufficient numbers of candidates who have completed the initial supervision segments in a geographic area, Level 2 workshops can be added in other locations as well.

When should the case study and Therapy Involvement Plan (TIP) be started?

The TIP and case study can begin as soon as you are ready to do them, usually after receiving approximately 8-10 hours of supervision. Many find it useful to keep the TIP as a work in progress, even after submitting for credentialing, as this helps them keep up to date on their animals' needs and limitations as they age! The case study can begin with the information gathering as soon as you identify a client you want to create your case study around. The segments requested in the case study and the TIP are in the Certification Manual found at www.iaapt.org.

Is there an outline for the TIP? An example? Can I see yours?

The Certification Manual has more information about this as well as a guide on how to write it. Since each animal and therapist team is unique, we ask that others not share theirs and you develop it based on your individual animal and the skills you have been working on as you work through this process. Your supervisor is not available to review this as the AAPT Certification Board wants a version that is totally your own work so as to assess your skills and knowledge of your animal/s and how to involve them so they enjoy the work. The credentialing process is a user-friendly one. We are eager to see people succeed and the Board can provide useful information and feedback when needed to ensure you have developed the competencies you are demonstrating with everything in the application.

How detailed should the case study be? Can we use a case we have talked about in supervision?

The Certification Manual has a lot more information on this. Case studies are to be typed and usually are approximately 6-10 pages. We want to assess your independent ability, aside from supervision, to assess your decision making and application of AAPT learning. All of the training and supervision that precedes this help prepare you for it!

After submitting my certification application, how long will it take me to hear if I am certified?

There is a Guide available for completing the Certification Application to help expedite its review. Once all required certification documents have been received and confirmed, the AAPT International Certification Board takes approximately 6-8 weeks to review everything and provide feedback about the status of your application.

The Path to Animal Assisted Play Therapy® Certification

