

# Internationally Acclaimed Training Course Information Level 1 Workshop Package 2024



## Animal Assisted Play Therapy: Theory, Research, & Practice

**AAPT CO-CREATORS:**  
Risé VanFleet &  
Tracie Faa-Thompson

**CERTIFIED INSTRUCTORS:**  
Emily Boatwright (TN)  
Shell Brown (UK)  
Rebecca Dickinson (IA)  
Jacque George (PA)  
Teri Holamon (TX)  
Cyndie Kieffer (IL)  
Lucy Llewellyn (UK)  
Mary Rottier (MI, GA)

**Animal Assisted Play Therapy™**

AAPT is a full integration of play therapy with animal-assisted therapy, ethology, and several other disciplines. It is designed for mental health, allied health, and educational purposes. It is valuable in helping children, adolescents, and adults, and can be provided for individuals, groups, and families.

**JOIN US!**

**Level 1: AAPT Theory, Research & Practice**  
Hands-on skill building for AAPT competencies

**Supervision**  
Contacted securely online in groups of 4

**Level 2: AAPT Relationships & Applications**  
Hands-on focus on animal partnership & application of techniques

**Certification**  
Via the AAPT International Certification

**INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR  
Animal Assisted Play Therapy®**

The International Institute for Animal Assisted Play Therapy® (IIAAPT) was founded to provide cutting-edge training, supervision, certification, and continuing education for professionals interested in this multidisciplinary intervention. Its unique focus is on relationship, exploration, and play to address the needs of clients while ensuring the well-being and voluntary participation of the carefully prepared dogs, horses, cats, rabbits, goats, cows, and others in the therapeutic process.

**WWW.IIAAPT.ORG**  
Check for updates for multiple translations/versions around the world

**Details Inside!**

*The International Institute for Animal Assisted Play Therapy® is the only authorized provider of workshops on Animal Assisted Play Therapy® in the world.*

***Why THIS workshop?*** ...because of our unique and acclaimed focus on *therapist-animal relationships & animal agency and well-being, use of humor and play to enhance top-notch integrative therapy, and lots of hands-on skill-building experiences taught by highly accomplished instructors!! Plus, it is the first big step toward full certification.*



*AAPT co-creator Tracie Faa-Thompson (UK)*



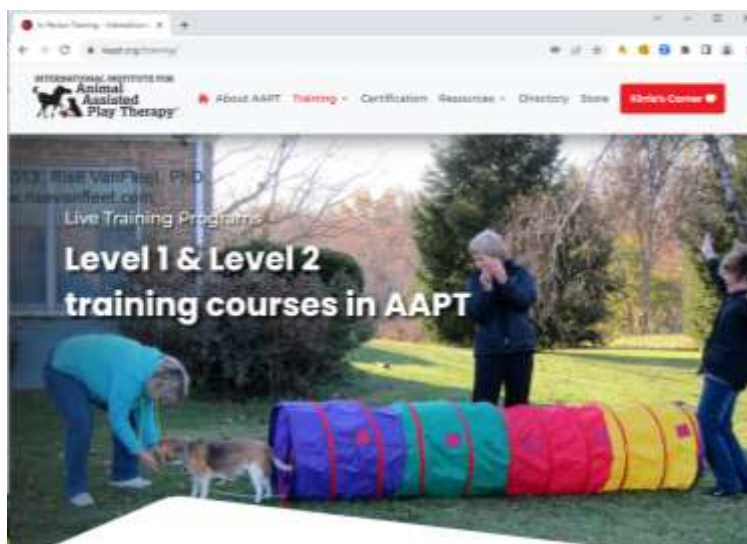
*AAPT co-creator Risë VanFleet (USA)*

*All Level 1 workshops include videos of both AAPT co-creators in action.*

## **Dates/Locations**

**Specific dates, locations, lead instructors, and contact information is in the chart on the website:**

<https://iaapt.org/training/>



***Please note:*** Only fully certified instructors under the auspices of the AAPT Certification Board are authorized to offer this program. The lead instructors on the chart are fully certified. The Level 1 program developed by Dr. Risë VanFleet and Tracie Faa-Thompson is the same at all locations.



## Who Should Attend

This training program is designed for play therapists, psychologists, social workers, counselors, psychiatrists, family therapists, school counselors, and other experienced mental health, medical, allied health, and educational professionals. The training is relevant to a wide range of clinical, developmental, and educational problems for clients throughout the lifespan. Animal behavior professionals interested in the topic are also welcome to attend. This workshop is an intermediate-level experience in how to conduct AAPT effectively and ethically. It includes experiences with dogs and horses supplied by the instructors.

## AAPT Level 1 Course Description

This training is designed for mental health, allied health, and education professionals who wish to learn about the exciting field of Animal Assisted Play Therapy®. Properly selected and prepared animals are incorporated into therapy sessions for clients of all ages, while the power of humor and play is harnessed to create a safe environment for therapeutic change. The 2 online courses and the 4-day in-person hands-on workshop that comprise this course provide **52 hours of detailed instruction** on topics such as human-animal interactions, ethology/animal behavior, animal assisted therapy, research, natural environments, and the full integration of animal-assisted therapy with play therapy to address a wide range of client challenges. The program emphasizes a **relationship-based approach**. The Level 1 course focuses on dogs and horses with information about other species included since AAPT principles and practices apply across species. AAPT can be applied from virtually any theoretical orientation, as well as integrative models of intervention.

Participants completing this training program will be able to...

- Define at least 5 key concepts in the AAI field, including AAPT
- Describe at least 4 of the values that undergird the AAPT approach
- Explain all of the guiding principles for the practice of AAPT
- Describe the 5 major therapeutic goal areas that are typically addressed with AAPT for clients of all ages
- Identify at least 2 sources of information about the selection of dogs for AAPT work
- Demonstrate the skills for observing and interpreting animal body language fluently, especially dogs and horses
- Identify at least 4 aspects of environmental context that can impact interpretation of animal behavior that might occur during a therapy session
- Explain the importance and skills for using humane, animal-friendly methods of training
- Describe the rationale for and the critical importance of building healthy reciprocal relationships with therapy animals
- Give at least 3 examples of reciprocity in human-animal relationships in AAPT
- Explain the role of playfulness & humor in therapy with clients of all ages and with a wide range of problems
- Demonstrate how to build play, lightness, & emotional safety into the interactions between clients and animals
- Identify at least 5 body language signals in dogs in real time in a video playing at regular speed
- Identify at least 3 body language signals in horses in real time observations
- Discuss the goodness-of-fit approach used in AAPT as a humane way of including animals in play therapy and other forms of psychotherapy/counseling/intervention/education
- List the 3 requirements in AAPT of ever dressing up an animal
- List 2 reasons why painting horses in therapy is not a good idea



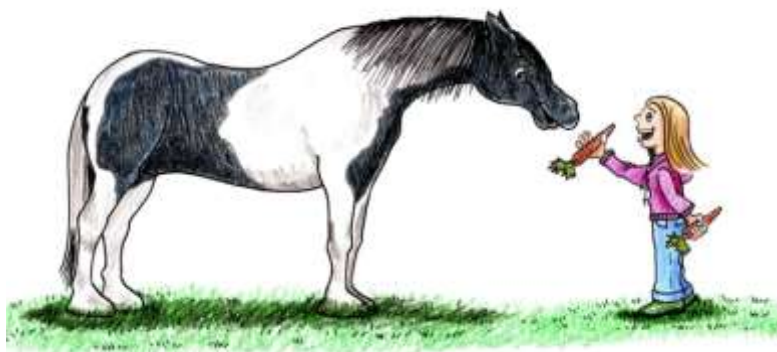
- Explain what is meant by “expect the unexpected” when working with animals in therapy, and how one responds to that
- Demonstrate the provision of effective treatment while reducing risks
- Design a new AAPT intervention that fully considers the needs of the client, the animal, and the environment
- Describe how to apply AAPT in at least 4 different settings or formats, including individual, group, and family
- Explain how AAPT can be conducted in an integrated manner with at least 3 different theoretical orientations in play therapy or other forms of therapy

Emphasis is on the use of client-animal play/humor interactions for therapeutic benefit. Many specific AAPT interventions are covered, including nondirective and directive play therapy, as well as AAPT approaches with varying degrees of structure. Participants learn how to conduct therapy in a manner that enhances the achievement of goals while ensuring the well-being of the animals involved. Considerable attention is paid to the human and animal preparatory phases of involving animals in professional work, as well as on the selection, facilitation, and processing of therapeutic material within AAPT for a full range of client ages and problem areas.

The workshop is very hands-on. The online courses provide background that is then applied in a practical manner during the in-person training. Video and live demonstrations as well as experiential portions are followed by skills-practice components with encouraging feedback from the training leaders. It is expected that most participants will develop competence and confidence during the workshop and will be ready to implement AAPT with an appropriate animal partner at the end of the training. Supervision for further skill development is strongly encouraged and discussed.

The workshop gives participants a chance to explore this exciting field and learn how to develop, implement, and research their own programs. Ideas for working collaboratively with animal professionals are included. The workshop is limited to 10-20 participants, depending on location and the need for pandemic mitigation/social distancing.

*This training is for people only.* Dogs and horses will be present and available for demonstration and practice segments. The Level 2 training held later featuring Dr. VanFleet provides opportunities to work with participants' own dogs, and equine clinics featuring Tracie Faa-Thompson continue participants' development of Equine Assisted Play Therapy™ skills for those working with horses. This Level 1 course is required for both of the extended courses focusing further on dogs and horses.



## Prerequisites

In general, participants should have prior experience conducting therapy as well as some familiarity with both nondirective (child-centered) and directive play therapy approaches. They should be familiar with basic behaviorism and learning theory, attachment theory, and family systems. Allied health and education professionals should have prior experience working in their fields. If you have questions about the prerequisites, please contact Dr. VanFleet at [info@iiaapt.org](mailto:info@iiaapt.org).

Those without a strong play therapy background, or canine/equine/other professionals interested in attending, are asked to read the book, ***Child-Centered Play Therapy*** (VanFleet, Sywulak, & Sniscak, 2010, Guilford) prior to the in-person training, and Dr. VanFleet or other course instructors can discuss your unique background and what is needed with you.

**[Please note that the *Child-Centered Play Therapy* book is coauthored by one of the founders and head instructor/creator of the AAPT Level 1 course, Dr. Risë VanFleet. It can be purchased directly from her at a discount (shared author discount) of \$37, although it can be purchased from other outlets as well. This is not a requirement but suggested for those who have no significant background in nondirective play therapy.]**

**2 Prerequisite Online Courses** are included in the registration fee and must be completed prior to the in-person training. Together the online courses are eligible for 24 additional continuing education (CE) credits. The courses are ***Introduction to AAPT*** and ***Canine Communication for AAPT***. The powerpoints, written articles, and video links are all included in the overall registration fee for this Level 1 training.

**[Please note: In addition, there are 2 books and a CD that serve as "texts" for the online courses that must be purchased separately. (The online courses are part of the overall fee, but these materials are not as many people already have them.) One book and the CD are available as downloads from their respective authors, and information about these are sent with registration confirmations.**

**The other book, *Animal Assisted Play Therapy*, is coauthored by the Level 1 course creators and instructors, Dr. Risë VanFleet and Tracie Faa-Thompson, and is the only existing book on the topic. It is also the 2018 Maxwell Award winner as the best book written on the human-animal bond (Dog Writers Association of America). Covering this material in advance reduces lecture time and allows for more hands-on skill building during the in-person workshop. The AAPT book may be purchased from most countries from [risevanfleet.com/shop](http://risevanfleet.com/shop) (in the UK [aaptbaseuk@mail.com](mailto:aaptbaseuk@mail.com); in Australia [4busypaws.com.au](http://4busypaws.com.au)) and other outlets.**

**The total additional cost for the 3 items is \$86 USD. When you register for the Level 1, you will receive information about accessing the 2 online courses, and information on travel and what to expect that is sent by the instructor. The 2 online courses take approximately 24 total hours to complete and must be completed 3 weeks prior to the live training to be eligible to attend the live training. (Cancellation policies apply if the online courses are not completed.)]**



## Special Needs

We are committed to making workshops accessible to everyone. Please contact us as early in the process as possible if you have special needs. Training is generally held in a rural country environment with contact with dogs, horses, and other animals.

## Schedule

The training runs daily from **9:00 am to 5:45 pm**, with a 5:00 pm dismissal on the last day. There are 28 actual contact hours in the in-person training, and the online courses include 24 hours of instruction, for a total of 52 CE credits/clock hours for the entire program.

## Venue

Detailed venue and other information will be sent to participants after they have registered. The live training will be held in a rural environment with dogs and horses present.

## Continuing Education

The Family Enhancement & Play Therapy Center is approved by the American Psychological Association to sponsor continuing education for psychologists. The FEAPT Center maintains responsibility for this program and its contents. The Family Enhancement & Play Therapy Center is an NBCC-Approved Continuing Education Provider (5732) and may offer NBCC-approved clock hours for events that meet NBCC requirements. The FEAPT Center solely is responsible for all aspects of the program. It is also an Association for Play Therapy (APT) Approved Provider 95-014. This program has been approved by a number of state social work boards (please contact us for this info). **52 total continuing education credits/clock hours** will be awarded to participants who attend the **entire** training (24 for the online courses and 28 for the live training). Partial credit cannot be given. No exceptions can be made to this policy. Please contact us re. various canine and equine credits, which are sometimes available.

## Dress

The training will involve work with dogs and horses in a rural environment, including outdoors. Please dress comfortably with this in mind. Rain gear and footwear for muddy areas are also advised. Closed-toed shoes are mandatory for the equine segments.

## Fees - Discounted Package

This training package includes registration fees for 2 online courses and the 4-day live AAPT Level 1 workshop (52 CE credits total). 2 textbooks and a CD for the online courses are separate. All amounts are listed in U.S. dollars. Currency conversions are made automatically when you register. We regret that installment payments are not possible.

**Early Bird Fee: \$1200 USD [£980 GBP]** (fully paid 4 months prior)

**Regular Fee: \$1350 USD [£1103GBP]** (pd w/in 4 months of wkshp start)

**GREAT PRICE**  
for 52 hrs of state-of-  
the-art hands-on  
learning!!!

As noted on the previous page, **an additional \$86** is required for the 2 texts and CD that are part of the online courses if you do not already have them. The online course fees are included in the overall workshop fees, however.

### Please note:

> *During any public health emergencies or disasters, offerings of this workshop will be conducted (or rescheduled) in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and other country, state, or local public health or emergency management guidelines and restrictions.*

> *Because some participants are likely to have auto-immune issues, we will adopt practices that protect them fully. This can include social distancing, masking, or other public health practices.*

> *Please stay in touch with your instructors for more information.*



## **Cancellation Policy:**

Registrations are accepted on a first-come-first-served basis. Fees include 4 days of training (28 hours), extensive handout, 2 online courses (24 hours), morning and afternoon snacks and beverages. Lunches/dinners are on your own. Travel fees and accommodation are not included.

\$285 (£233) is nonrefundable. Written cancellations received 4 months prior to the start of the workshop will receive a full refund of the balance of the fees. Cancellations after the 4-month point will forfeit a total of \$435 (£356), with the remainder being refunded. This strict policy is due to the limited seating in this workshop.

We regret that NO refunds can be given in the final month preceding the workshop. When someone from the waiting list can substitute, credit toward future trainings may be given.

**[Failure to complete the prerequisites on time is considered a cancellation in the final month.]**

We urge you to consider purchasing insurance to protect against unforeseen events.

In the very unlikely event that the workshop must be completely cancelled by the organizers, the relevant instructors will provide a full refund of the registration fees. Participants will be responsible for their own travel fees, another reason to consider purchasing travel insurance that covers this. During any public health or disaster emergencies, rescheduling might become necessary depending on CDC recommendations, as well as country, state, or local public health/emergency management recommendations and restrictions designed to ensure participant health and well-being. In that case, the cancellation policy above will apply to the rescheduled dates.




## **Origins and Presentation of This Training**

This course was created over many years through the collaboration of Dr. Risë VanFleet and Tracie Faa-Thompson, and includes the input of many past participants and animals. Risë and Tracie are also the coauthors of the acclaimed and 2018 Maxwell-Award-winning book, *Animal Assisted Play Therapy* (2017; Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Press).

The Level 1 workshop is offered by fully Certified AAPT Instructors who are highly experienced and who have gone through a rigorous program of certification based on demonstrated competencies. The Level 1 training uses the same PowerPoint, videos, activities, and hands-on practice segments regardless of the instructors.

Bios of the co-founders of AAPT, and the developers of this workshop, can be found in the AAPT Directory at <https://iaapt.org/directory/> under the *Co-Founders* section. They have a combined 80+ years of experience in the field, an impressive list of publications and international presentations, and are fully dedicated to the highest quality of client service and animal well-being. Names and locations of certified instructors are found in the same Directory in the *Certified AAPT Instructors* section.

If you wish to set up a Level 1 workshop near your location, please contact Dr. VanFleet at [rise@risevanfleet.com](mailto:rise@risevanfleet.com). She will provide an information sheet that details the many considerations and requirements that are needed.

 *The Family Enhancement & Play Therapy Center/IIAPT organization and the instructors have no conflicts of interest in offering this program, nor is there any commercial support. All fees, including for the additional prerequisite materials, some of which are authored by the instructors, are listed above in the sections on prerequisites and registration fees.*

## Currently Scheduled Level 1 Workshops

To see the currently available Level 1 workshops, please visit the link below:

<https://iaapt.org/training/>



### Registration: Level 1 AAPT Workshop

Follow the links provided in the chart at the site above for the location and dates you are interested in.

*Register early as this workshop often sells out quickly!*

*Join us for this fun, exciting, and cutting-edge workshop that provides empathy, empowerment, and reciprocity to humans and animals alike!*

**Questions?** For any general information, as well as specifics about workshops in North America and most other countries, please contact Dr. VanFleet at [info@iaapt.org](mailto:info@iaapt.org). For the UK program, please contact [aaptbaseuk@mail.com](mailto:aaptbaseuk@mail.com)



# Animal Assisted Play Therapy™ Guiding Principles



**ENJOYMENT & CHOICES** - Sessions are enjoyable for animals & clients. Participation is completely voluntary for all. Animals always have an exit route available.

**RELATIONSHIP** - AAPT is always about relationship, not control. Healthy, humane relationships feature reciprocity & mutual benefit.



**PROCESS-ORIENTATION** - Is important for achieving goals. The journey is important & must be flexible, allowing for unexpected events, expression, & creative problem-solving.

**FOUNDATIONS** - AAPT is grounded in well-established theories & empirically supported practices in lifespan development, clinical intervention, play therapy, education, ethics, & welfare.



**RESPECT** - Is equal & reciprocal for clients & animals.

**SAFETY** - Activities are physically & emotionally safe for all involved. The therapist immediately intervenes in unsafe situations.

**ACCEPTANCE** - Is shown to clients & animals for who they are. Empathy for animals & clients guides interventions. Natural animal behavior is valued.

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**ANIMAL-FRIENDLY TRAINING** - Only kind, playful, animal-centered, positive, & relationship-based training methods are used to prepare animals. Equipment is minimized, & aversives are never used.

**AGENCY & EMPOWERMENT** - Are maximized for animals & clients. Emphasis is on discovering their competence & confidence and following their unique paths.

[iaapt.org](http://iaapt.org)



# Animal Assisted Play Therapy™ Competencies



## ANIMAL-RELATED COMPETENCIES

- › Selection of Animals
- › Animal Appropriateness Scale™ (Personality & Preferences)
- › Animal's Trained Behaviors
- › Therapy Involvement Plan™ for Each Animal



## ETHICS & WELFARE COMPETENCIES

- › Adherence to All Professional Ethical Standards
- › Effectiveness of Intervention (Evidence of Goal Attainment)
  - › Fidelity to AAPT Values & Principles (Clients & Animals)
- › Adherence to Highest Welfare & Well-Being Standards
- › Voluntary Participation of All

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## THERAPIST-ANIMAL RELATIONSHIP COMPETENCIES

- › Ethology, Behavior, Development, Senses of Species & Individual
- › Reciprocal Relationship-Building (STARS Scale™)
- › Fluency in Animal Body Language
- › Animal-Responsive Handling & Decision-Making™
- › Animal-Friendly Training
- › Proactive & Split-Attention
- › Natural Environment & Setting Awareness



## THERAPY/EDUCATION COMPETENCIES

- › Professional Therapist or Educator Competence
- › Play Therapy Competence
- › Competence in Planning, Conducting, Facilitating, & Processing AAPT Sessions

[iaapt.org](http://iaapt.org)





## AAPT Training Program in Action



*AAPT animals must enjoy the work, not merely tolerate it!*

**THANK YOU!**

