Congratulations on deciding to apply to become a pediatric certified specialist (PCS)! The best place to begin your preparations is on the Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy (APPT) website (www.pediatricapta.org). Select “Professional Development,” go to “PCS & Other Opportunities for Professional Development,” and choose “Pediatric Certified Specialist information.” This page has links to the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties (ABPTS) (application, prerequisites, description of specialty practice [DSP], etc.), as well as Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy resources (local and online PCS study groups, the Memorial Fund Scholarship, and Academy courses) that can assist in your preparation for the exam.

I. Getting Started — General Information
   A. Assess Readiness and Develop an Action Plan: Review the pediatric DSP and the pediatric self-assessment tool (SAT). The written exam is developed from the DSP, which is based on a practice analysis study. The SAT can be used to determine readiness for specialist certification. The SAT helps to identify your current level of knowledge and skills in advanced clinical competencies. Once you have identified the competencies that need to be improved, you can develop an action plan (helpful in prioritizing the time, resources, and funds for your journey to achieving specialization). The pediatric DSP, which includes the SAT, is available for purchase from the American Physical Therapy Association’s (APTA) online catalogue (www.apta.org) and choose Store, then search for “DSP.”

   Note: The pediatric DSP was last updated in 2011 and is a working document that will be modified as necessary.

   B. Important Dates:
      July 31: Pediatric Certification Application Deadline
      August 31: Pediatric Certification Reapplication deadline
      October 1: Dichter Memorial PCS Scholarship Application Deadline
      November 30: Examination Fee Due
II. Next Steps – After Acceptance of the Application

Use your action plan to guide knowledge-gathering strategies. This may include attending continuing education courses, collaborating with colleagues by participating in study groups, and gathering information from textbooks, web-based online resources, and primary research in peer-reviewed journals.

Note: Candidates for the examination sign an affidavit and pledge of confidentiality and cannot discuss exam content, but may state how they prepared. Below is a list of resources from a survey of pediatric clinical specialists. (ABPTS nor APPT does not review or endorse the content of any review materials or courses.)

A. Attending Continuing Education Courses: The APPT offers a variety of online and onsite courses. Visit the website (www.pediatricapta.org) for additional information. Review the course description, objectives, and scheduled learning activities closely before attending to ensure that the course content is relevant for your action plan.

B. Participate in Study Groups: Visit the PCS webpage to identify and select a PCS study group (either online or local) or collaborate with local colleagues who are also studying for the PCS.

C. Access Resources to Support your Study Plan

1. Textbooks: The following can be purchased new or used via Amazon.com, other online resources, borrowed from a physical therapy professional program, etc.


2. **Primary Research in Peer-Reviewed Journals:** For APTA members, PT Now offers clinical summaries and an article search database. You or your institution may have access to institutional online resources. Additional web-based resources that may lead to full-text articles include Google Scholar (www.scholar.google.com) and PubMed (www.pubmed.gov). Access the Evidence-based Practice in Pediatric Physical Therapy fact sheet at www.pediatricapta.org, under “Resources,” which provides additional ideas for searching literature.

Key Journals include:

- Physical Therapy Journal - [www.ptjournal.org](http://www.ptjournal.org)
- Pediatric Physical Therapy - [www.pedpt.com](http://www.pedpt.com)
- Developmental Medicine and Child Neurology
- Journal of Developmental - Pediatrics
- Physical and Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics
- Journal of Early Intervention by the Division of Early Childhood of the Council of Exceptional Children
- Rehabilitation Oncology. Oncology section, APTA

3. **Fact Sheets from the APPT** (available at the APPT website):

- Intensity of Service in an Outpatient Setting for Children with Chronic Conditions
- Frequency and Duration of Physical Therapy Services in the Acute Care Pediatrics Setting
- Providing Physical Therapy Services in Schools under IDEA 2004
- Intervention for Youth Who Are in Transition from School to Adult Life
- Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy

4. **Online Resources:**

   *(There are numerous Web sites and publications available that may be relevant to your study plan; this list is not meant to be all inclusive. Many of the listed sites have links to additional resources.)*

- ABPTS, American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties - [www.abpts.org](http://www.abpts.org)
- CanChild, McMaster University - [www.canchild.ca](http://www.canchild.ca)
- PTNow from APTA - [www.ptnow.org](http://www.ptnow.org)
- Campbell’s Physical Therapy for Children Expert Consult - [https://expertconsult.inkling.com](https://expertconsult.inkling.com) (product key to web site provided with Campbell’s 5th edition)
- Quizlet - [www.quizlet.com](http://www.quizlet.com) (create your own study guide)
• Medbridge Pediatric Clinical Specialty Prep Course (not affiliated with the APPT, ABPTS, or the APTA)  https://www.Medbridgeeducation.com (subscription site; Review the course description, objectives, and scheduled learning activities closely to ensure that the course content is relevant for your action plan.


The Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy provides access to these member-produced fact sheets and resources for informational purposes only. They are not intended to represent the position of APPT or of the American Physical Therapy Association.