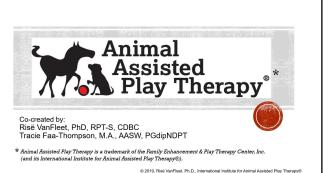


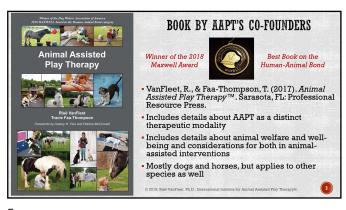


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# Who Am I Anyway?

Cyndie Kieffer is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Illinois and Indiana. She is also a Certified Professional Practitioner in Animal Assisted Play Therapy-Instructor and an AutPlay provider. Cyndie has worked alongside her dogs since 2002 in a variety of settings including in private practice, nursing homes, hospice and as an advocate Cyndie authored the children's book, "Jack the Brave" and a chapter entitled, "To the Rescue: How Animals can Assist People Diagnosed with Autism" in the book, "A Spectrum of Solutions for Clients with Autism" edited by Rachel Bedard and Lorna Hecker. She has spoken on the topic of Animal Assisted Interventions at the international, national, and state level. She was awarded the Kirrie Award in 2023 by the International Institute for Animal Assisted Play Therapy \* for her work in this field. She has been a volunteer with Pet Partners since 2002 and enjoys sharing Norm; her canine partner in crime, with people in their community.





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## WHAT IS ANIMAL ASSISTED PLAY THERAPY®?

- Represents the full integration of Animal Assisted Therapy and play therapy, plus several other animal-related fields.
- Definition: "the integrated involvement of animals in the context of play therapy, in which appropriately trained therapists and animals engage with clients primarily through systematic playful interventions, with the goal of improving clients' developmental and psychosocial health, while simultaneously ensuring the animal's well-being and voluntary engagement. Play and playfulness are essential ingredients of the interactions and the relationship." (VanFleet, 2004; VanFleet & Faa-Thompson, 2017)
- All ages—individuals, families groups—mental health, allied health, education (professionals involving animals in their work)
- Wide range of therapeutic goals addressed
- Most common: dogs, horses, cats.
- Growing: goats, rabbits, guinea pigs, cows, pigs, etc.

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## AAPT PRINCIPLES

- Respect equal & reciprocal of clients & animals
- Safety physical & emotional for all
- Enjoyment & Choices option of nonparticipation for clients & animals; enjoyment, not tolerance
- Acceptance of client and animal for who they are
- Training use of only positive reinforcement, noncoercive, animal-friendly methods



- Relationship primary focus of all; reciprocal, empathic, playful
- Empowerment encourages growth, independence, competence, & confidence for clients & animals
- Process more important than any single outcome; unexpected events are expected and woven into therapy
- Foundations grounded in wellestablished theories & practice, animal welfare & well-being forefront, guided by research

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## **DEMONSTRATED COMPETENCIES**

#### Animal-Related Skills

- Observation
- Communication fluency
- Welfare/well-being advocacy
- Ethology/behavior
- Handling
- R+ training
- Clear-eyed view of animal strengths & sensitivities

### AAPT Therapy Skills

- Core therapy skills within field (without animal)
- Client goals fit with
- animal
  Split/proactive
  attention
- Application of principles/methods



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### Relationship Focus

- Therapist-animal reciprocity
- Healthy attachment relationship
- Facilitation of client-animal interaction in service of client goals
- Integration of all
- Decision-making
- Effectiveness
- Ethics

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