



## WHAT IS APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS?

*Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is considered by many to be a gold standard intervention for teaching children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Through its data driven, evidence-based methodology, ABA has been shown to encourage positive behavior change, skill development, and greater independence for a wide variety of learners. ABA is a science, and each person's individual program should be designed around their unique learning profile.*

*While ABA may be accessed as an intervention by trained professionals through an individualized education plan (IEP), you may also be able to access this intervention at home through your family's insurance plan. This guide will walk you through how to set up this intervention, what to expect, and some questions you may consider asking the ABA provider.*

### Gather the important documents

- Most ABA agencies will require initial documents before they set up an intake session
- These will likely include:
  - The individual's diagnostic report (must state that a standardized assessment like an "ADOS" or "CARS" was used)
  - A "letter of medical necessity" from an M.D. recommending the service
  - A copy of the individual's insurance card (can be a picture taken on a phone)
- Sometimes, individual agencies will also have consent forms and intake forms that they require before setting up that first visit. You should ask the agency when you inquire about services what is needed.

### Make a list of questions for the ABA agency before calling

- What is your model of service? What will the intervention look like?
- Will there be a parent/caregiver training component included?
- How many therapists will my child have?
- Is there currently a waitlist and can you anticipate how long it will take for my child to be assigned to a therapist?
- What are the policies I should be aware of before starting services with your agency?

## SETTING UP IN-HOME APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS



## Call the ABA agency

- There are many factors that go into finding an ABA agency. This website can help to narrow your search by allowing you to put in your family's zip code, and will then populate a list of agencies, the insurances they are in network with, and their estimated wait time.
  - Website: <https://www.mabhaccess.com/Search.aspx> (Select service: ABA)
- It is highly recommended that you reach out to your child's clinical provider and support team to ask if they have recommended agencies and/or could help assist in the referral process.

## Intake

- Once the ABA agency has processed all of the documents required to set up an intake, they will reach out to the individual's insurance plan to get approval for an "initial assessment". This could take as little as 1 week or as long as several months, depending on the agency.

## Initial Assessment

- Once the ABA agency has received authorization from the individual's insurance company that they have been approved for an initial assessment, they will contact you to schedule.
- During this assessment the ABA agency will meet with you and your child to discuss what the goals for therapy are, and observe what the child is working on in the home setting. They will start to take some initial data and information that they will turn into a document that will get submitted to the individual's insurance.
- Once the initial assessment is complete, the ABA agency will submit their report to the individual's insurance agency for approval.

## Direct Service

- The individual's insurance company has to give the ultimate approval for services. The insurance company will not only approve the services, but they will decide how many hours of ABA will be covered per week. They make this determination based on the needs of the specific individual. Sometimes agencies can ask for more or less hours based on their clinical judgement.
- Think of this number of hours as a prescribed medication. It is important to engage in the full dosage of the intervention, and not just a part of it, to see growth and progress. Also-if the individual is approved for 10 hours a week of ABA, but you are only able to engage in 2 hours, it is likely that over time the agency will close the services because it is not a sustainable model of service.
- Be aware that parent/caregiver engagement in the intervention is important! Your questions and insight matter so much, and it will be you who is carrying out the things learned during therapy once the therapist leaves for the day.

## Questions to ask your ABA agency

- What are the types of things the therapist might do with the child?
- How will you document or communicate about any progress my child is making?
- How often will we meet to discuss goals for my child?
- Can services only be done in the home or are we also able to work on skills in the community?



## Stay organized

- Once a schedule has been set, write the individual's ABA therapy hours down on a calendar where it can be visible
- Choose a space or spaces in your home where the therapy can take place. Don't worry, you don't need to have anything special on hand for this-just a place where the child and therapist can work together.
- Write down the names and contact information (phone/email address) for everyone involved in the individual's therapy.
- Ask for the ABA agency directors contact information to have on hand as well. Share this information with your child's school team or clinical providers.

For questions about insurance coverage:  
Autism Insurance Resource Center (AIRC)  
[www.disabilityinfo.org/arica/](http://www.disabilityinfo.org/arica/)  
E-mail: [info@disabilityinfo.org](mailto:info@disabilityinfo.org)  
Telephone: 774-455-4056