

Introduction to ABA



About • Special • Kids

Answers for families of kids with special needs

Introduction to ABA webinar

Who are we and why am we here talking about ABA?

- Suzanne Aaron & Lisa Kutschera, Parent Liaisons from About Special Kids
- Mothers of 12 year old sons with autism
 - One had Full-time ABA October 2007-August 2013 and Said “mama” for the first time after 20 minutes of ABA therapy at age 4
 - One has had Part-time ABA since August of 2011 and learned to tie his shoes within one week
- If wanting to learn how to get coverage for ABA, watch our webinar on “Indiana’s Insurance Mandate for Autism”

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- Autism: what comes to mind?
 - ❑ Behaviors!!! (among other things)
 - Inappropriate playing with toys (spinning wheels on car instead of pretend play)
 - Sensitivity to sound, lights, touch, etc (panic w/ loud noises, hearing lights/AC units)
 - Inappropriate laughing or crying
 - Hyperactivity or passiveness
 - Unusual attachment to objects (characters, stuffed animals, pacifiers, etc)
 - Lack of or delayed speech
 - Lack of awareness of danger (running into street, unaware of traffic, wandering to water)
 - Spins objects
 - Insensitivity to high tolerance of pain
 - Lack of eye contact, etc, etc!

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- Autism defined:
- a developmental disorder that appears by age three and that is variable in expression but is recognized and diagnosed by impairment of the ability to form normal social relationships, by impairment of the ability to communicate with others, and by stereotyped behavior patterns especially as exhibited by a preoccupation with repetitive activities of restricted focus rather than with flexible and imaginative ones
- Merriam-Webster website, Medical Definition of Autism

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- What can be done?
- Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is the only U.S. Surgeon General approved autism therapy.
- “Thirty years of research demonstrated the efficacy of applied behavioral methods in reducing inappropriate behavior and in increasing communication, learning, and appropriate social behavior.”
 - Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General
 - <http://www.appliedbehaviorcenter.com/ABAEendorsements.htm>
- For our purposes today, we will discuss ABA in a parent to parent style. The field of Behavior Analysis is huge, and ABA is one small segment of this field of study. We will discuss what an ABA program looks like and how it can help.

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- ABA uses scientific principles of learning and ***motivation***. It seeks to improve behaviors through ***positive reinforcement*** and decrease behaviors through ***redirection***.
- The consequences of ***behavior*** will determine whether that behavior will occur again.

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- How does ABA help?
 - Increase desired behaviors (staying on task, social interaction)
 - Teaching new skills
 - Generalizing skills so they can be done outside a clinical setting
 - Reducing undesired behaviors
 - Maintaining behaviors – such as self-control

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- The A-B-Cs of Behavior
- **Antecedent:** what precedes the behavior (trigger?)
- **Behavior:** the behavior itself
- **Consequence:** what happened after the behavior (reinforced?)

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- Who provides ABA?
- BCBA: Board Certified Behavior Analyst
- Master's degree required
- BCaBA: Board Certified assistant Behavior Analyst
- Bachelor's degree required, overseen by BCBA
- BCBA-D or BCBA PhD
- Doctorate in Behavior Analysis

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- How do you start a program?
- Find a provider
- Provider does assessments!
 - VB-MAPP & ABLLS-R
 - What are they measuring?
 - ◆ Receptive language
 - ◆ Imitation
 - ◆ Vocal imitation
 - ◆ Requests
 - ◆ Visual performance
 - ◆ Labeling
 - ◆ Etc, etc, etc!

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- Assessment, data collection...now what?
- Individual Treatment Plan (ITP)
 - Each client has unique plan
 - Created based on deficits found through assessment
 - Usually updated every 6-12 months (depending on need of client and/or insurance requirements)

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- GREAT! Who pays for it?
- In Indiana, ABA is a medical therapy and is paid for primarily by health insurance or out-of-pocket.
- Indiana's Autism Insurance Mandate covers medical treatments for autism. The Mandate also defines autism as a neurological disorder. Neurological = medical.
- Says ABA must be covered with no age or dollar amount (the most generous in the country currently)
- Mandate applies to health insurance policies
 - Based in Indiana
 - Fully-funded
- For more detailed information, watch our webinar on Indiana's Insurance Mandate for Autism – under Training Tab, then Webinars

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- What if your policy isn't covered by the Mandate?
- Self-funded policies may choose to cover ABA
- Children's covers up to \$10,000/year
- Some centers accept Medicaid
- Can get some ABA under Medicaid Waiver – under IBI service
- Cost of full-time ABA prohibitive for out-of-pocket pay

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- This looks a lot like an educational approach. Can't the schools do it?
 - They don't in most cases (even after Due Process)
 - Goes against public school beliefs of inclusion, Least Restrictive Environment
 - ABA has bad rap in education (can't even mention in a Case Conference)
 - Some states do provide ABA in schools – it goes state by state.
- Goal of ABA centers: get the kids back in school.
 - Caveat: when possible.
 - Start ABA ASAP (kids as young as 18 months)
 - Recommended amount: 25-40 hours a week.

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- ABA now is the most recognized and scientifically supported treatment for autism.
 - While there is much controversy over the cause of autism, there have been remarkable advances in its treatment. In fact, study upon study shows that behavioral treatments rooted in applied behavioral analysis (ABA) yield significant positive results. *
 - Every child with autism is different; it is our job as parents to figure out our child's best path to reach their maximum potential. ABA may be part of that picture.
 - If interested in learning more about ABA or starting a program for your child, you can call ASK (317) 257-8683. We can help get you started.
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- **"Effective Treatments for Autism", Doreen Granpeesheh BCBA PhD. Autism Advocate, Fifth Edition, 2008.*

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- Any questions?