



What is ABA?

ABA stands for Applied Behavior Analysis. Currently, ABA is the only scientifically proven effective treatment for autism.

ABA is a science that is dedicated to understanding and improving socially significant behaviors and is focused on skill acquisition. It uses the principles of learning and motivation to increase skills and appropriate behaviors. ABA focuses on the idea that the consequences of what we do affect what we learn and what we will do in the future.

BCBAs (Board Certified Behavior Analysts) and LABAs (Licensed Applied Behavior Analysts) intervene to improve target behaviors while demonstrating a reliable relationship between the interventions and improvements. Data is collected and analyzed to see if interventions are working or if they need to be modified.

Individual programs are designed to address specific skills or behavior change procedures that can be maintained over time and generalized across multiple settings and people.

When addressing target behaviors, behavior therapists study the environment in which the behaviors are occurring. ABA focuses on observable behaviors, as opposed to what individuals may be thinking or feeling. Using Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and ongoing data collection, Behavior Analysts scientifically determine what factor of the environment is maintaining the behavior (also known as the FUNCTION of the behavior.) Using this information, Behavior Analysts develop interventions that address this same function to create a positive change in behavior.

When reducing inappropriate or challenging behaviors, behavior therapists always strive to teach an appropriate replacement behavior to engage in instead.





Functions of Behavior

If the function of the behavior is:	Do this:	Example:
Escape	Maintain the demand	At dinner time, your child runs away from the table. Correct response: Redirect him back to the table.
Access to tangibles	Deny access to the tangibles	Your child is engaging in a tantrum because they want the ipad. Correct response: Do not give them the iPad after having a tantrum.
Automatic Reinforcement	Replace the behavior	Your child is flapping their hands and arms while waiting in line at the store. Correct response: Redirect them to put their hands in their pockets.
Attention	Ignore the behavior	Your child is crying and they start throwing toys all over the house. Correct response: Ignore them, (maintain safety), have them clean up when they are calm.

Sometimes, a behavior can have more than one function!

Example: Your child is upset that they can't have cookies for dinner, so they start throwing food items all around the kitchen.

Functions: Access to tangibles and attention

Correct response: Ignore them, have them clean up when they are calm, and do not allow access to cookies.

ABS Behavioral Health Services encourages parents to collaborate with Behavior Analysts regularly. If you have questions or concerns about specific behaviors that are occurring at home, be sure to communicate these to your child's supervisor.
ABA is a team approach!

