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# Applied Behavior Analysis

English

Español

Applied behavior analysis is the treatment approach identified across research literature as showing the most evidence of positive impact on child developmental trajectory.

Behavior analysis is the scientific study of behavior. ABA is the application of the principles of learning and motivation from behavior analysis, and the procedures and technology derived from those principles, to the solution of problems of social significance.

An ABA program uses a systematic teaching approach that involves breaking skills down into small, easy-to-learn steps. Praise or other rewards are used to motivate the child. Multiple opportunities are provided to practice each skill, and progress is continuously measured to make an informed decision regarding adjustments to the child's treatment plan. ABA programs are specifically developed and designed to meet the developmental needs of each child.

Many people are familiar with the use of ABA in treating autism through an intensive comprehensive treatment program of 20-40 hours per week of direct therapy for two years or longer and with the goal of impacting all areas of development. However, ABA can be conducted across shorter periods as well as across the person's lifetime (for example, a teenager who needs to be desensitized to going to the dentist). The level and intensity of

programming should be driven by the child's needs.

A variety of ABA techniques have been developed for building useful skills in people with autism – from toddlers through adulthood. Some of these techniques include:

- Reinforcement
- Shaping
- Chaining
- Modeling
- Prompting
- Fading
- Discrimination learning
- Task analysis using teaching formats such as discrete trial teaching.

ABA can be used to understand and teach language, treat challenging behavior, teach daily living skills and increase skill acquisition in other developmental areas.

ABA therapy can be provided in many settings, including home, school, clinic or community locations the person frequents. The goals and treatment plan used in these settings might differ. In an educational setting, the focus is on teaching and achieving educational goals aligned with state curriculum standards. When services are provided in clinics, community and home settings, the focus is on teaching functional skills and generalization of skills learned in clinical and educational settings in the natural environment.

## Resources

- [Children's Autism Overview \(PDF\)](#)
- [Texas Autism Research and Resource Center\(link is external\)](#)

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