

## **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Services: What are some questions I should ask?**

*Below are some of the questions that individuals/caregivers might ask potential home or clinic-based ABA service providers. You are your child's best advocate. Advocate for services that are person-centered and evidence-based. Today's ABA emphasizes the development of meaningful skills that lead to individually determined forms of self-advocacy and empowerment. Compassion, connection and happiness are indicators to look for within the behavior analytic teaching and learning context.*

### **What matters most?**

If you had to pick three overall outcomes that matter most for a child like mine, what would those be?

### **Getting started with services:**

- Do you have a waitlist for services, and approximately how long is your wait?
- Does your agency have an age limit or age cap for services?
- Do you accept  (insert yours here)  insurance funder?
- For services to be authorized, do you need an autism evaluation completed by an MD or PhD level licensed psychologist?
- When we are ready to get started with services, what is the basic process and timeline?
- Once you accept my child off your waiting list and the assessment is complete, what is a reasonable timeframe in which to expect staff to begin services?
- We are also receiving NC Innovations Waiver services. How will this work with ABA?

### **Staffing and supervision:**

- Do you have Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) working in your agency?
- In addition to behavior analysis, what other relevant areas of expertise, licensure or training do your staff possess?
- Are all your behavior technicians certified as Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs)?
- Please describe the process for training and supervising the behavior technicians/front line staff who are working with my child.
- How often will I see the BCBA who supervises this case?
- How many cases does each BCBA oversee? In other words, what is a BCBA's typical caseload size?
- If I have a concern or issue regarding the RBT or BCBA working with my child, who is my next point of contact?

- (If applicable) Do you provide language translation and interpretation services?
- Could you tell me about the typical RBT/BCBA retention at your company? Can I expect my child to have consistent staff throughout treatment?
- What is your policy when an RBT cancels a session? Also, what if I need to cancel a session?

**Initial assessment process:**

- What is involved in the assessment process? What does this look like, and how long does it take?
- What information sources and factors do you consider when developing a treatment plan?
- What assessment tool(s) and curricula might you use for a child like mine?
- Once the initial assessment and treatment plan document is complete, how long will it take for sessions to get started?

**Intervention:**

- What is the typical frequency and length of a session?
- My toddler was recently diagnosed. What are a few examples of goals that you might address with a child like mine?
- My child is conversational in their language and very intelligent. But they struggle with social peer interactions and managing emotions. What are a few examples of goals that you might address with a child like mine?
- My adolescent or adult child has high support needs and is substantially impacted by their autism. What are a few examples of goals that you might address?
- My adolescent child will graduate from high school with a standard diploma in a few years. They want to go on to college. What are a few examples of goals that you might address with a child like mine?
- Please describe what a typical intervention session with my child might look like. Paint that picture for me.
- (If applicable to your situation), what is your experience in dealing with severe problem behavior?
- How often will the BCBA directly observe treatment sessions?
- What documentation and data do you collect during services?
- How long are individuals typically enrolled in your program?

- What does the typical transition and discharge process look like for your agency (e.g., gradual step down in hours, increase in caregiver collaboration efforts, connection to other resources)?

**Place of service:**

- Is this a home- or clinic-based service?
- If at home, is there a designated space in the home where the service should happen?
- If in a clinic, am I able to observe sessions?
- Can services also happen out in the community (e.g., at parks, volunteer sites, library)?
- Can you provide this service in my child's classroom?

**Collaboration with caregivers and other providers:**

- If services are happening at home, should we (as parents/caregivers) participate in every session? What are we supposed to do when services are happening?
- If services are happening in a clinic setting, am I able to periodically observe those sessions?
- How often will the BCBA directly meet with and coach me so I learn strategies to support my child? Where does this collaboration and coaching happen?
- How often will I be updated on progress, and how will this information typically be shared with me?
- Describe the ways you collaborate with other professionals who support my child (therapists, school system staff, medical providers, etc.).
- If my child will be served in a traditional preschool/daycare or K-12 school setting, can you describe a general plan for fading your supports over time?

**Financial impact:**

- Do you help with the insurance process (i.e., do you file the insurance claims for the family and do you help to clarify their out-of-pocket costs such as deductibles, co-insurance, co-pays, etc.)?
- Will you provide information about my insurance benefit, including any age or dollar caps?
- Do you monitor the drain down of my insurance benefit so I will be alerted when my funds are about to be exhausted?
- If I am paying privately for these services, how much does each service type cost per hour? What might I expect to pay per month? How often am I billed for services?