

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?