

What

is

ABA?

ABA Overview, Myths vs. Facts



John Watson

1878-1958



B.F. Skinner

1904-1990



Ivan Pavlov

1849-1936

i:ON Academy ABA

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What's Inside?



**1. The Science of Behavior :
Understanding ABA**



**2. What Does ABA Therapy Look
Like?**



3. Who Can Benefit from ABA?



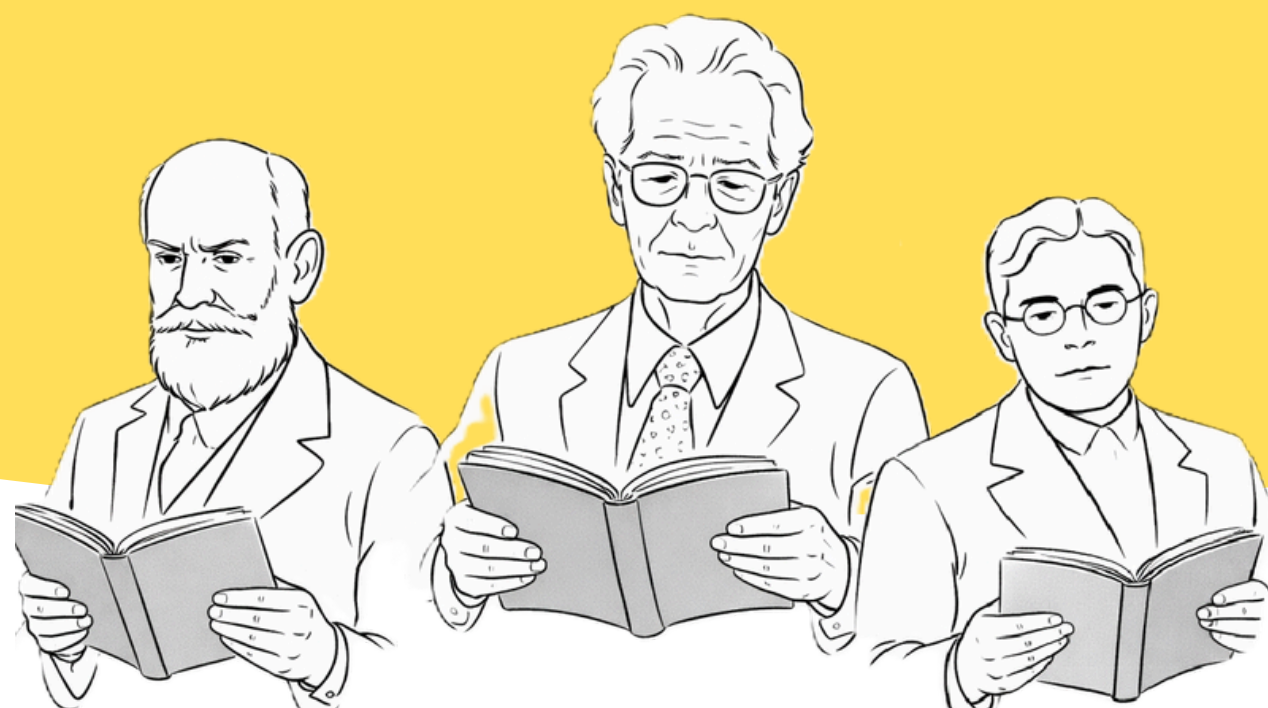
4. Who provides ABA?



**5. How Is ABA Different from
Other Therapies?**



**6. FAQs for Parents Getting
Started with ABA**



Welcome to i:ON Academy ABA!

Navigating your child's development and behavior and finding the right information can sometimes feel overwhelming.

At i:ON Academy ABA, we created this guide to support families who are looking for clear, trustworthy information and professional guidance along the way.

We hope this booklet helps you better understand ABA therapy and serves as a meaningful first step in your child's journey of growth.

– i:ON Academy ABA



What is ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis)?

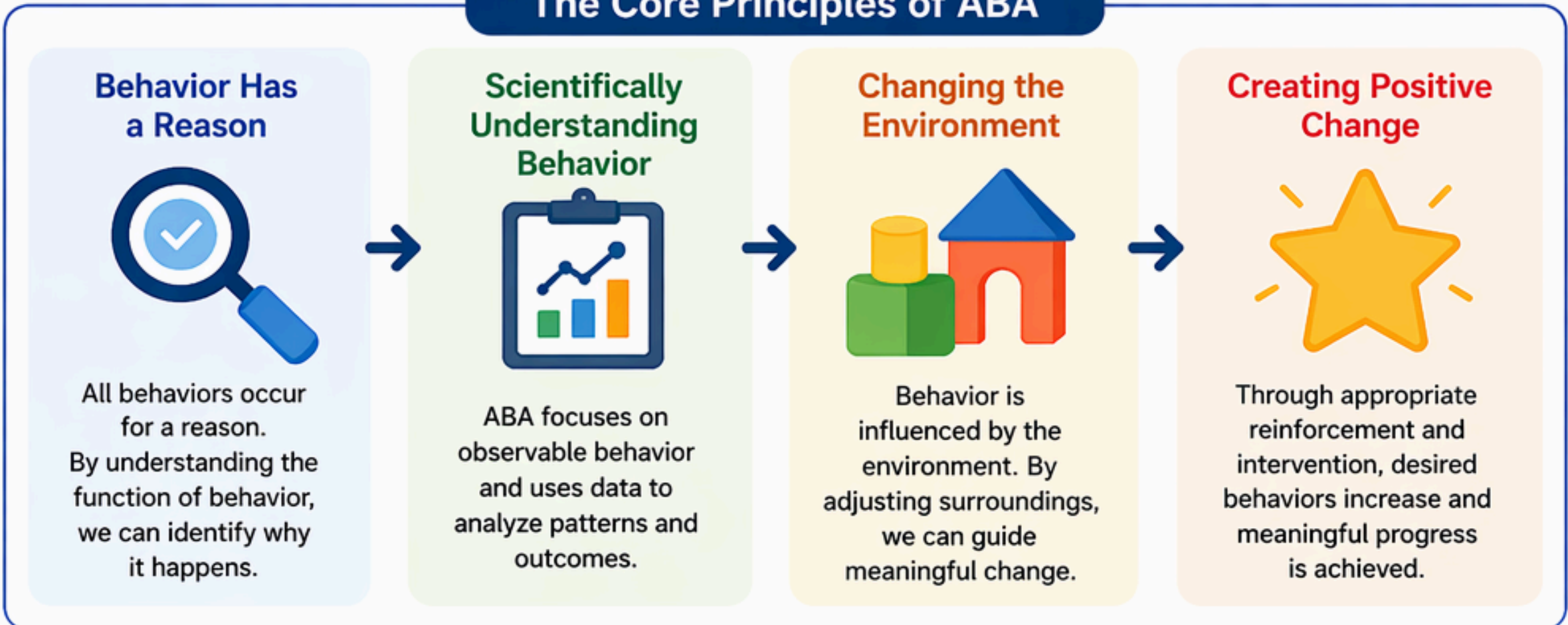
ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) is based on the behavioral theories of B. F. Skinner.

It is a **scientific approach** to **understanding behavior** and creating **positive change** by adjusting the **environment**.



B. F. Skinner (1904–1990)

The Core Principles of ABA



ABA's Scientific Approach & Core Concepts



ABA is a science of behavior developed since the early 20th century.



Behavior is influenced by environmental factors.



Skills are learned and strengthened through reinforcement.

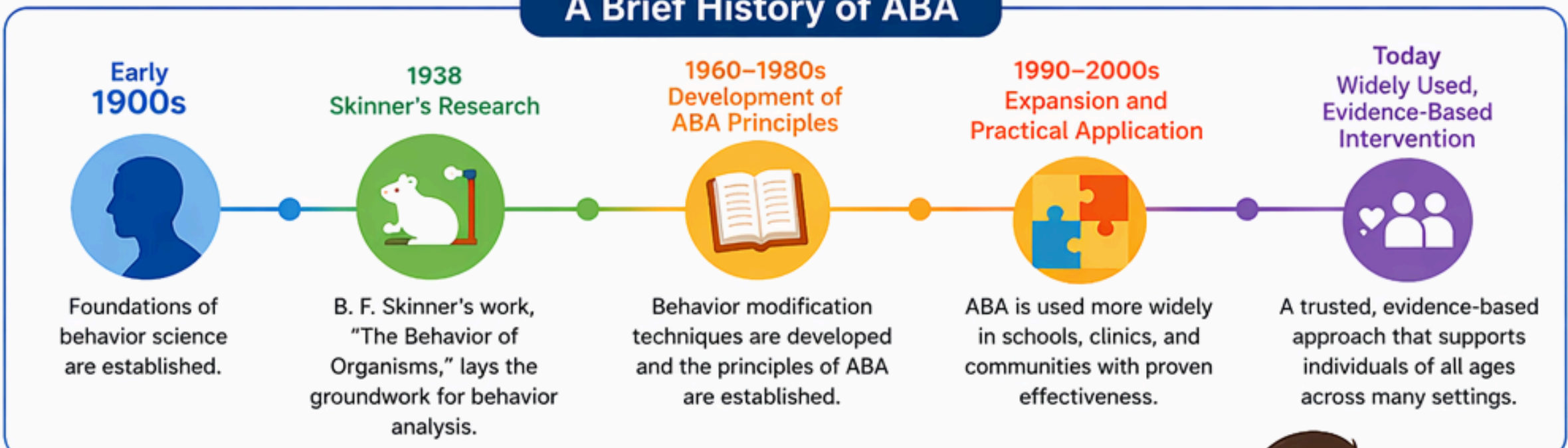


Behavior change occurs through consistent, data-based intervention.



Proven effective across many settings and populations.

A Brief History of ABA



ABA supports children in reaching their full potential and helps them live more **independent, meaningful lives**.



WHAT IS ABC DATA?

ABC data is one of the most fundamental tools in ABA for analyzing behavior.

By systematically recording the A (Antecedent), B (Behavior), and C (Consequence), we can identify the function of behavior and plan effective interventions that can decrease or increase behavior.

ABC DATA EXAMPLE		
A ANTECEDENT	B BEHAVIOR	C CONSEQUENCE
What happens before the behavior	What the behavior looks like	What happens after the behavior

* Understanding these three parts helps us identify the function of behavior!

A Antecedent

(What happens before the behavior)

The events or situation that occur right before the behavior

Let's clean up now.

- What happened right before?
- Who was present?
- What was the environment like?

EXAMPLES

- ✓ Asked to clean up toys
- ✓ Transition to a new activity
- ✓ Given a difficult task
- ✓ Denied a request

B Behavior

(What the behavior looks like)

Observable and measurable actions

- What exactly did the child do?
- Describe only what you can see.

EXAMPLES

- ✓ Crying
- ✓ Throwing items
- ✓ Yelling / Screaming
- ✓ Hitting

C Consequence

(What happens after the behavior)

The response or change that occurs after the behavior

Okay, you can have a break.

- What happened immediately after?
- How did others respond?
- What changed as a result?

EXAMPLES

- ✓ Given attention (praise, comfort)
- ✓ Task removed / Escaped
- ✓ Got a preferred item or activity
- ✓ Nothing changed

By looking at the full ABC pattern, we can understand WHY the behavior occurs (its function).

A → B → C
Antecedent → Behavior → Consequence

This helps us choose the right strategies to decrease or increase behavior.

COMMON FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR (EXAMPLES)

<p>ESCAPE / AVOIDANCE</p> <p>To get out of or avoid something unwanted</p>	<p>ATTENTION</p> <p>To get attention from others (positive or negative)</p>	<p>ACCESS TO TANGIBLES</p> <p>To get access to something desirable</p>	<p>SENSORY / AUTOMATIC</p> <p>To get sensory input or stimulation</p>
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When we understand the function, we can plan the right intervention.

- 1. Identify the Function**

Use ABC data to determine why the behavior is occurring.
- 2. Choose Appropriate Strategies**

Select evidence-based strategies to address the function.
- 3. Teach Replacement Behavior**

Teach a more appropriate way for the child to get their needs met, and reinforce the new skill.

DATA TIPS!

- Be objective.** Write what you see, not what you think or feel.
- Be specific.** Focus on facts, not general statements.
- Record right away.** Write down the data as soon as possible after the behavior.
- Be consistent.** Use the same format and criteria every time you collect data.

2. What Does ABA Therapy Look Like?

What Does ABA Therapy Look Like?

ABA therapy is a personalized approach that promotes positive change and meaningful growth in your child.



HOW DOES THERAPY WORK?

1 Assessment



We assess your child to understand their strengths, challenges, and the reasons behind behaviors.

2 Goal Setting



We set meaningful, individualized goals that are specific and measurable.

3 Treatment Planning



Based on assessment results, we create a personalized plan for your child.

4 Implementation



Our therapists use evidence-based strategies during structured activities and routines.

5 Data Review & Adjustment



We regularly review your child's progress and adjust goals and strategies as needed.



Treatment is individualized and adjusted as your child progresses, ensuring the best possible outcomes.

HOW IS THERAPY TIME SPENT?



Communication Skills

Building language, expressive and receptive skills.



Daily Living Skills

Practicing skills for independence in daily routines.



Social Skills

Learning to interact, take turns, and build relationships with others.



Reducing Challenging Behaviors

Teaching appropriate replacement skills and coping strategies.



Academic & Cognitive Skills

Supporting readiness skills, attention, memory, and problem-solving.



Through play, learning, and everyday routines, children learn in natural and enjoyable ways!

WHERE DOES THERAPY HAPPEN?



In Various Settings

Therapy may take place at home, school, in the community, or other environments where your child spends time.



With Trained Professionals

Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) design and supervise the therapy plan, and trained therapists implement it.



Family Involvement

We work closely with families. Your involvement helps support your child's success every day.

PARENTS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE!

Your interest and participation at home help your child make faster and more meaningful progress.



Understand therapy goals and strategies.



Apply skills in daily routines and natural environments.



Encourage and celebrate your child's small achievements.



Communicate with professionals and share feedback.



Support your child with patience and understanding.



"Your love and interest are the greatest support for your child."



ABA therapy helps children unlock their potential and creates a meaningful, happy life for the whole family.



2. What Does ABA Therapy Look Like?

ABA is not a one-size-fits-all approach.

There are many evidence-based treatment methods used in the right way for each child.



💡 KEEP IN MIND!

- ✓ ABA is not about punishment or strict, rigid methods.
- ✓ Effective ABA is based on ongoing learning and data, and should be adjusted according to the child's needs and progress.

ABA is based on scientific principles and uses a variety of strategic interventions (also called the Umbrella Term) that are tailored to each child's unique characteristics and goals.



KEY ABA TREATMENT APPROACHES

1 DTT (Discrete Trial Training)

Structured, one-on-one teaching



- ✓ Breaks skills into small, teachable steps.
- ✓ Uses clear instructions, prompting, and reinforcement.

EXAMPLE

"What's this?" → "Apple" → Praise & reward

2 NET (Natural Environment Teaching)

Learning through everyday routines and play



- ✓ Teaches skills in natural situations that are meaningful to the child.
- ✓ Uses the child's interests to promote motivation and learning.

EXAMPLE

During family play time, we teach "more" when the child wants a toy.

3 PRT (Pivotal Response Treatment)

Focusing on pivotal skills that lead to broad improvements



- ✓ Focuses on key areas like motivation.
- ✓ Supports improvements in multiple developmental areas.

EXAMPLE

Increase choice-making
→ More engagement → More language

4 FCT (Functional Communication Training)

Teaching alternative communication for challenging behavior



- ✓ Identifies the function of the behavior.
- ✓ Teaches a more appropriate and effective way to communicate.

EXAMPLE

Crying → "Help, please" /
Hitting → "I don't like it"

5 Incidental Teaching

Teaching in spontaneous, natural moments



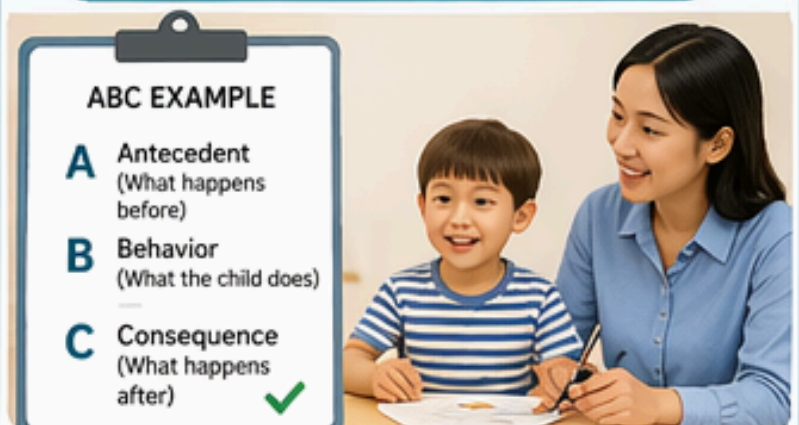
- ✓ Takes advantage of the child's interest or need in the moment.
- ✓ Builds skills during daily routines and activities.

EXAMPLE

Child reaches for a snack →
Prompt "Please" → Give snack

6 BIP (Behavior Intervention Plan)

Understanding the reason behind behavior and teaching new skills



ABC EXAMPLE

- A** Antecedent (What happens before)
- B** Behavior (What the child does)
- C** Consequence (What happens after)

- ✓ Analyzes behavior using the ABC model.
- ✓ Teaches new skills to prevent challenging behaviors and support success.

EXAMPLE

Identify the reason (e.g., escape from task)
→ Teach skills + Adjust environment
→ Reduce challenging behavior



When the right strategies are used, children can grow, learn, and thrive.

Every child. Every family. Every day.

2. What Does ABA Therapy Look Like?

HOW CAN ABA THERAPY HELP YOUR CHILD?



ABA therapy is a scientific approach that brings about meaningful and positive changes in your child's behavior.



A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) uses **functional behavior assessment (FBA)** to:

- ✓ Analyze the environment where the target behavior occurs
- ✓ Identify what maintains the behavior (i.e., the **function of the behavior**) in a scientific and objective way.



Then, they design and implement a program that teaches **alternative skills** with the same function to replace the problem behavior.

WHAT ARE SOCIALLY SIGNIFICANT BEHAVIORS?

These are behaviors that interfere with a child's **learning** or **social interactions**, or put their **safety** at risk.



Tantrums, Aggression, Self-Injury



Task Refusal, Avoidance, Procrastination



Social Withdrawal, Difficulty with Social Interaction



Difficulty Coping with Transitions

Reducing these behaviors and teaching more appropriate, functional behaviors is a key goal of ABA therapy.

WITH ABA THERAPY, THESE POSITIVE CHANGES CAN HAPPEN!



Communication Improves

Expressing needs, wants, and feelings becomes easier.



Social Skills Grow

Building positive relationships and interacting with others becomes easier.



Learning Abilities Increase

Better attention, memory, and academic skills.



Independence Increases

More self-help skills and greater confidence in daily life.



Problem Behaviors Decrease

Challenging behaviors decrease, and positive behaviors increase.

PARENTS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE!



Understand the therapy goals and strategies.



Apply strategies consistently at home.



Celebrate small wins and progress.



Your love and encouragement make a big difference.

ABA helps unlock your child's potential and creates a happy, meaningful life for the whole family.



ABA is Applied Everywhere in Life

— Wherever behavior change is needed —

1 Development & Clinical Areas

-  **Early Childhood Development**
Supporting developmental milestones and early learning
-  **Sleep, Eating, and Daily Routines**
Building healthy habits and independence
-  **Brain Injury Rehabilitation**
Improving cognitive and functional skills
-  **Child Abuse Prevention**
Teaching safety skills and protective behaviors

2 Mental Health & Treatment

-  **Applied Behavior Analysis (ACT, FAP, etc.)**
Supporting emotional and behavioral regulation
-  **Gerontology (Aging & Older Adults)**
Improving quality of life and daily functioning
-  **Substance Use Disorders**
Reducing harmful behaviors and building healthy habits

3 Education & Growth

-  **Education (School Settings)**
Improving learning, focus, and classroom behavior
-  **Sports Psychology**
Enhancing performance, motivation, and discipline

4 Society & Organizations

-  **Organizational Behavior Management (OBM)**
Improving employee performance and workplace systems
-  **Public Health**
Promoting healthy behaviors across communities
-  **Environmental Sustainability**
Encouraging eco-friendly and responsible behaviors

5 Health & Lifestyle

-  **Exercise & Health Habits**
Building consistent, healthy routines
-  **Weight Management & Nutrition**
Supporting sustainable lifestyle changes

ABA is Present in Everyday Life







-  At Home
-  At School
-  At Work
-  In the Community
-  In Society

ABA is used in everywhere where that has behaviors.

3. Who Can Benefit from ABA?

However, to receive insurance for ABA therapy, the individual must meet the diagnostic criteria for **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**.

Diagnostic Criteria for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) According to DSM-5

SEVERITY LEVEL	SOCIAL COMMUNICATION	RESTRICTED & REPETITIVE BEHAVIORS
<p>Level 3</p> <p>“Very Substantial Support Needed”</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills cause severe impairments in functioning. Very limited initiation of social interactions, and minimal response to social overtures from others. <p>Example</p>  Rarely uses words that are functional  May not respond to social interactions  May have great difficulty initiating interactions and maintaining contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflexibility of behavior, extreme difficulty coping with change. Restricted/repetitive behaviors are present in all areas of life and significantly interfere with functioning. Great distress/difficulty changing focus or actions. 
<p>Level 2</p> <p>“Substantial Support Needed”</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marked deficits in verbal and nonverbal social communication skills; social impairments are obvious even with supports in place. Limited initiation of social interactions and reduced/abnormal responses to social overtures from others. <p>Example</p>  Uses simple phrases  Responds only to certain social initiations  Odd or limited interest in social interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflexibility of behavior, difficulty coping with change. Restricted/repetitive behaviors appear in multiple contexts and cause impairment. Distress or difficulty changing focus or actions. 
<p>Level 1</p> <p>“Support Needed”</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Without supports in place, deficits in social communication cause noticeable impairments. Difficulty initiating social interactions and clear examples of atypical or unsuccessful responses. May appear to have decreased interest in social interactions. <p>Example</p>  May struggle with back-and-forth conversation  May have less interest in interacting  May have difficulty making and keeping friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inflexibility causes significant interference in one or more contexts. Difficulties switching between activities. Organizational and planning problems hamper independence. 



These criteria help professionals determine the level of support needed and guide the development of effective, individualized treatment plans.

DOES ABA THERAPY, COVERED BY INSURANCE?



..... Here's a quick guide to insurance coverage for ABA.

1 THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTOR: A DIAGNOSIS (ASD Diagnosis)



If you want insurance to cover ABA, your child must have a formal diagnosis of **Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)**.

WHO CAN PROVIDE A DIAGNOSIS?



Developmental Pediatrician



Psychologist



Neurologist / Psychiatrist

- ✓ A formal evaluation report from one of these professionals is required.

2 THE "MEDICAL NECESSITY" DETERMINATION



"It's not just about being helpful—it's about being necessary." A doctor must determine that ABA therapy is medically necessary for your child."

CRITERIA MAY INCLUDE:

- Challenges with behavior, social skills, or communication
- A written Treatment Plan
- Includes a BCBA evaluation

Your insurance company will review and approve this.

3 YOUR INSURANCE PLAN MUST INCLUDE ABA

Not all insurance plans are the same. Make sure your plan includes ABA coverage.

TYPICAL PLANS THAT MAY COVER ABA



Most Private Insurance (e.g., BCBS, Aetna, Cigna, etc.)
→ May Cover



Marketplace Plans (ACA / Obamacare)
→ May Include (Essential Health Benefit)



Texas Medicaid (Texas Medicaid)
→ Covers ABA since 2022

! BUT, BE CAREFUL!

- ✗ Self-funded plans (employer-funded insurance) → May NOT cover
- ✗ Some plans have limits or extra conditions

4 AGE & DIAGNOSIS TIMING (TEXAS GUIDELINE)

In Texas, getting a diagnosis before age 10 may improve your insurance coverage.



Diagnosed before age 10 → More likely to be covered

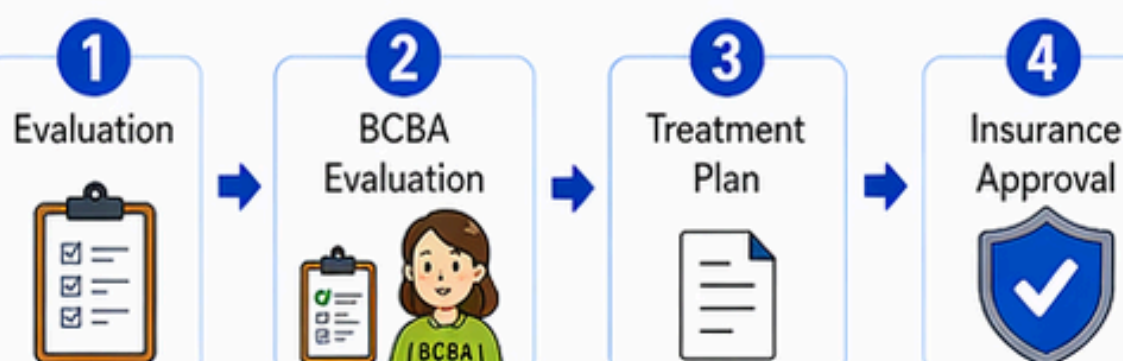


Diagnosed at age 10 or older → May face financial limits or restrictions



5 PRE-AUTHORIZATION (AUTHORIZATION) IS REQUIRED!

THE APPROVAL PROCESS (We can help!)



WHO PROVIDES ABA?



★ ABA is a **team effort!** Many professionals work together to support your child's growth and success.

ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) is a science-based approach to understanding behavior and teaching new skills that improve quality of life.



1 BOARD CERTIFIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSTS (BCBAs)

The clinical leaders of ABA therapy.

- ✓ Assess and analyze behavior
- ✓ Design individualized treatment plans
- ✓ Oversee implementation and monitor progress
- ✓ Make clinical, evidence-based decisions
- ✓ Train and support families and team members



BCBAs ensure that treatment is effective, ethical, and tailored to your child's needs.



2 REGISTERED BEHAVIOR TECHNICIANS (RBTs)

The direct implementers of ABA therapy.

- ✓ Work directly with your child one-on-one or in small groups
- ✓ Teach skills and implement behavior plans
- ✓ Collect data and track progress
- ✓ Work under the supervision of a BCBA



RBTs bring plans to life through everyday teaching, support, and encouragement.

3 THE ABA TEAM WORKS TOGETHER

A collaborative team approach leads to the best outcomes for your child.



BCBA

Plans, analyzes, and makes clinical decisions



RBT

Implements the plan and collects data



FAMILY

Shares insights, practices skills, and supports generalization



TEACHERS & OTHER PROVIDERS

Collaborate and support skills in other environments



Open communication and teamwork help your child grow and succeed!

WHERE CAN ABA TAKE PLACE?



AT HOME

Building skills in natural routines and everyday activities.



AT SCHOOL

Supporting learning and behavior in the classroom setting.



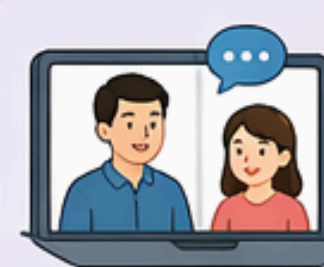
IN CLINICS

Structured environment for focused teaching and practice.



IN THE COMMUNITY

Practicing skills in real-life situations like stores, parks, and restaurants.



VIA TELEHEALTH

Accessing services remotely when appropriate and available.



AND MORE!

ABA can be flexible to fit your child's unique needs.



Every moment is an opportunity to learn.
With the right team and support,
your child can reach their potential and thrive!



5. How Is ABA Different from Other Therapies?

ABA vs OT vs Speech vs Play Therapy



Each therapy supports different areas of your child's development.



Therapy is not a competition.
It's about working together for your child.
Choose the support your child needs!

1. ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis)



Focuses on behavior and learning.

Applies principles of learning to increase helpful behaviors and reduce behaviors that interfere with learning or daily life.

What it helps with

- Communication (requesting, expressing needs)
- Social skills & interactions
- Daily living skills
- Attention, focus
- Self-regulation, behavior

Examples

- ★ Teaching a child to ask for help instead of having a tantrum
- ★ Encouraging positive behaviors like sitting and following directions
- ★ Breaking tasks into small steps and reinforcing success

2. OT (Occupational Therapy)



Focuses on daily living skills and independence.

Helps children build the skills they need for everyday tasks and to function as independently as possible.

What it helps with

- Self-care (eating, dressing, bathing, etc.)
- Sensory processing (touch, movement, sounds)
- Fine motor skills (writing, cutting, using tools)
- Gross motor skills (balance, coordination)
- Planning and organization

Examples

- ★ Helping a child get dressed independently
- ★ Improving hand strength for writing
- ★ Practicing balance and motor skills

3. Speech Therapy (Speech-Language Therapy)



Focuses on communication and language.

Helps children understand and use language, express themselves, and improve communication skills.

What it helps with

- Understanding (following directions, answering questions)
- Expressing (words, sentences, sharing ideas)
- Speech sound production (articulation)
- Fluency (stuttering, smooth speech)
- Social communication (conversations, taking turns)
- AAC (Augmentative & Alternative Communication)

Examples

- ★ Teaching a child to say "I want..." instead of crying
- ★ Helping with pronunciation and speech clarity
- ★ Building vocabulary to express needs and feelings

4. Play Therapy (Play Therapy)



Focuses on emotions and relationships.

Helps children express feelings, build self-esteem, and heal from emotional challenges through play.

What it helps with

- Emotional expression
- Building self-esteem and confidence
- Managing stress and anxiety
- Processing and trauma
- Strengthening relationships

Examples

- ★ Helping a child express and understand feelings through play
- ★ Working through anxiety or difficult experiences
- ★ Building confidence and self-acceptance

Let's Compare!

	ABA	OT	Speech Therapy	Play Therapy
Main Goal	Promote positive behavior change	Build independence in daily tasks and skills	Develop communication skills	Support emotional well-being & healing
What It Targets	Behavior and learning	Daily living and motor skills	Speaking and understanding language	Emotions and relationships
Key Areas	Behavior, learning, social skills, communication, self-care, self-regulation	Self-care, sensory processing, fine & gross motor, coordination, organization	Speech, language, vocabulary, fluency, social communication, AAC	Emotions, trauma, self-esteem, relationships, stress management
How It Helps	Teaches skills, encourages positive behaviors, reduces challenging behaviors	Builds practical skills and independence for everyday life	Improves communication so children can express needs and connect with others	Provides a safe space to heal, express, and grow emotionally



- ✓ Start with your child's unique strengths and needs.
- ✓ Different therapies can work together.
- ✓ The best team is the one that supports your child and your family.
- ✓ Every step forward, no matter how small, is progress! ♥





PARENT FAQ: GETTING STARTED WITH ABA



♥ Answers to the most common questions families have ♥

1 My child shows challenging behaviors. Can ABA help at school?



GOOD NEWS!

- ✓ ABA services can be provided in various settings, including school.
- ✓ However, school-based services may require approval or coordination.
- ✓ Some schools allow observation but limit direct intervention.



We collaborate with schools to support your child whenever possible.

2 My child was diagnosed later... Is it too late to start ABA?



IT'S NEVER TOO LATE!

- ✓ It's never too late to benefit from ABA.
- ✓ ABA supports children at different ages and developmental levels.
- ✓ A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) will assess your child's current skills and needs and create an individualized plan.



The earlier the support, the better—but meaningful progress can happen at any time.

3 Does every child need intensive therapy?



NOT ALWAYS!

Therapy intensity depends on:



Your child's needs



Family goals



Clinical recommendations



ABA is flexible and tailored—from focused support to more intensive programs.

4 Can parents observe sessions? How involved can we be?



PARENT INVOLVEMENT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE!

- Observe sessions
- Learn strategies
- Practice skills at home



Parent participation leads to faster and more meaningful progress.



Every child is unique.

The most important step is finding the right support for your child and your family.





The image is a contact card for i:ON Academy ABA. It features a light yellow background with decorative leaf and heart motifs. The card is enclosed in a rounded rectangular frame. At the top left is a lightbulb icon with 'i:ON' inside. To its right is the text 'i:ON Academy ABA'. Below this are four rows of contact information, each with an icon in a circle on the left and text on the right, separated by a vertical line. The icons are a location pin, a telephone, an envelope, and a globe. The text includes the address, phone number, email, and website. At the bottom center of the card is a small heart icon.

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