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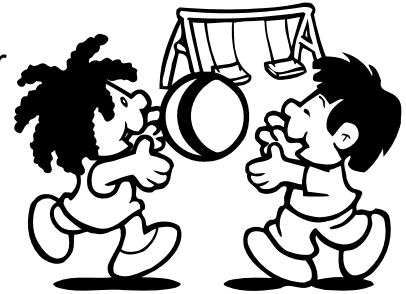


Applied Behavior Analysis

By Natalie J. Dahl, MS, CCC-SLP

What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?

To understand Applied Behavior Analysis better, let's first look at the part of the phrase that says "Behavior Analysis." This focuses on the principles that describe how learning happens. There are many of these principles, such as positive reinforcement or negative reinforcement that can increase "good" behaviors and decrease "bad" behaviors. When these principles are applied to bring about meaningful change in behavior, this is called "Applied Behavior Analysis," or ABA.



Applied Behavior Analysis has been around since the 1960s. This type of therapy can be used in structured situations, like in a classroom lesson, or in everyday situations, such as on the school playground. It can be implemented in small groups or during one-on-one instruction.

Who Can Benefit from ABA Therapy?

ABA is typically used with children, teens, and adults who have autism. It has been recognized as a safe and effective intervention that can help develop basic skills such as listening and looking, as well as complex skills such as holding conversations and taking others' perspectives.

ABA Therapy is a complex treatment and has many steps. But the first step is to analyze the behavior. This can easily be done using the ABC Model:

- **A = Antecedent:** This is what happens right before a behavior occurs. It could be a request for a child to complete an action.
- **B = Behavior:** This is a behavior, or response, from the child. It could be a successful performance, noncompliance, or no response.
- **C = Consequence:** This could be a positive reinforcement like a treat or verbal praise or a negative response such as "No!"

As an example, let's pretend that David is learning how maintain eye contact with a conversational partner. His therapist (or other qualified professional) might follow the ABC Model like this:

- A: "David, look at me."
- B: David successfully looks at the therapist and maintains eye contact.
- C: David receives a goldfish cracker, one of his favorite snacks.

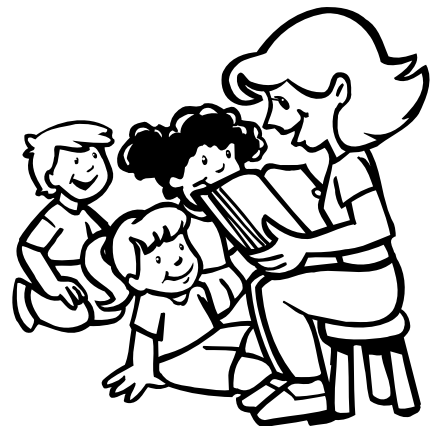
Who Can Provide ABA Therapy?

Just as a specific medical treatment should be provided by a qualified doctor, ABA therapy programs should be provided by qualified professionals. These can be licensed clinical psychologists or behavior analysts with specific training in ABA therapy.

"Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)," Autism Speaks, accessed March 12, 2018, <https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/treatment/applied-behavior-analysis-aba>.

"Applied Behavior Analysis and Communication Services," ASHA, accessed December 4, 2017, <https://www.asha.org/NJC/Applied-Behavior-Analysis-and-Communication-Services/>.

"Introduction to Applied Behavior Analysis," Autism-Help, accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.autism-help.org/intervention-applied-behavioral-analysis.htm>



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Autism & PDD Primary Social Skills - Behavior Book
[Item #LS-1536](#)