



## How Can A Psychologist Help?

Many professionals deliver competent ABA services. Psychologists can bring special training and qualifications to the child and the family. Psychologists can help you understand how family dynamics or unhealthy ideas could be contributing to difficulties using ABA in everyday situations. Psychologists with competencies in autism are equipped to confirm or make the diagnosis of autism, or to help differentiate autism from other problems. Psychologists are trained to assess your child on the whole, looking at all possible diagnoses to help get the right kinds of services—even when ABA isn't the best option.

### Credentials to Look for:

Many psychologists have training and competence in ABA. In addition, some psychologists voluntarily seek board certification from:

- American Board of Cognitive and Behavioral Psychology (ABCBP) [www.abpp.org](http://www.abpp.org)
- Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) [www.bacb.org](http://www.bacb.org)

## Who We Are

### About Us

The Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards is the alliance of state, provincial, and territorial agencies responsible for the licensure and certification of psychologists throughout the United States and Canada. ASPPB established the Applied Behavior Analysis Task Force to examine the relationship between Psychology and Applied Behavior Analysis and provide education about how psychologists can help.

### Finding an ABA Competent

#### Psychologist

As ASPPB's primary mandate is to assist member regulatory boards/Colleges to fulfill their role of public protection, we are unable to offer provider referrals. We do suggest that you take the following steps:

1. Check to see that the provider you are considering has a license and no history of discipline by going to the ASPPB website and using the "Look Up A License" feature.
2. Check your state, provincial, or national psychology organizations (APA, CPA) for locator services that can help you find a licensed psychologist with the right area of specialty.
3. If you experience difficulty, you may also contact the state or provincial regulatory body through the ASPPB website to find out how to contact a specific state, provincial or national association.

### Contact Us



#### ASPPB

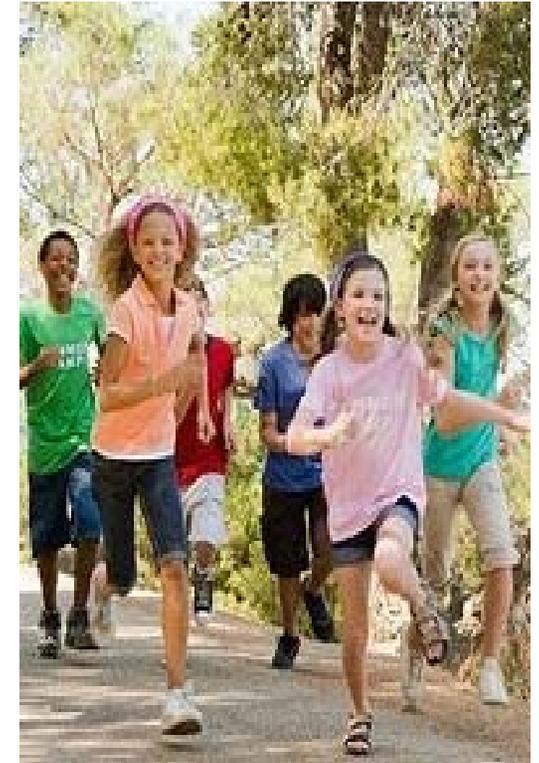
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## A PARENT'S GUIDE TO APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA)



## What is Applied Behavior Analysis?

Parents usually seek Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services if their children are diagnosed on the autism spectrum, have intellectual/developmental disabilities, or chronically behave in ways that limit their emotional, social, and/or academic growth. ABA can help your child do better with school tasks and language skills by teaching him or her more appropriate social, motor, and verbal behaviors. ABA does this by helping you closely measure and monitor behaviors, as well as those events that precede and follow them.

Children with autism respond particularly well to an ABA approach, as they often need help to stop problematic behaviors such as hurting themselves through banging their heads or picking their skin, destroying things, hurting others, flapping their hands, or running away. A psychologist who is competent with ABA can help your child with autism reduce those behaviors through teaching skills like expressive communication, understanding everyday routines, and coping with transitions and change.

## What Can I Expect from ABA?

Our Guidelines will help you find a psychologist who competently provides ABA:

**Real-Life problems:** Psychologists make sure that the ABA plan focuses on behaviors and situations that make a difference in the every-day life of the person being treated. ABA focuses on changes that make the person's life better off if treatment works.

**Measurable behaviors:** Psychologists make it clear, in easy-to-understand terms that the ABA plan focuses on behaviors. ABA requires that you understand what behaviors will change, and how the change is measured. ABA plans also include ways to make sure that behaviors are measured consistently, or in a reliable way.

**Behavioral analysis:** Psychologists use clear ways of showing that the ABA intervention made a difference (rather than something else). There are two basic ways to analyze the effect of an ABA intervention: "withdrawal" and "multiple-baseline". These two methods are fairly complex, and can't be adequately explained in this document—but psychologists should be able to explain which one is being used, and what it will look like.

**Behavioral "technology":** Psychologists should explain to you exactly what behavioral techniques will be used in the ABA intervention. The explanation must be clear enough that, with some guidance, you can do the ABA intervention on your own. Look for specific details on what is being done to change behaviors.

**Behavioral concepts:** Psychologists should teach you not just what to do, but why you're doing it. ABA interventions in the real-world improve parenting or teaching skills by helping you to better understand what triggers behaviors and how to use consequences to learn new behaviors, strengthen existing behaviors, or change interfering behaviors.

**Important changes:** Psychologists work with you to make changes that are big enough, and important enough, to be worth the effort. When the intervention plan is written, make sure that you've been asked about what's important, and how much change is needed to be really helpful. ABA interventions are effective when they make a real difference.

**Durability:** Psychologists should explain how the ABA intervention can be used to make changes last, even after the intervention is finished. Durability includes not just lasting changes, but ones that show up in different situations.

**Graphics:** Psychologists should provide you with graphs that help you understand the ways the ABA interventions make a difference. The graphs usually show behaviors going up (or down) when the ABA strategies have been implemented. Be sure the psychologist explains terms like "baseline," "A-B-A design," etc. so that you can make sense of the graphs.

**Evidence-based:** Psychologists should review with you studies in the past that show how the ABA plan is based on scientific evidence. You should have confidence that science is the basis to believe that the ABA interventions have a strong likelihood of working.