WHAT IS ABA THERAPY?

**What is ABA Therapy?**

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is the application of the principles of behavior. ABA focuses on improving positive behaviors and eliminating negative behaviors in order to teach a variety of skills (communication, adaptive skills, feeding, toilet training).

Interventions using applied behavior analytic principles have long been established as effective approaches to increase appropriate behaviors and decrease problem behaviors for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD; National Autism Center, 2009; Wong et al., 2014).

**WHY DOES ABA WORK?**

Over 30 years of research has demonstrated the effectiveness of ABA for individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Children who receive early, intensive behavioral intervention (EIBI) have demonstrated positive improvements in their development.

Areas of improvement include: communication, socialization, following instructions, daily living skills, etc.

**WHY DO WE SPECIALIZE IN EARLY INTERVENTION?**

Research has demonstrated that the most effective treatment to improve outcomes (i.e., adaptive behaviors, communication skills, and cognitive abilities) for children with ASD is through comprehensive and intensive early intervention programs (Maglione, Gans, Das, Timbie, & Kasari, 2012). Early intervention services aim to bridge the gap between a child’s current functioning and that of their same age peers.

Current research encourages parents to obtain at least 25 hours of intervention per week across multiple years for their child in order to see the greatest gains (Maglione et al., 2012). Some children have been able to participate in regular education classrooms with little or no additional support following two or more years of early, intensive ABA services.

**WHAT ARE THE ABCS OF ABA?**

A - Antecedants

Antecedents are things or events that precede a behavior.

B - Behavior

Behavior is an observable and measurable action. Behavior does not refer to challenging behavior only. For example, eating, yelling, reading are all behaviors.

C - Consequences

Consequences are events that follow a behavior. Consequences are not always negative, they can be positive. For example, a child may receive an ice cream after standing in line quietly at the ice cream shop.
What is the benefit of center-based services?

Center-based services have shown to be superior to home-based services for mastery of program targets and rate of mastery (Dixon, Burns, Granpeesheh, Amarasinghe, Powell, & Linstead, 2017). Increased treatment hours increase the number of targets mastered.

Center-based services provide a more structured learning environment to train parents and caregivers. Furthermore, the quality and quantity of therapy supervision by board certified behavior analysts of direct care professionals is improved with center-based services.

What does an ABA therapy program entail?

ABA therapy at FAC is completely individualized. There are no cookie cutter, one size fits all, plans because each program is written to meet the individual needs of each child. A BCBA will design and oversee the program that involves the child’s skills, needs, deficits, interests, as well as family preferences. These are all used to determine treatment goals for the individual in different skill areas – everything from daily living skills to communication and language.

Goals are adjusted as the child progresses and the BCBA will meet regularly with the family for parent training that will help them apply what is being done successfully in the center to the home environment.

HOW MUCH THERAPY IS NEEDED?

During the assessment process, a trained clinician from FAC will determine a plan for how many hours of therapy they would recommend for your child to make progress.

In 2001, the National Research Council Report recommended a minimum of 25 hours per week.

In 2007, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommended 20 hours or more of active engagement in evidence-based interventions. We offer very flexible scheduling and do our best to accommodate what works best for each family.

IS ABA THERAPY COVERED BY INSURANCE?

FAC is very proud to have dedicated professionals who are devoted 100% to helping you navigate the terms of your insurance policy. Your type of plan determines which health benefits may be available to you and while new insurance laws in Florida sometimes make it difficult for novice providers to understand whether service will be covered.

FAC is well versed in the plans of all major carriers and can help you discover if yours includes an ABA benefit. If you aren’t sure if you have coverage, we can help.