

WHAT IS APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS?

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is the use of these techniques and principles to bring about meaningful and positive change in behavior.

Behavior analysis focuses on the principles that explain how learning takes place. Positive reinforcement is one such principle. When a behavior is followed by some sort of reward, the behavior is more likely to be repeated. Through decades of research, the field of behavior analysis has developed many techniques for increasing useful behaviors and reducing those that may cause harm or interfere with learning.

These techniques can be used in structured situations such as a classroom lesson as well as in "everyday" situations such as family dinnertime or the neighborhood playground. Some ABA therapy sessions involve one-on-one interaction between the behavior analyst and the participant. Group instruction can likewise prove useful.

Today, ABA is widely recognized as a safe and effective treatment for autism. It has been endorsed by a number of state and federal agencies, including the U.S. Surgeon General and the New York State Department of Health. Over the last decade, the nation has seen a particularly dramatic increase in the use of ABA to help persons with autism live happy and productive lives. In particular, ABA principles and techniques can foster basic skills such as looking, listening and imitating, as well as complex skills such as reading, conversing and understanding another person's perspective.

Such studies have demonstrated that many children with autism experience significant improvements in learning, reasoning, communication and adaptability when they participate in high-quality ABA programs. Some preschoolers who

participate in early intensive ABA for two or more years acquire sufficient skills to participate in regular classrooms with little or no additional support. Other children learn many important skills, but still need additional educational support to succeed in a classroom.

Planning and Ongoing Assessment

- * A qualified and trained behavior analyst designs and directly oversees the intervention.
- * The analyst's development of treatment goals stems from a detailed assessment of each learner's skills and preferences and may also include family goals.
- * Treatment goals and instruction are developmentally appropriate and target a broad range of skill areas such as communication, sociability, self-care, play and leisure, motor development and academic skills.
- * Goals emphasize skills that will enable learners to become independent and successful in both the short and long terms.
- * The instruction plan breaks down desired skills into manageable steps to be taught from the simplest (e.g. imitating single sounds) to the more complex (e.g. carrying on a conversation).
- * The intervention involves ongoing objective measurement of the learner's progress.
- * The behavior analyst frequently reviews information on the learner's progress and uses this to adjust procedures and goals as needed.
- * The analyst meets regularly with family members and program staff to plan ahead, review progress and make adjustments as needed.

ABA Techniques and Philosophy

- * The instructor uses a variety of behavior analytic procedures, some of which are directed by the instructor and others initiated by the learner.
- * Parents and/or other family members and caregivers receive training so they can support learning and skill practice throughout the day.
- * The learner's day is structured to provide many opportunities - both planned and naturally occurring - to acquire and practice skills in both structured and unstructured situations.
- * The learner receives an abundance of positive reinforcement for

demonstrating useful skills and socially appropriate behaviors. The emphasis is on positive social interactions and enjoyable learning.

* The learner receives no reinforcement for behaviors that pose harm or prevent learning.

<https://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism/treatment/applied-behavior-analysis-aba>