



City Pro Group, Inc.

Early Intervention and Preschool Special Education

General Overview of ABA

Often families are in shock or denial when their child initially receives a diagnosis of Autism. Before treatment begins, it is helpful to provide a clear explanation of the treatment and to dispel any misconceptions/myths they may have about Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy. This knowledge will help families become partners in their child's treatment with the goal of joining us in helping their child reach his or her full potential.

Below are some common concerns that parents have after their child has been diagnosed and some suggestions on how to reassure them that they are giving their child the most appropriate and scientifically proven treatment available.



If parents have additional concerns, please feel free to call us at City Pro at (718) 769-2698 and ask to speak with our ABA Program Supervisor, Debbie Klempner MSEd, BCBA.

What exactly is ABA?

ABA stands for Applied Behavior Analysis. ABA involves teaching skills and changing behavior through the use of multiple behavioral techniques. ABA is based on the science of learning and behavior. ABA therapy is used to increase language and communication skills. It is also used to improve attention, focus, social skills, memory, and academics. ABA can be used to help decrease problem behaviors. ABA is considered an evidence-based "best" practice treatment by the US Surgeon General and by the American Psychological Association. "Evidence based" means that ABA has passed scientific tests of its usefulness, quality, and effectiveness.



Why Does My Child Need ABA?

The New York State Department of Health, in its Clinical Practice Guidelines, for the treatment of Autism and PDD recommends that: "principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA) and behavior intervention strategies be included as an important element of any intervention program for young children with autism." (pg. 138)



ABA seeks to develop or improve socially important behaviors (e.g., requesting a desired item, making eye-contact, and verbal and non-verbal communication) and to eliminate or reduce any negative behaviors (e.g. tantrums, spinning, rocking). Families will be active participants in choosing targets and setting goals for behaviors to work on with their children.

What types of behaviors does ABA seek to change?

Why do therapists collect so much data?

ABA programs involve collecting data on the child's successes and attempts to complete skills (e.g., complete a puzzle, wave bye-bye, etc.). This data helps the therapists individualize the treatment and make necessary changes in the child's program to help the child continue to progress.



Research has shown that intensive treatment, which begins as early as possible, provides the best outcome for children. The goal of ABA is to set up an environment that is structured, predictable and optimal for your child. Additionally, one of the first goals that ABA therapists work on is pairing themselves with desirable objects and activities so that your child will be motivated to work and learn with their therapists. Additionally, during the initial phase of treatment, City Pro strongly encourages their therapists to spend time to develop rapport with the family and the child to assist the family with the transition to the treatment.

ABA is too intense and will be stressful for my child.

Can you give me an example of the type of skill that my child might work on in his ABA program?

Brushing his teeth independently. Since many kids in ABA programs have difficulty with social learning (e.g., watching someone else perform the activity and then performing it independently), we often look to break down activities into smaller steps (e.g., first turning on the water, then taking the cap off the toothpaste) and reward the child as he accomplishes each specific task toward the completed goal (e.g., brushing his teeth independently).

