

## **APPLIED BEHAVIOR ANALYSIS (ABA)**

### **What is Applied Behavior Analysis?**

ABA is a therapy that focuses on influencing socially important behavior such as social skills, communication, hygiene and grooming as well as academic skills such as reading and adaptive learning skills. ABA is not a singular intervention or a “one size fits all” approach to behavior. The term behavior is neutral. The effect the behavior has on the environment determines if the behavior is perceived as acceptable or not.

### **What does Applied Behavior Analysis look like?**

Behavior has four components the setting event, antecedent, behavior and the consequence. Setting events are events that occurred in the past that will affect the likelihood that an antecedent will trigger a specific behavior. The antecedent is what occurs immediately prior to the behavior, and the consequence is what occurs after. Both antecedents and consequences can be altered to increase or decrease the likelihood that a person will engage in the behavior in the future.

ABA uses evidenced-based treatment approaches to learning and behavior. The Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) observes and measures the behavior then develops a positive behavior intervention plan in response to the function of the behavior; attention, access to tangible items, escape or access to sensory stimulation. The two main categories of intervention are preventative, implemented before the behavior occurs with the intent to prevent problem behavior, and reactive, occurs in response to the individual engaging in problem-behavior. Individuals with Prader-Willi syndrome respond best to preventative interventions.

Prevention strategies include behavior skills training (instruction, modeling, rehearsal, and feedback), positive reinforcement systems, visual supports, social stories and setting limits. Behavior skills training can be applied successfully to many different behaviors, including learning new socially appropriate behavior. Each of these prevention strategies can be implemented singularly or in conjunction with one or more other strategy. Students with PWS often do best in the education setting when multiple strategies are being used.

### **Who benefits from Applied Behavior Analysis?**

Although ABA is best known as the approach used with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder, the effectiveness is not limited to ASD or even I/DD. ABA strategies can be used effectively with everyone students, athletes, employees, and colleagues.

## **Where can I learn more about Applied Behavior Analysis?**

Behavior Analysts Certification Board [www.bacb.org](http://www.bacb.org); Association for Behavior Analysis International [www.abainternational.org](http://www.abainternational.org); Association for Positive Behavior Support [www.apbs.org](http://www.apbs.org)

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*Rebranded November 2022*