

WHAT IS ABA THERAPY?

[Applied Behavior Analysis](#) is a form of treatment for the developmental disorder ASD, also known as autism spectrum disorder or autism. ABA is a form of therapy that helps to create new behavioral patterns by rewarding the desired behaviors through reinforcement thereby helping the patient to create a new life and learning skills.

ABA therapy is particularly good for people with autism as it can help them to bridge the gap in their behaviors. ABA is a great way to help teach children with autism language and communication skills, greater confidence in social situations, and many more skills that can make their lives a bit more comfortable.

HOW DOES ABA THERAPY WORK?

ABA is very goal-oriented. The technician, or therapist, will identify a small task or achievement for the lesson that day and help guide the person towards that goal employing rewards.

Every time the child successfully performs the task or the behavior, they are given a reward as an indication that they did it. The reward is generally something small in nature, but big in the mind. Things like verbal praise and cheering, toys, books, playtime on playgrounds, and other fun activities are all methods of rewarding the child.

Additionally, therapists look to discover the triggers that prevent the child from completing the task properly. Triggers vary from child to child and can change over time, but they can be debilitating for a child with autism who has not learned how to self-regulate their emotions around their triggers.

The most common triggers for a child with autism are loud, unexpected noises, tiredness, hunger, clutter, distracting objects, or something attention-grabbing that distracts them from the goal at hand.

Once the therapist has identified the triggers that can derail a child, the therapist can begin to craft some possible solutions for that trigger to help the child better focus on the goal and to self-regulate their distractions and emotions. Removing the trigger or helping to soothe the child are both possible solutions, but many therapists will create custom solutions for the child they are treating.

Lastly, ABA therapy focuses on communication between the families of the child, the child themselves, and the therapist. Each session with the child gives the therapist a huge amount of qualitative data and information about the behaviors of the child and how the child responds to different stimuli.

Proper and effective communication between the therapist and the families of the child can help to increase the success of the ABA therapy at home and beyond when the family knows what to look for, reinforce, and reward.

BENEFITS OF ABA THERAPY

Some of the benefits of ABA therapy include:

1. **Improved social skills:** ABA therapy can help individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities to improve their social skills and develop meaningful relationships with others.
2. **Enhanced communication skills:** ABA therapy can help individuals to improve their communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal. This can help them to express their needs and desires more effectively and to better understand the communication of others.

3. **Reduced problem behavior:** ABA therapy can be used to reduce problem behavior, such as aggression, self-injury, and tantrums, by teaching alternative behaviors and providing positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior.
4. **Increased independence:** ABA therapy can help individuals to develop skills that increase their independence, such as self-care, hygiene, and household chores.
5. **Improved academic performance:** ABA therapy can be used to improve academic performance by teaching academic skills, such as reading, writing, and math, in a structured and supportive environment.
6. **Generalization of skills:** ABA therapy can help individuals to generalize their newly learned skills to new situations and environments, allowing them to function more independently in their daily lives.
7. **Family involvement and support:** ABA therapy can involve the family in the treatment process, providing them with strategies and techniques to support their loved one with autism or other developmental disabilities.

PROS OF ABA THERAPY

There are many pros of [ABA therapy](#) that you should know before getting started. Here, we will get into some of the benefits and great aspects of ABA therapy that can help your child grow and learn more life skills.

RESEARCH PROVEN EFFECTIVENESS

There has been tons of research conducted that proves ABA therapy's legitimate success and effectiveness, particularly with children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Additionally, ABA therapy is one of the longest developmental or behavioral treatments.

ABA therapy has certainly stood the test of time and is backed by psychological therapies that are taught in psychology 101 classes around the world. ABA therapy is a form of classical conditioning in which the child is conditioned towards certain behaviors and away from others which can help them become more independent beings.

SPECIALIZED FOR YOUR CHILD

ABA therapy is specialized for each patient entering therapy. A plan is made by the therapist after meeting and observing the child. The plan may be subject to change as the child grows and develops further, but the plan is their unique strategy for that child.

Not many treatments can say the same.

PROFESSIONALLY LED

ABA therapy is led by trained professionals with an extensive background in therapy and psychological behavior. This is not some led by a group leader or a psychology student looking to get some clinical hours for their graduate degree.

TREATMENT GUIDELINES

With ABA therapy, there are no confusing suggestion guidelines, or do-it-yourself style strategies. You are guided by your child's therapist to help. Plus, you can establish boundaries that you want your child and therapist to have when it comes to reinforcing behaviors.

IMPROVES SKILLS

Some of the skills proved to be enhanced through ABA therapy are learning skills, social skills, cognitive function, self-regulation and self-help skills, communication, and improved independence.

CONS OF ABA THERAPY

While ABA therapy is a fantastic option for many people, it still has some issues that can be a problem for some people. Some of the cons of ABA therapy are as follows.

POOR RESULTS

Some poorly trained ABA therapists can give subpar results. This can make certain reinforced behaviors robotic or odd. This is not permanent and can be fixed by visiting a well-trained and certified ABA therapist who understands human behavior, particularly autistic children's behavior.

HARD TO FIND

Good ABA therapists can be very hard to find, and you must find an ABA therapist who is trained properly and understand the art of ABA therapy. Without a good ABA therapist, your child reinforced behaviors can end up robotic, as stated earlier.

LONG TERM

It can take a while for the results to show. ABA therapy is certainly not an overnight fix to behavioral problems and you should not expect to see results after one session.

Have patience and trust in your child's ability to learn, in their ability to be flexible and create new neural pathways. Creating new neural pathways takes time for everyone, so do not get impatient.

COSTLY

ABA therapy can be expensive and is occasionally outside of insurance, so it can be a chunk of money coming out of your pocket.

ACADEMIC

ABA therapy is generally not offered in many schools. Additionally, ABA is not an academic approach to behavior. It is focused on the response and actions of the child, not necessarily the cognitive pre-thought to the behavior.

CRITICS

ABA has critics that say it suppresses the self-expression of the child because it is altering the behaviors the child naturally wants to express. Critics also say that this suppression could be emotionally harmful later in life.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, ABA therapy is a highly effective form of therapy that has helped countless individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities to improve their social, communication, and behavioral skills, and increase their independence and quality of life. However, it's important to consider some potential drawbacks of ABA therapy as well. The cost of therapy can be prohibitive for many families, and the intensive nature of the therapy can be time-consuming and exhausting for both the child and the family.

Overall, while ABA therapy is not a one-size-fits-all solution, it can be a highly effective tool for improving the lives of individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities when used appropriately and with care.