

Understanding Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS and CAREGIVERS

LINKS: Helping parents and caregivers navigate ABA services

- **Finding the Right ABA Treatment**, written by UW psychologist who is a autistic self-advocate: <https://depts.washington.edu/uwautism/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/4.-UWAC-Finding-the-Right-ABA-Treatment.pdf>
- **How do I know I'm getting a "good" ABA program:** <https://childmind.org/article/know-getting-good-aba/>
- **What is ABA:** <https://www.autismspeaks.org/applied-behavior-analysis-aba-autism-treatment>
- **5 Red Flags You Need a new ABA Provider** <https://www.appliedbehavioranalysisedu.org/5-red-flags-that-you-need-to-find-another-aba/>
- **ABA: Perceptions from a self-advocate autistic who supports ABA: Podcast**
Over the past few years stories of abusive practices in ABA therapies have gained attention on social media, and as a result, a percentage of the Self-Advocate community are now fierce opponents to ABA and other therapies/interventions used to aid in behavior modification in children with autism and related conditions. **Self-advocate John Lemus** shares his evolution of views and now is in full support of ABA.
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-aba-debate-with-john-lemus/id1470698237?i=1000533343778>
- **ABA Toolkit:** a comprehensive listing of ABA terms, types, and methodologies. Helpful to understand\ what type of ABA your child might work best for your child.
<https://sites.google.com/site/thebcbas/aba-toolbox?fbclid=IwAR2CHd0D2avy3svc7n8kSCvdyz3zob3eCNYhaMV7QpYXLLkzjYYDnpkB3s>
- **Thoughts about ABA from an Autistic Self Advocate:**
<https://theautismcafe.com/a-balanced-view-on-aba-therapy-by-an-autistic-adult/?fbclid=IwAR1eh714abE0Zk-Pwm1ArePBIFg52wD6eQQDv7PDs6pUWL1jBPYLBm3J5Mk>
- **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) How to Access Medicaid ABA** English.
Available in: ([Amharic](#)) ([Somali](#)) ([Spanish](#)) ([Vietnamese](#))
- ABA advocacy if denied by insurance: [Washington Autism Alliance & Advocacy \(WAAA\)](#)
- [Applied Behavior Analysis: A Parent's Guide](#), Autism Speaks
- [What is ABA? toolkit](#), Autism Speaks
- [Applied Behavior Analysis, Health Care Authority](#), Medicaid
- [Medicaid-enrolled clients seeking ABA services](#), Washington State Healthcare Authority
- [Tips for Choosing an ABA Provider](#), Indiana Resource Center for Autism

Videos

- **ABA: What Parents Need to Know-- Panel Presentation (UW and Seattle Children's Autism Center)** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k-mK0o6hWMI>

Autism 200 Seattle Children's Autism Center

Intervention using the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) has long been considered an effective and gold standard treatment for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). However, ABA is frequently misunderstood. Perceptions of ABA have recently been a "hot button" issue, due to reports

that this intervention can lead to trauma. In addition, ABA advocates and members of the neurodiversity movement have sometimes been at odds, the former advocating for intensive treatment and the latter arguing that autism must be accepted as a form of diversity. This mixed information can be confusing for parents who are striving to choose the best therapeutic interventions for their child with ASD. This presentation will explore these perceptions of ABA and provide clarification of the scientific evidence for various claims, with the goal of helping parents navigate the confusion and controversy and confidently identify the best therapeutic intervention for their child and family.

This panel presentation includes:

- Brief overview of ABA including different applications of ABA (parent education, social skills, 1:1 intensive intervention)
- Brief overview of scientific evidence for ABA
- Discussion of benefits and criticisms of ABA for children with ASD and related disorders
- How parents can become educated consumers of ABA
- ABA and neurodiversity

- [How to Access and Implement ABA Services in Schools](#)
- [Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Interventions for Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)

Self-paced on-line ABA program

- [ADEPT \(Autism Distance Education Parent Training\) Interactive Learning](#) is an original 10-lesson interactive, self-paced, online learning module providing parents with tools and training to more effectively teach their child with autism and other related neurodevelopmental disorders functional skills using applied behavior analysis (ABA) techniques.

Articles explaining the ABA controversy:

- Child Mind Institute:
<https://childmind.org/article/controversy-around-applied-behavior-analysis/> Quotes Cathy Lord--reputable
- Spectrum News:
<https://www.spectrumnews.org/features/deep-dive/controversy-autisms-common-therapy/> A deep dive but really great job at explaining both "side" of the controversy
- Master ABA: <https://masteraba.com/understanding-the-debate-about-aba/> This is an ABA BCBA resource website but the article explains debate, includes a videos of ABA sessions, and attempts to tackle the "problem of ABA and how to be part of the solution"

"Black and white statements like "ABA is bad" cancels my son's positive experiences with this therapy and runs the dangerous risk of misinforming other parents who have children with similar severe challenges and high-needs who could also benefit tremendously from ABA. I fully support scrutinizing this therapeutic intervention and seeking ways to improve outcomes is crucial---but let's not throw out the baby with the bath water." -Parent of an Autistic 22-year-old

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Please email: Autism.Resources@seattlechildrens.org
if you have any questions or if you would like to recommend information for this handout