

Who provides traditional ABA or DTT?

A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) specializing in autism will write, implement and monitor the child's individualized program. Individual therapists, often called "trainers," (not necessarily board certified) will work directly with the child on a day-to-day basis.

What is a typical ABA therapy session like?

Sessions are typically two to three hours long, consisting of short periods of structured time devoted to a task, usually lasting three to five minutes. 10 to 15 minute breaks are often taken at the end of every hour. Free play and breaks are used for incidental teaching or practicing skills in new environments. Effective ABA intervention for autism is not a "one size fits all" approach and should never be viewed as a "canned" set of programs or drills. On the contrary, a skilled therapist customizes the intervention to each learner's skills, needs, interests, preferences and family situation. For those reasons, an ABA program for one learner might look somewhat different from a program for another learner. An ABA program will also change as the needs and functioning of the learner change.

What is the intensity of most ABA programs?

Most ABA programs consist of 25 to 40 hours per week of therapy. Families are also encouraged to use ABA principles in their daily lives.

To find more information on ABA, go to the Association for Behavior Analysis International website at ABAinternational.org or the Behavior Analyst Certification Board website at BACB.com.

What is Verbal Behavior?

Verbal Behavior therapy teaches communication using the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis and the theories of behaviorist B.F. Skinner. By design, **Verbal Behavior** therapy motivates a child, adolescent or adult to learn language by connecting words with their purposes. The student learns that words can help obtain desired objects or other results.

Verbal Behavior therapy avoids focusing on words as mere labels (cat, car, etc.). Rather, the student learns how to use language to make requests and communicate ideas. To put it another way, this intervention focuses on understanding why we use words.

In his book *Verbal Behavior*, Skinner classified language into types, or "operants." Each has a different function. Verbal Behavior therapy focuses on four word types. They are:

Mand: A request, such as "Cook e," to ask for a cook e

Tact: A comment used to share an experience or draw attention, such as "airplane" to point out an airplane

Intraverbal: A word used to answer a question or otherwise respond, such as "Where do you go to school?" "Castle Park Elementary"

Echoic: A repeated, or echoed, word, such as "Cook e?" "Cook e!" (important as the student needs to imitate to learn)

Verbal Behavior therapy begins by teaching mands or requests as the most basic type of language. For example, the individual with autism learns that saying "cookie" can produce a cookie. Immediately after the student makes such a request, the therapist reinforces the lesson by repeating the word and presenting the requested item. The therapist then uses the word again in the same or similar context.