



# Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Glossary

These are some helpful definitions for frequently used terms found in Applied Behavior Analysis. If you have any questions, please ask your care manager or BCBA for more information!

Term	Definition
ABC Data	A description of behavior in terms of the Antecedent (A), Behavior (B), and Consequence (C) of the behavior. What happened shortly before the behavior, including being ignored, needing an object, or trying to avoid a demand, is the antecedent. The behavior is an explanation of how the activity appears. For example, a "tantrum" might include kicking, throwing items, crying and so on. The response to the behavior is the consequence. This might entail ignoring the behavior, handing the object on to the learner and so on. A consequence is not always a negative response to the behavior.
Antecedent	Something that happens before a behavior.
Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)	A type of therapy based on the application of evidence-based science and understanding of socially important human behavior. ABA therapy can be used to understand a child's behavior and how to encourage positive behaviors.
Apraxia	A speech condition that affects both the brain and the motor system. The brain is unable to efficiently coordinate the muscular movements required to pronounce words, sounds or syllables.
Autism	Defined by the DSM-V as persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts. The impact rating system of Level 1, 2 or 3 is based on an impact rating system of Level 1, 2 or 3 based on the intensity of supports the individual needs to function in their daily environments/meet daily demands and expectations. It's important to know that autism is a spectrum, and no two individuals are precisely the same.
Behavior Intervention Plan	A written document that describes one or more challenging behaviors, the environmental conditions that contribute to that pattern of behavior, the supports and interventions that will reduce the behavior and the skills that will be taught as an alternative to the behavior.
Behavior	An observable action by an individual.
Board Certified Behavior Analysis (BCBA)	Requirements for this certification include completing a prescribed number of university master's level coursework, completing 1,500 hours of clinical work under the supervision of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and passing the required written board exam. BCBA responsibilities include but are not limited to conducting assessments, writing behavior plans and treatment programs, training staff and parents.
Care Manager (CM)	A clinically trained health care professional who helps coordinate your access to care and services, including for autism.
Caregiver Training	A crucial part of ABA treatment and should begin at the onset of services necessary to address member's appropriate generalization of skills, including activities of daily living, and to potentially decrease familial stressors by increasing the autistic person's independence.

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Comorbidity	Having multiple diagnoses at the same time, such as being diagnosed with autism, OCD and an anxiety disorder. Autism often co-occurs with other diagnoses.
Consequence	What results after a behavior occurs.
Desensitization	Overcoming challenging behaviors by gradually exposing individuals to the triggering object/ event until it can be tolerated. Ultimately, the individual can participate in that activity or task without challenging behaviors.
Discrete Trial Training (DTT)	An ABA teaching approach for learning new skills by isolating small specific tasks to complete. To maximize the likelihood of desired responses, highly motivating reinforcers are provided and clear/immediate consequences are used throughout the training session.
Echolalia	Consistent repeating of another person's vocalizations. This might happen right away or be delayed.
Elopement	Also called wandering. When an autistic individual leaves a safe area or a responsible caregiver for any given time without permission or even knowledge of the caregiver.
Functional Analysis (FA)	An assessment that can be used to determine an effective and precise treatment of challenging behavior.
Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)	An assessment designed to identify environmental events that occur just before and just after occurrences of potential target behaviors and that may influence those behaviors.
Functional Communication Training (FCT)	Addresses challenging behaviors by recognizing them as a form of communication and teaching individuals more appropriate ways to express their needs and wants.
Generalization	Skills acquired in one setting are applied to many contexts, stimuli, materials, people and/or settings to be practical, useful and functional for the individual.
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)	A document that provides early intervention assistance to children aged up to 3 years. The IFSP, like an IEP, defines and outlines the services required for the individual learner to meet developmental goals. It is also guaranteed under IDEA. Together, family members and care providers decide how to effectively plan, execute and evaluate services and progress.
Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA):	Law ensuring that children with special needs get Free and Adequate Public Education (FAPE) and related services throughout their lives to prepare them for independent living and employment.
Initial ABA Assessment	When a child meets with a BCBA for the first time, in which they will ask parents questions about the child's strengths and areas where they want to see improvements. The BCBA will assess the child's skill set and will recommend how many hours of ABA therapy the child should attend therapy.
Least Restrictive Environment	A phrase used in education to describe the most common setting in which a student can achieve academic and social growth.
Mastery Criteria	Set of criteria that a learner must meet before they are recognized as able to independently perform a skill.
Natural Environment Teaching (NET)	Teachings determined by the learner's present activities and interests. NET follows the child's lead, allowing learning to take place anywhere and at any time.
Pairing	The act of an instructor connecting with a learner to become a reinforcer for that learner in ABA. This might take anywhere from ten minutes to multiple days to complete. Pairing is a continual action.

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Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)	Allows the individual to request and communicate their needs by using icons.
Preference Assessment	An assessment to determine what a child likes.
Prompt	An additional antecedent stimulus that causes a certain response. Prompts can be viewed as "hints." A child, for example, may not welcome a passing friend, but the teacher may wave or mouth the word "hello" to prompt the child to do so. Prompts must fade fast so that the natural "trigger" (a peer in the corridor) may establish the tone for a greeting.
Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)	A credential that states the person has successfully met specific education and experience standards and successfully completed an exam. This is now a requirement to be part of an ABA staff. Other common terms for an RBT include therapist or technician.
Reinforcer/Reinforcement	Used to motivate a learner to complete a task or engage in a behavior. Reinforcement can be tangible (physical item), social (praise), or physical (hugs, kisses, tickle). A reinforcer should increase the future frequency of desired behavior.
Respite Care	Alternate care that provides a break for the individual's family or persons caring for the individual.
Shaping	A technique for teaching a new behavior that involves encouraging incremental approximations to the desired behavior. If a child refuses to use a spoon, for example, shaping could start with accepting the spoon on the table, then next to the plate, on the plate, holding the spoon, and continuing until the child is utilizing the spoon.
Self-Injurious Behaviors (SIB)	Actions that an individual performs that result in physical injury to their own body.
Skills Assessment	A standardized assessment used to track progress and skills learned throughout treatment. Different skills assessments can be utilized based on several factors including age, skill level, setting, etc. (e.g. ABLLS, VBMAPP, AFLS, PEAK)
Stereotypic Behavior	Often referred to as "stimming" or "stims." These are self-initiated, often repetitive movements (e.g. rocking, vocalizations, flapping, spinning, finger-flicking and/or manipulation of inanimate objects) that can be vocal or motoric.
Task Analysis	This is a set of steps that must be followed to perform a certain activity. The activity is broken down into its smaller parts, and the learner is then requested to do the action, such as "brushing teeth."

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