

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES



In this example, the students comply (behavior) with the instruction (antecedent) and are provided with extra recess (consequence) for their behavior. The students love recess.

Home Example:

- Antecedent: A mother tells her child to put away his shoes and socks.
- Behavior: The child complies.
- Consequence: The mother gives her child a hug and praises him for cleaning up.

What is Applied Behavior Analysis?

ABA is a science that studies how the things and events around us affect and change our interactions with the world. It is not a single intervention or approach. A number of intervention strategies and programs are based on the principles of ABA (i.e., Discrete trial teaching, naturalistic teaching, structured teaching).

Interventions are based on the idea that behaviors are learned and maintained by the environment, which includes antecedents and consequence.

- Antecedents: Events that occur immediately *before* a behavior. They can be altered to increase or decrease the occurrence of a behavior.
- Behavior: A response to the persons or things around us at any given time.
- Consequences: Events that occur immediately *after* the behavior. They can increase or decrease the likelihood that the person will display the behavior again.

What are examples of ABA in action?

School Example:

- Antecedent: The teacher instructs her students to walk quietly in the hallway.
- Behavior: The students comply and walk quietly to their destination.
- Consequence: The teacher praises the students and gives them an extra 2 minutes of recess.

In this example, the child complies (behavior) with the instruction (antecedent) and is provided with praise and a hug (consequence). The child loves hugs.

What behaviors can be addressed through ABA?

A number of skills can be taught using interventions based in the principles of ABA, including social skills, communication, learning readiness, self-care, self-regulation, and other skills that can take the place of challenging behaviors. Behaviors chosen to target with ABA should be socially significant and meaningful to the individual and should be clearly defined.

Who benefits from ABA strategies?

ABA strategies are often with students with Autism Spectrum Disorders and other developmental disabilities. However, the effectiveness is not limited to individuals with disabilities. ABA strategies can even be effective with your spouse!

Who can teach ABA strategies?

Interventions and strategies can be effectively used and implemented by different people. Individuals can be certified to deliver ABA services. These individuals are called Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA). You do not have to be a BCBA to effectively learn and use ABA teaching strategies. In fact, a competent behavioral service provider will teach others how to implement strategies and interventions.

Please see reverse for resources.



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RESOURCES

Who We Are and Who We Serve

The **Vanderbilt Kennedy Center** (VKC) works with and for people with disabilities and their family members, service providers and advocates, researchers and policy makers. It is among only a few centers nationwide to be a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, a *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities Research Center, and a Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities Training Program. The following are some of the ways the Center's programs and staff can assist families, educators, and other service providers.

Vanderbilt Autism Resource Line

Free information and referral service for parents, teachers, and community professionals. Information is available about autism-specialized diagnostic evaluation services, school consultation, parent workshops, and professional training at Vanderbilt for children, adolescents, and adults with ASD. Contact autismresources@vumc.org, or (615) 322-7565, or toll-free (877) 273-8862.

Treatment and Research Institute for Autism Spectrum Disorders (TRIAD)

TRIAD is a Vanderbilt Kennedy Center program dedicated to improving assessment and treatment services for children with autism spectrum disorders and their families while advancing knowledge and training. See TRIAD.vumc.org or call (615) 936-0267.

Two Easy Ways to Take Part in Research

The Vanderbilt Kennedy Center serves families through research studies. StudyFinder is a searchable database that lists current VKC studies, including ASD research. Studies seek people of all ages with and without developmental disabilities. See kc.vanderbilt.edu/studyfinder, (615) 936-0448. Research Match is a secure place for volunteers and researchers to connect. Once you sign up and get added to the registry, a researcher will contact you if you're a possible match for the research study. See www.researchmatch.org.

Tennessee Disability Pathfinder

Tennessee Disability Pathfinder is a free statewide phone, web, and print referral service in English and Spanish. It connects the Tennessee disability community with service providers and resources. Its website database has over 3,000 agencies searchable by Tennessee county and service. Pathfinder is a project of the VKC, TN Council on Developmental Disabilities, TN Department of Health, and the TN Department of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Contact www.familypathfinder.org, (615) 322-8529, toll-free (800) 640-4636.

Web Resources

• Behavior Analyst Certification Board

A nonprofit corporation established to meet professional credentialing needs identified by behavior analysts, governments, and consumers of behavior analysis services. Their website has a helpful "consumer information" section, including a registry of current Board Certified Behavior Analysts. www.BACB.com

• Autism Speaks

www.autismspeaks.org

• ABA International

www.abainternational.org

Print Resources

• Selecting a Behavioral Services Provider Tips and Resources for Parents is a fact sheet that provides information on how to select a qualified and effective behavioral services provider. Visit vkc.vumc.org. Select "resources" then scroll down to the "Tip Sheets" section.

• Cooper, J.O., Heron, T.E., & Heward, W.L. (2007). *Applied Behavior Analysis* (2nd Edition). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

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