

Informing Families

Building Trust

A Partnership for Better Communication
on Developmental Disability Issues in Washington State



Access to Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)



If you have a child who has been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), *Is/he may* be eligible for a type of therapy that helps children with ASD learn and improve communication and social skills. It's called Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).

The route to receiving ABA therapy varies, depending on the type of insurance coverage, but it generally begins with a referral to, and evaluation by, an approved provider. It can be a challenging process to get a prescription for ABA and locate a provider; however, coverage is beginning to improve.

Currently, ABA is a covered service for children diagnosed with ASD (or other disabilities impacting the core impairments associated with autism) who have been prescribed ABA therapy through the following pathways:

- **Apple Health** (formerly Medicaid). Contact the [Health Care Authority](#) directly for assistance. (See steps below.)
- **Public Employee Benefits Board plans**. Call your benefits number to find out about your plan's process to obtain ABA therapy.
- **Tricare**. Contact your provider for a referral and evaluation.
- **Private insurance** (not covered through PEBB). Check your plan for details. In addition, [Washington Autism Alliance and Advocacy](#) has resource coordinators to assist families in accessing private health insurance benefits for their children.

Apple Health: ABA for children with ASD under age 20

NOTE: Be sure to contact the [Health Care Authority](#) (HCA) directly to help guide you through the following steps:



- Step 1.** Referral from PCP, any other health care professional, or parent, for diagnostic testing, evaluation and multi disciplinary treatment plan.
- Step 2.** [Center of Excellence](#) Comprehensive evaluation performed; diagnosis confirmed; treatment plan recommends and orders ABA services.
- Step 3.** [Qualified Behavior Analyst](#) assessment of child and development of a goal-oriented, time-limited treatment plan
- Step 4.** Prior authorization for ABA services request submitted to HCA by the ABA provider.
- Step 5.** Authorization determination made by HCA. Letters sent to:
 - [ABA Provider](#), prescribing provider, client's family;
 - DDA case worker, managed care carrier, if applicable.
- Step 6.** ABA services initiated.
- Step 7.** Re-authorization required every 3-6 months, at HCA's discretion.

What is ABA?



Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) focuses on understanding behavior and how an individual's environment impacts behavior.

ABA uses the principles of learning to teach skills that improve behavior and communication related to core impairments associated with autism and a number of other developmental disabilities.

These core impairments are seen in the child's communication, social interaction and behavior.

ABA therapy uses a family-centered, whole-life approach to helping the child learn skills that promote quality of life and interaction with others.