



**UK Society for  
Behaviour Analysis**

# Information for Parents/Carers New to ABA

## **What is ABA?**

ABA stands for 'Applied Behaviour Analysis'. ABA is a science that helps us understand why people behave in particular ways, including how they acquire skills or develop challenging behaviours. The science of ABA has been used to develop a number of therapies and strategies to help people change behaviour and be more successful across a range of life domains. Although there are many ways in which ABA can be applied, this document focusses exclusively on issues relating to autism.

Therapies grounded in ABA, such as Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI), are among the best examples of evidence-based therapies for autism. There is a wealth of evidence that has been published, reviewed and, in most cases, independently replicated, which demonstrates the effectiveness of ABA-based teaching programs for individuals with autism.

For autistic children, ABA-based programs typically focus on teaching skills such as communication, playing, toileting, eating a wider variety of foods, and academic and school-readiness skills. Programs might also target reducing dangerous behaviours, such as biting, hitting, self-injury or running away.

## **If I would like my child to receive ABA services, where do I start?**

There are a few different ways for your child to receive ABA services. You could choose to run a 'home program' or apply to an ABA clinic. There are a number of ABA schools across the UK, but typically your child must have been on an ABA program for a while before applying to these schools (more information at <http://www.abaschools.org.uk/> and <https://www.abaa4all.com/schools-list-1>). Please note that the UK-SBA does not endorse any ABA provider.

If you don't have an ABA school or clinic near you, or you prefer to have your child receive services at home, there are a number of considerations in setting up a home program. These types of programs require a team of professionals to help deliver services. The information below describes the types of professionals you will need on your team.

First things first... Find an **ABA consultant!**

### ABA Consultant / Case Manager / BCBA (Board Certified Behaviour Analyst)

ABA programs should be managed by a consultant (sometimes called a case manager).

Your consultant/case manager/BCBA should:

- Have a formal certification in Behaviour Analysis (e.g. BCBA/MSc in Behaviour Analysis)
- Provide references from other families they have worked with
- Be on the UK-SBA Register (<https://uk-sba.org/register-as-a-behaviour-analyst/find-a-behaviour-analyst/>)
- Hold an Enhanced DBS check\*
- Have public and professional liability insurance
- Have up-to-date safeguarding training

Your consultant/case manager/BCBA will:

- Conduct assessments to determine your child's learning needs
- Design your child's program
- Train the whole team (including parents!) in how to work with your child
- Design data collection systems to monitor your child's progress
- Review your child's progress and data regularly
- Update your child's program regularly
- Be willing to attend meetings to discuss your child, such as EHC meetings, annual reviews, etc.
- Be willing to write reports for such meetings (they might charge additionally for these reports)
- Help you set up your home program team

You should have frequent contact with your consultant (typically once per month). The consultant also should arrange a communication system among team members and parents (e.g. WhatsApp group, email chain) to ask questions, share information and keep in contact.

You might also choose to have a **supervisor** on your team. If you have a supervisor on your ABA team, you typically will see your consultant less often.

### ABA Supervisor / BCaBA (Board Certified assistant Behaviour Analyst)

A supervisor should:

- Have a formal education and/or certification in Behaviour Analysis (e.g. BCaBA/BSc or MSc in Behaviour Analysis)
- Provide references from other families they have worked with

- Be on the UK-SBA Register (<https://uk-sba.org/register-as-a-behaviour-analyst/find-a-behaviour-analyst/>)
- Hold an Enhanced DBS check\*
- Have public and professional liability insurance
- Have up-to-date safeguarding training
- Have at least 5 years of experience in ABA

Your supervisor will:

- Be in regular contact with the consultant/case manager/BCBA
- Be responsible for updating the consultant on the child's progress
- Know your child extremely well (many supervisors conduct weekly 1:1 sessions)
- Update and train the team on the program
- Ensure timely data collection and data review
- Update data collection methods and analysis

Although your consultant will be responsible for designing your child's program, making decisions on program changes, and training your team, you will need a team of “**tutors**” to implement the programs. Because ABA-based therapies typically require 10-30 hours per week of work with your child, you are likely to need more than one tutor on your team. Some tutors might have a background in psychology, childcare or teaching, but this is not necessary as your consultant will provide the training they need to implement the program with your child.

*ABA tutor / therapist / RBT (Registered Behaviour Technician)*

An ABA tutor should:

- Above all, be kind, safe, fun and committed to helping your child
- Be on the UK-SBA Register (<https://uk-sba.org/register-as-a-behaviour-analyst/find-a-behaviour-analyst/>)
- Hold an Enhanced DBS check\*
- Have public and professional liability insurance
- Have up-to-date safeguarding training
- Attend all team meetings
- Be receptive to training
- Follow the consultant's program
- Arrive to sessions prepared – on time, dressed appropriately, ‘emotionally ready’, have resources with them (data sheets, teaching materials needed for the program, toys/games).

## Where do I find my team?

Both the UK-SBA and the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board hold registers of qualified behaviour analysis professionals.

UK-SBA: <https://uk-sba.org/register-as-a-behaviour-analyst/find-a-behaviour-analyst/>

BACB: <https://www.bacb.com/find-a-certificant/>

If you want to advertise for positions on your team, you can use UK-SBA's Job Board: <https://uk-sba.org/jobs/#>

Sample advert:

“Looking for a (tutor/supervisor) for a (short description of child) (age) (boy/girl/child) in (area), (postcode). (Outline days and times of sessions available). Programming will focus on (ask your consultant for a general description). The team will be supervised by a (BCBA/BCaBA/Consultant), with regular meetings held. Please email [parent@emailaddress.com](mailto:parent@emailaddress.com) with your CV, availability and expected hourly rate.”

e.g.

“Looking for a tutor for a delightful, verbal 6-year-old boy in Totteridge, N20. After school sessions (3:30pm onwards Monday-Friday) and/or weekends are available. Programming will focus on verbal behaviour, play and self-help skills. The team will be supervised by a BCBA, with monthly meetings held. Please email [parent@emailaddress.com](mailto:parent@emailaddress.com) with your CV, availability and expected hourly rate.”

It is advisable to have a phone interview with a tutor and to meet them in a public place before inviting them to meet your child at home.

## How do I connect with other families who are using ABA?

There are many online groups where other 'ABA parents' and professionals post. They're great for asking advice, having a sense of community and finding resources and professionals to work with your child. You can also post job adverts there.

Facebook groups for ABA families:

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/90374896556/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/groups/90374896556/?ref=br_rs)

[https://www.facebook.com/groups/492377767545577/?ref=br\\_rs](https://www.facebook.com/groups/492377767545577/?ref=br_rs)

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2351683885/>

ABA forum: [www.vbcommunity.org.uk](http://www.vbcommunity.org.uk)

ABA-UK yahoo group: [www.groups.yahoo.com/group/ABA-UK/](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/ABA-UK/)

ABA forum: <https://abacus.discussion.community/>

Abacus community: <https://abacus.discussion.community/>

## What else should I consider?

*Hourly rates of pay*

Tutors typically set and negotiate their own hourly rate with families, increasing their rate annually as their level of training and experience increases. You might use one of the social media forums above to ask other parents about what rates of pay are typical.

### Contracts and invoices

The UK-SBA Code of Ethical and Professional Conduct and the BACB's Professional and Ethical Compliance Code mandates that behaviour analysis professionals have a written contract prior to beginning services. These contracts should stipulate expectations for both parties (i.e., you and the consultant, supervisor, or tutor). The behaviour analysis professionals usually initiate the contract, but if you are unsure about anything in the contract or want to develop your own contract, you should seek qualified legal advice.

Most ABA professionals invoice clients at the end of each month. At a minimum, invoices should detail the dates, times, nature of work and hourly rates.

**Your consultant should be able to advise and help with any other questions you may have.**

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### **\*A note on DBS checks and keeping your child safe**

A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (previously known as a CRB - Criminal Records Bureau - check) helps employers make safer recruitment decisions and prevent unsuitable people from working with vulnerable groups, including children.

There are three types of criminal record checks: Basic, Standard and Enhanced. A Basic Disclosure provides you with information regarding 5 years of any unspent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (ROA). There are no eligibility criteria that must be met to obtain a basic disclosure, however, these types of checks are not job specific and are available to anyone, for any purpose. A standard check will show all criminal history; cautions, warnings, reprimands and convictions held on the Police National Computer, with the exception of the DBS filtering rule. An Enhanced DBS details all criminal history; cautions, warnings, reprimands, and convictions held on the Police National Computer, with the exception of the DBS filtering rule. Additionally, an Enhanced DBS with barred list checks against the DBS Children and Adult barred list (where appropriate) and information provided by local police forces.

At present, self-employed individuals cannot apply for their own Enhanced DBS check – only employers can. For this reason, some independent practitioners (typically self-employed) may only be able to obtain a DBS check if they additionally work or volunteer for an organisation or if they apply independently for a Basic DBS check.

There is no official 'expiry date' on a DBS check. Any information included is only accurate at the time the check was carried out. Whether or not to carry out a subsequent check is up to the practice owner/employer. Some authorities suggest a new check every 3 years.

It is important to note that holding a DBS check is not a guarantee of an individual's ability to perform their role safely and ethically. Parents should be mindful of this when having an adult work with their child. Also, the therapist's role is to provide therapy, not provide

childcare, so therapists should never be left alone in a house without a caregiver. Many parents choose to install a camera to watch therapy from another room or keep the doors between rooms open at all times.

For more information, please see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/dbs-eligibility-guidance>