



Applied Behaviour Analysis Services and Supports

Serving the Hamilton, Brant, Haldimand, Norfolk and Niagara areas

Parent Information Package

Dear Parent, Legal Guardian or Care Provider:

- Please read this important information about Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Services and Supports.
- When we meet, you can discuss this information and ask any questions you may have.
- The services we provide follow the guidelines set by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, which are available online. If you need a copy of the guidelines, please let us know and we will provide you with a copy.

Sincerely,

Chuck Meister, M.A., Psychological Associate
ASD Service/ABA Services and Supports
McMaster Children's Hospital



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What is Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)?

ABA is the field of psychology dedicated to understanding and improving human behaviour.

Research in behaviour analysis has discovered effective ways to help children:

- learn new behaviours
- decrease undesirable behaviours
- increase desirable behaviours, and
- change behaviour.

Applied	Behaviour	Analysis
Working directly with a child on behaviours that can improve the quality of his or her life.	Choosing a behaviour that can be measured, and monitoring it.	Identifying the causes of the behaviour. Finding the best way to improve behaviour.

What are ABA Services and Supports?

ABA Services and Supports is program that provides interventions for children and education for parents and caregivers.

Interventions are the actions we take to improve your child's behaviour.

By working with families, we can help children change behaviour in a way that improves their quality of life.

There are four main areas for intervention:

- communication
- daily living skills
- social skills
- regulating emotions and behaviour

If your child is eligible for ABA, our team will work with you to identify your child's specific goals. We will focus on one area of need to determine which services and supports are best suited to you and your child.

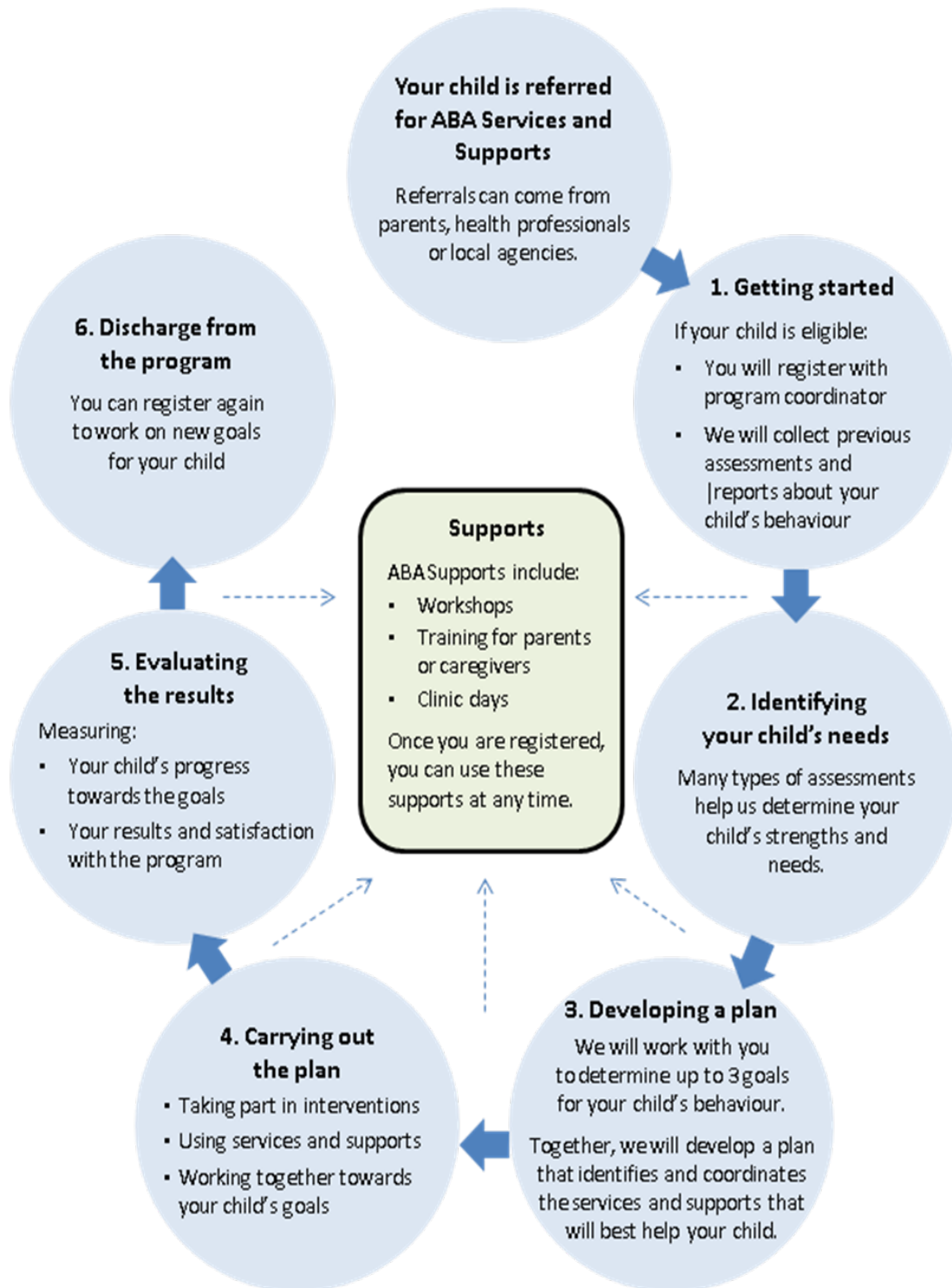
ABA Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Address your identified needs through specific programming in small group or individual sessions provided by ABA clinicians.• Parent participation is expected.
ABA Supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include a number of resources you can access upon registration, such as parent/caregiver workshops and monthly clinic days.

Is my child eligible to receive ABA?

To be eligible for ABA, your child must:

- ✓ have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) or Asperger Syndrome,
 - ✓ be under 18 year old, and
 - ✓ live in the Hamilton area, Brantford or Brant County, Haldimand and Norfolk Counties, or the Region of Niagara.
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ABA Services and Supports: The process



How will my child's ABA goals be decided?

A member of the ABA team will meet with you to identify your child's needs and strengths. This is called a "needs assessment".

An ABA team member will review the assessment results with you. Together, you will identify up to 3 specific goals for your child's intervention plan.

When and where will my child receive ABA services and supports?

We will develop your child's intervention plan with you. You will be contacted:

- when a parent and/or child group is running that meets your child's identified needs, OR
- when we can begin offering individual intervention sessions for your child.

The location of intervention will depend on your child's intervention plan. Your child will receive ABA Services in the location that best meets his or her goals. This may be in:

- your home
- a patient care area
- a community location

If you wish, you can have ABA Services or go to parent workshops anywhere in the region. You will be notified about the location of workshops and services in our region.

Who is on the ABA Services and Supports Team?

Title	Responsibilities
Parents or Caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify your child's needs and help set goals. • Identify parent/caregiver goals. • Take part in training. • Help your child learn and use new skills, by using ABA teaching methods during everyday activities.
Psychological Associate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clinical responsibility for ABA Services and Supports. • Sets the standards of professional practice.
Clinical Leader and local agency Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages employees. • Answers your questions about running the ABA program.
Program Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers general questions about the ABA program. • Keeps the registration and wait list. • Takes re-referrals.
Clinical Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With the ABA therapist, will set and approve goals for your child's intervention plan. • Approves and supervises ABA Services and Supports. • Supervises staff, and may teach parents and provide individual intervention sessions.
ABA Therapist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with you to develop your child's Service Coordination and Intervention Plan. • Works with you and your child if problem behaviours need attention. • Works with your child in individual or group sessions. • Provides training, coaching and workshops for parents.

Title	Responsibilities
ABA Interventionist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works with you to develop your child's Service Coordination and Intervention Plan. • Works with you and your child if functional skills (communication, daily living, social) need attention. • Works with your child in individual or group sessions. • Provides training, coaching and workshops for parents.
Other local agencies and service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABA Services and Supports may work with service providers in their own agency and other community agencies to provide services to your child. • We will share information about your child's intervention with these service providers. If you do not want this information to be shared, you must let us know.

How much ABA Services and Supports will I receive?

ABA Services and Supports aims to help families reach their child's goal by:

- ✓ teaching the family ABA strategies, and
- ✓ working with the child when appropriate.

The hours and length of intervention will be based on your child's identified needs. This may involve up to 4 hours a week of services for a set length of time. This may be a few weeks to a few months, but no longer than 6 months. Services will be adjusted, based on your child's response to intervention.

There may also be times when your child's service hours are less than planned. This may be due to illness, bad weather or staff absence.

What happens if I choose to decline an ABA Service that is offered to my child?

You may choose to decline an ABA service that was offered to help your child reach his or her goals. However, if you decline service 3 times in a row, your child will be discharged and referred again to ABA Services and Supports. Your child's name will be added to the bottom of the registration list.

What are the possible benefits and risks of receiving ABA Services and Supports?

Benefits	<p>The goal of ABA is to help your child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ learn new behaviours, or✓ reduce or eliminate challenging behaviours and replace them with positive behaviours that are socially acceptable. <p>The results of ABA intervention can help improve the quality of your child's life.</p>
Risks	<p>ABA uses positive approaches to behaviour change. However, some risks and discomforts are possible with ABA methods.</p> <p>Some of the risks your child may experience are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaving in ways that show frustration or upset related to learning new tasks.• Increased use of "old" behaviours during intervention, before these behaviours are replaced by more desirable ones.• Responding negatively to the use of certain rewards or other ABA methods.

Not all risks and benefits can be anticipated. Your ABA Services and Supports team will make every effort to tell you the known risks and benefits of each method that will be used in your child's intervention.

You have the right to decide which ABA methods will be used with your child. We will ask for your permission (spoken or written consent) to use each proposed ABA method with your child. You will be trained to use these ABA methods.

You may withdraw from intervention provided by ABA Services and Supports at any time. This will not affect your ability to receive services in the future.

What can I expect while my child is receiving ABA Services and Supports?

The effectiveness and results of your child's intervention depends on your child's attendance and your participation.

You can expect your ABA Services and Supports team to be dedicated in helping you reach your child's goal(s). Services will be provided through parent or child groups or individual intervention. Each intervention method includes working with you and your child directly. You and your ABA team will choose which ABA strategies to use with your child. You will be taught how to use these strategies, how to generalize them, and how to maintain achieved benefits with your child.

ABA strategies commonly used in teaching new skills include:

- rearranging the environment,
- helping your child respond correctly, and
- rewarding your child's efforts.

When reducing behaviours, these strategies would also be used to teach replacement behaviours.

If the first session of a child or youth group is not helpful or appropriate for your child, the Clinical Coordinator will discuss this with you and review your child's goals. You will be enrolled in the next available service.

Recordings

We may video-record some of your child's ABA sessions to help monitor your child's progress and supervise ABA staff. These recordings are not kept as part of your child's health record. They are destroyed or recorded over within 1 month.

We may take photographs or other audiovisual records of your child's behaviour and progress. These records are destroyed or erased within 1 month. We will ask for your permission in writing if we need to keep them longer.

What is my role as a parent or caregiver?

Attendance and participation

Make sure your child is available and on time for his or her ABA sessions.

- You must be in the home when the ABA Therapist or Interventionist is present. Your participation in your child's intervention is expected.
 - Smoking and drinking alcohol are not permitted in your home when ABA staff are there.
 - During home visits, please put pets away and make sure there is a clean space, without clutter or distractions, that we can use during your child's intervention.
 - If your child misses 3 group sessions in a row, within the first 6 weeks, we will remove your child from the group. Your child will be offered group sessions again at the next available time.
 - If your child misses more than 2 individual treatment sessions in a row, we will review your child's intervention plan with you. We will make adjustments if needed.
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Attend meetings

- When asked, meet with the Psychological Associate, Clinical Supervisor, ABA therapist or ABA Interventionist to discuss your child's program and/or progress.
- Within 30 days of the end of your child's intervention, meet with the ABA staff to receive feedback about your child's progress, review your child's intervention plan and develop the next steps. You will also be asked to fill out forms and surveys when starting and ending your child's involvement with ABA interventions.

Follow guidelines when your child is sick

- We will give you a copy of our guidelines for when your child is too ill to attend intervention sessions.
- If your child is ill and unable to attend his or her scheduled intervention appointment, call your child's Therapist or Interventionist. Please give as much notice as possible.
- If we call to tell you that your child is sick, please pick up your child from the service location as soon as possible. If you cannot pick up your child, please tell us who will do this. This person must be over the age of 18.

Update us with new information

- Please make sure we have your current contact information, including your phone number, address and e-mail.
 - Let us know if your family situation changes (such as custody arrangements) so that we share personal information with the right people.
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What happens when my child's intervention schedule is complete or the goals are met?

During your child's intervention, his/her progress will be monitored by yourselves as well as the ABA clinicians by recording your child's responses to the teaching strategies used. Your ABA team will meet with you regularly to review your child's progress towards his or her goal.

One month after your child's intervention schedule ends, we will share a report with you, which will describe your child's progress.

When intervention finishes, your child can be referred to ABA Services and Supports again, to focus on another goal. We will update your child's needs assessment, meet with you to set goals, and develop or update your child's intervention plan.

You may continue to refer your child to focus on other goals until he or she is 18. You can continue to access supports and attend workshops.

After your child's intervention, we would like to receive feedback about your experiences with ABA Services and Supports. We may ask you to fill out a survey or participate in other ways to help us improve our services.

How will my child's information be used?

We will protect the privacy and confidentiality of the personal information you give us.

The Regional Program keeps records about the services we provide to children. Our records are stored in the hospital's secure computer system. We use this information to evaluate and improve our services. Some information about your child's ABA services will be entered into these records.

Guidelines from the Ministry of Child and Youth Services require McMaster Children's Hospital and your local agency to work together, and be in contact with other agencies that are involved in your child's intervention. To work well as a team, we share information about your child, including the goals and methods of his/her intervention. If you do not want this ongoing communication to occur, or want us to limit who we speak with, please let us know.

We may use information about your child and family for program evaluation or teaching purposes. No identifying information is included.

For more information, go to the Hamilton Health Sciences website: www.hhsc.ca Enter "patient privacy" in the Search box.

Are there limits to confidentiality?

Without your written permission, we will not share personal information about you, your child or family with people or agencies that are not affiliated with ABA Supports and Services. However, in certain situations the law requires us to make exceptions. We are required to:

- Report to the local Children's Aid Society any suspected child abuse, emotional harm, mistreatment or neglect of a child, or a child in need of protection for other reasons.
 - Report to the necessary authorities, tell significant others and warn possible victims, if a child (or family member of a child receiving our services) is about to harm themselves or others.
 - Provide information as directed by the courts through subpoena, search warrant or other legal order.
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What if I have questions or concerns?

If you have questions, wish to give a compliment or discuss a concern:

- Call the Clinical Leader for ABA Services and Supports at McMaster Children's Hospital **905-521-2100, ext. 77315**
OR
- Call your local ABA Services agency and speak with the ABA Services Manager.

If you would like help with a concern:

- Contact the Patient Relations Department at Hamilton Health Sciences. Call **905-521-2100, ext. 75240** or e-mail: patientrelations@hhsc.ca
OR
- Ask your local ABA Services agency for help.

How do I contact the Regional ABA Program?



ABA Services and Supports
Chedoke Site, Empire Building
McMaster Children's Hospital
Box 2000
Hamilton ON
L8N 3Z5



Program Coordinator:
905-521-2100, ext. 74136



www.mcmasterchildrenshospital.ca/ABA
Email: ABAServices@hhsc.ca

Notes

