

# SCOPE AND STRUCTURE

## GOAL

Understand the what is included in your training, and how the training will be structured.

## BACKGROUND

ABA is effective because of its individualized approach. While parent training should cover important behavior analytic principles, it should also specifically relate to your child's needs. These lessons provide you with the tools you need to understand your child's behavior, teach important skills, and help him succeed in all areas of his life.

## BUT I JUST WANT TO BE A PARENT!

It can be tough to take on the work of learning ABA. It's a brand new way of thinking and is likely different from the way you were raised.

But you might be using ABA strategies already without even knowing it!

The BCBA won't train you to become a Registered Behavior Technician, but will teach you many of the basics that RBTs understand.

You don't need to be trained as a professional, just understand how your response to behavior can make it more or less likely to occur in the future.

# TOPICS FOR TRAINING

## PRIMARY TOPICS

**Training should be tailored to meet the needs of your child and family, but these topics should be included.**

The primary topics that you will cover in parent training will include:

- Goals and progress for treatment
- Basic ABA principles including interventions for both skill acquisition and behavior reduction
- Data review and problem solving
- Homework

## PROBLEM OF THE DAY

**When should you talk to your BCBA about problem behavior at home?**

You may feel tempted to start every session with a list of concerns or maybe you feel that things are fine at home and don't know what to talk about. Either way, avoid focusing on the COD (crisis of the day) and instead focus on learning the fundamentals and staying on-track with your treatment plan.

Of course you should discuss a true crisis with your BCBA immediately, but by sticking with the topics listed above, you will continue to expand your understanding of ABA and become more independent in managing crises as they appear.

# TRAINING SHOULD INCLUDE

## Basic ABA Principles

As you will see in future lessons, ABA provides a unique way of looking at behavior. Every parent training session should include ABA strategies and interventions for you to practice at home. Building these skills allows you to expose your child to ABA treatment even when he's not in services. This magnifies the benefits of ABA services and leads to far greater success.

## Data Review

No matter who collects the data, set aside some time during each parent training session to review recent data. Look for trends or changes in the direction of the data. Identify which skills your child needs more help with.

## Homework

Leave every parent training with at least one thing to practice at home between meetings. Using these interventions and strategies at home exponentially increases your child's exposure to ABA and will lead to far greater results for your child. There's no doubt that you feel as though you have enough to do at home. Raising children is hard, but raising a child with special needs or behavioral challenges often feels overwhelming.

## ABA Interventions

Take the time to learn the interventions used during ABA therapy. These interventions should address both skill acquisition and behavior reduction needs. It might feel either overwhelming or unnecessary at first, but interventions are the key to success.

## Problem Solving

This is a good time to bring up any recent struggles you experience at home. Answer the following questions:

- What have been the biggest challenges at home since the last meeting?
- What has he mastered?
- Which interventions are easiest for you to implement?
- Where have you struggled to follow the plan?

# GOALS

## BE INVOLVED

Actively participate in goal development for your child. We will discuss this process in detail in a future lesson, but this is a vital piece of treatment. During each parent training session, discuss current goals, progress toward those goals, relevance of the goals, and any new goals. Cover this information quickly. This part is a simple check-in to make sure treatment progresses as expected.

Don't spend hours analyzing the data from the BCBA. That's her job, let her handle it. What you need to know is whether progress is on track or not. If it is, great, move on. If not, talk about what obstacles prevent the progress you expected.

As goals become mastered work with the BCBA to determine how best to help your child generalize (use) the skill at home.

Identify new goals as your child's skills and behavior improve but avoid the temptation to continually add new goals. The number of goals appropriate for your child depends on many different factors:

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| ✓ Amount of direct service hours she receives  | ✓ Your fluency with ABA principles  |
| ✓ Resources available during sessions (i.e. presence of peers to work on social or group skills, availability of powerful reinforcers, etc.) | ✓ Type of skills being taught (i.e. concrete vs. abstract, simple vs. complex, etc.)              |
| ✓ Your child's own rate of skill acquisition   | ✓ The degree to which your child's maladaptive behavior interfere with skill acquisition programs |

## WHAT GOALS DO YOU HAVE FOR YOUR CHILD?

# TRAINING IS ABOUT YOU!

## **Start small**

If you feel overwhelmed already, ask for a small, simple assignment. Many of the principles of ABA require a shift in perspective and a slightly different response to behavior than you're used to. These are often simple to implement at home.

## **Or challenge yourself!**

If you're up for the challenge and ready to make a dramatic difference in your child's life, ask for a longer list of assignments. How can you use some of the strategies at home that are successful in ABA therapy?

## **Allow for changes over time**

Your ability to complete assignments between meetings will likely shift over time. As you begin to experience success with interventions, you may want to tackle something a little more challenging. When your family experiences change, you take a trip, or have an important event, you may need to pull back and keep the assignments simple. Communicate this with your BCBA so he knows what you feel you can handle.

## **NOTES:**

