

Applied Behavioral Analysis for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder Frequently Asked Questions

Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) therapy is now a benefit for Medicaid members. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas (BCBSTX) contracts with a network of ABA providers to offer ABA as a covered benefit through Texas Medicaid.

ABA can help children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) develop improved function with their peers and care givers. To qualify for ABA, there is a process of evaluation and testing. This process can be started by speaking to your child's pediatrician. Read on for more information about the ABA therapy benefit.

What should I do if I suspect my child has ASD?

You may be concerned your child is showing signs of ASD. Speak to your child's pediatrician. Your child's pediatrician can perform certain screening tests. These screening tests can help show if your child needs to be referred to a specialist. A specialist can do further testing to see what treatment is best for your child.

What is ABA?

ABA is a type of therapy for behaviors that can be associated with ASD. Children with ASD often have trouble knowing how to express their needs. They can also repeat certain behaviors over and over. These repeated behaviors can include hand flapping or lining up objects. Some of these behaviors can make life function harder for children with ASD. Life function is a child's ability to interact with peers and care givers. ABA can help improve life function skills and overall quality of life for children with ASD. ABA can help reduce behaviors that make life function harder for children with ASD. ABA can also help improve behaviors that help their life function. ABA does not work for all children with ASD. ABA can work better for some children with ASD than others. If your child has ASD, your child's care team can help see if ABA would be right for them.

How do I know if ABA is right for my child?

To qualify for ABA, your child must first have special testing to confirm their diagnosis of ASD. This testing is more thorough than what most pediatricians can do as part of their practice. This testing must be performed by a specialist*. Your child's pediatrician can help refer your child to the right type of specialist. The specialist will become part of your child's care team**.

If your child's testing shows they have ASD, your child's care team will help decide if ABA is right for your child. For your child to receive ABA, the testing for your child must show the severity of their ASD. The

*An appropriate specialist can include a developmental pediatrician, a neurologist, a psychiatrist, a licensed psychologist, or an Autism diagnosis team.

**Your child's care team may also include other specialists, such as a social worker, counselor, psychological associate, school psychologist, occupational therapist (OT), and/or a speech-language pathologist (SLP)

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severity helps your child's care team decide how intense their treatment should be. The testing results must also show that your child's care team thinks ABA is right for your child.

How do I start ABA services for my child?

Your child must have testing showing they have ASD. The treatment plan for your child must also show that ABA would be best for your child. Your care team will help find an ABA provider. You can also call the number on the back of your health plan ID card. Your health plan agent can help you find an ABA provider who is part of your health plan. Your care team and health plan will help you find the best ABA provider for your child.

Who performs ABA?

ABA is performed by two types of people: ABA providers and care givers. An ABA provider is a specialist who is trained to provide ABA***. The ABA provider only performs ABA for children with ASD. The ABA provider will work closely with the other members of your child's care team. The ABA provider will send reports to your child's care team. The other care team members have a chance to review your child's progress with ABA. This is to ensure your child is getting the proper treatment.

An ABA provider is also trained to teach ABA techniques to the child's care givers. This is because ABA works best when it is done in all a child's living settings. A child's living settings include the home and school settings. This is why the ABA provider also serves as a teacher. ABA providers will teach the child's care givers techniques to do at home. With the ABA provider and the child's care givers working together, ABA has the best chance of success to help a child with ASD.

What should I expect once my child's ABA starts?

You child's care team and health plan will help refer your child to an ABA provider. Once referred, the ABA provider will conduct a thorough assessment for your child. This is done to see what your child's therapy needs are. The assessment will likely take 2-4 hours. The assessment will likely be scheduled over 1-2 days. The ABA provider will then compose a detailed and comprehensive treatment plan for your child. The treatment plan will include the number of ABA therapy hours for your child.

The treatment plan will have goals for both you and your child. The ABA provider will keep records of treatment. The records will show what progress your child is making with ABA. The records will also include attendance to treatment sessions. Both your child and their care givers must participate in treatment and show progress to continue therapy. The ABA provider will update your child's treatment plan if needed. The treatment plan will be updated 90 days after treatment starts. The treatment plan will be updated again every 180 days after that.

The ABA provider will also have meetings with you and other members of your child's care team. This is to make sure everyone is working together.

There will come a time when ABA will end for your child. The ABA provider will set certain testing scores your child must achieve before ABA ends. This will be part of the overall treatment plan composed by the ABA provider. This will also be discussed fully with you when the treatment plan is made and updated. This is to make sure you understand and agree with the treatment plan.

***An ABA provider can be a Licensed Behavior Analysis (LBA), or an LBA who works with a Licensed Assistant Behavior Analyst (LaBA) and/or a Behavior Technician (BT).

For how long will my child receive ABA services?

No two child's care needs are the same. Your child's specific care needs will be checked at the start of ABA. Part of this check is seeing how intense your child's ABA needs to be. For some children ABA can last 6 months. For other children ABA can last 3 years or longer. This depends on each child's individual care needs. Once your child's care needs are checked, your child's care team will decide how long ABA will continue for your child. This will be discussed with you when the treatment plan is made.

Your child's needs may also change as ABA goes on. If your child's treatment needs change, this will be approved by you and your child's care team. If ABA needs to last longer than 3 years, your child's diagnosis testing must be done again. This is to make sure ABA is the right treatment for your child. The ABA provider will discuss with you when ABA will end for your child. The ABA provider and the rest of your child's care team will help see what other treatments your child may still need after ABA ends.

If you have questions about ABA services, please call BCBSTX Service Coordination toll-free at STAR Kids **1-877-301-4394**, STAR **1-877-214-5630**. Members with hearing or speech loss can call the TTY line at **711**. Go to www.bcbstx.com/medicaid and click on Provider Finder[®] to search for and print a list of ABA providers in your area.

If you have any questions about your child's health plan benefits, please call the BCBSTX Customer Advocate department toll-free STAR **1-888-657-6061** or STAR Kids **1-877-688-1811**, TTY **711**.

Sincerely,

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas

To get auxiliary aids and services, or to get written or oral interpretation to understand the information given to you, including materials in alternative formats such as large print, braille or other languages, please call the BCBSTX Customer Advocate Department at the number on the back of your member ID card.

Non-Discrimination Notice

Health Care Coverage Is Important For Everyone

We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin (including limited English knowledge and first language), age, disability, or sex (as understood in the applicable regulation). We provide people with disabilities with reasonable modifications and free communication aids to allow for effective communication with us. We also provide free language assistance services to people whose first language is not English.

To receive reasonable modifications, communication aids or language assistance free of charge, please call us at **1-855-710-6984**.

If you believe we have failed to provide a service, or think we have discriminated in another way, you can file a grievance with:

Office of Civil Rights Coordinator
Attn: Office of Civil Rights Coordinator
300 E. Randolph St., 35th Floor
Chicago, IL 60601

Phone: **1-855-664-7270** (voicemail)
TTY/TDD: **1-855-661-6965**
Fax: **1-855-661-6960**
Email: civilrightscoordinator@bcbsil.com

You can file a grievance by mail, fax or email. If you need help filing a grievance, please call the toll-free phone number listed on the back of your ID card (TTY: 711).

You may file a civil rights complaint with the US Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights, at:

US Dept of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 509F, HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201

Phone: **1-800-368-1019**
TTY/TDD: **1-800-537-7697**
Complaint Portal: ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/smartscreen/main.jsf
Complaint Forms: <https://www.hhs.gov/civil-rights/filing-a-complaint/index.html>

This notice is available on our website at <https://www.bcbstx.com/medicaid/pdf/medicaid-non-discrimination-tx.pdf>

ATTENTION: If you speak another language, free language assistance services are available to you. Appropriate auxiliary aids and services to provide information in accessible formats are also available free of charge. Call **1-855-710-6984** (TTY: **711**) or speak to your provider.

Español Spanish	ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. También están disponibles de forma gratuita ayuda y servicios auxiliares apropiados para proporcionar información en formatos accesibles. Llame al 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) o hable con su proveedor.
العربية Arabic	تنبيه: إذا كنت تتحدث اللغة العربية، فستتوفر لك خدمات المساعدة اللغوية المجانية. كما تتوفر وسائل مساعدة وخدمات مناسبة لتوفير المعلومات بتنسيقات يمكن الوصول إليها مجانًا. اتصل على الرقم 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) أو تحدث إلى مقدم الخدمة.

中文 Chinese	注意：如果您说中文，我们将免费为您提供语言协助服务。我们还免费提供适当的辅助工具和服务，以无障碍格式提供信息。致电 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) 或咨询您的服务提供商。
Français French	ATTENTION : Si vous parlez Français, des services d'assistance linguistique gratuits sont à votre disposition. Des aides et services auxiliaires appropriés pour fournir des informations dans des formats accessibles sont également disponibles gratuitement. Appelez le 1-855-710-6984 (TTY : 711) ou parlez à votre fournisseur.
Deutsch German	ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie Deutsch sprechen, stehen Ihnen kostenlose Sprachassistentendienste zur Verfügung. Entsprechende Hilfsmittel und Dienste zur Bereitstellung von Informationen in barrierefreien Formaten stehen ebenfalls kostenlos zur Verfügung. Rufen Sie 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) an oder sprechen Sie mit Ihrem Provider.
ગુજરાતી Gujarati	ધ્યાન આપો: જો તમે ગુજરાતી બોલતા હો તો મફત ભાષાકીય સહાયતા સેવાઓ તમારા માટે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. યોગ્ય ઓફિસિયલ સહાય અને એક્સેસિબલ ફોર્મેટમાં માહિતી પૂરી પાડવા માટેની સેવાઓ પણ વિના મૂલ્યે ઉપલબ્ધ છે. 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) પર કોલ કરો અથવા તમારા પ્રદાતા સાથે વાત કરો.
हिंदी Hindi	ध्यान दें: यदि आप हिंदी बोलते हैं, तो आपके लिए निःशुल्क भाषा सहायता सेवाएं उपलब्ध होती हैं। सुलभ प्रारूपों में जानकारी प्रदान करने के लिए उपयुक्त सहायक साधन और सेवाएँ भी निःशुल्क उपलब्ध हैं। 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) पर कॉल करें या अपने प्रदाता से बात करें।
Italiano Italian	ATTENZIONE: se parli Italiano, sono disponibili servizi di assistenza linguistica gratuiti. Sono inoltre disponibili gratuitamente ausili e servizi ausiliari adeguati per fornire informazioni in formati accessibili. Chiama il numero 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) o rivolgiti a un assistente.
한국어 Korean	주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우 무료 언어 지원 서비스를 이용하실 수 있습니다. 이용 가능한 형식으로 정보를 제공하는 적절한 보조 기구 및 서비스도 무료로 제공됩니다. 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711)번으로 전화하거나 서비스 제공업체에 문의하십시오.
Diné Navajo	SHOOH: Diné bee yáníłti'gogo, saad bee aná'awo' bee áka'anída'awo'it'áá jiik'eh ná hólǫ. Bee ahił hane'go bee nida'anishí t'áá ákodaat'éhígíí dóó bee áka'anída'wo'í áko bee baa hane'í bee hadadilyaa bich'í' ahoót'í'ígíí éí t'áá jiik'eh hólǫ. Kohjǫ' 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) hodíilnih doodago nika'análwo'í bich'í' hanidzihi.
فارسی Farsi	توجه: اگر فارسی صحبت می‌کنید، خدمات پشتیبانی زبانی رایگان در دسترس شما قرار دارد. همچنین کمک‌ها و خدمات پشتیبانی مناسب برای ارائه اطلاعات در قالب‌های قابل دسترس، به‌طور رایگان موجود می‌باشند. با شماره 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) تماس بگیرید یا با ارائه‌دهنده خود صحبت کنید.
Polski Polish	UWAGA: Osoby mówiące po polsku mogą skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej. Dodatkowe pomoce i usługi zapewniające informacje w dostępnych formatach są również dostępne bezpłatnie. Zadzwoń pod numer 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) lub porozmawiaj ze swoim dostawcą.
РУССКИЙ Russian	ВНИМАНИЕ: Если вы говорите на русский, вам доступны бесплатные услуги языковой поддержки. Соответствующие вспомогательные средства и услуги по предоставлению информации в доступных форматах также предоставляются бесплатно. Позвоните по телефону 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) или обратитесь к своему поставщику услуг.
Tagalog Tagalog	PAALALA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng Tagalog, magagamit mo ang mga libheng serbisyonang tulong sa wika. Magagamit din nang libre ang mga naaangkop na auxiliary na tulong at serbisyo upang magbigay ng impormasyon sa mga naa-access na format. Tumawag sa 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) o makipag-usap sa iyong provider.
اردو Urdu	توجه دیں: اگر آپ اردو بولتے ہیں، تو آپ کے لیے زبان کی مفت مدد کی خدمات دستیاب ہیں۔ قابل رسائی فارمیٹس میں معلومات فراہم کرنے کے لیے مناسب معاون امداد اور خدمات بھی مفت دستیاب ہیں۔ 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) پر کال کریں یا اپنے فراہم کنندہ سے بات کریں۔
Việt Vietnamese	LƯU Ý: Nếu bạn nói tiếng Việt, chúng tôi cung cấp miễn phí các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ. Các hỗ trợ dịch vụ phù hợp để cung cấp thông tin theo các định dạng dễ tiếp cận cũng được cung cấp miễn phí. Vui lòng gọi theo số 1-855-710-6984 (TTY: 711) hoặc trao đổi với người cung cấp dịch vụ của bạn.