

Washington State Health Care Authority

Autism Spectrum Disorder: Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) Services Delivery Model for Medicaid

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Review of the
**Current Benefit
and
Program**

**WACs 182-531-0100
thru
182-531-1200**

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?

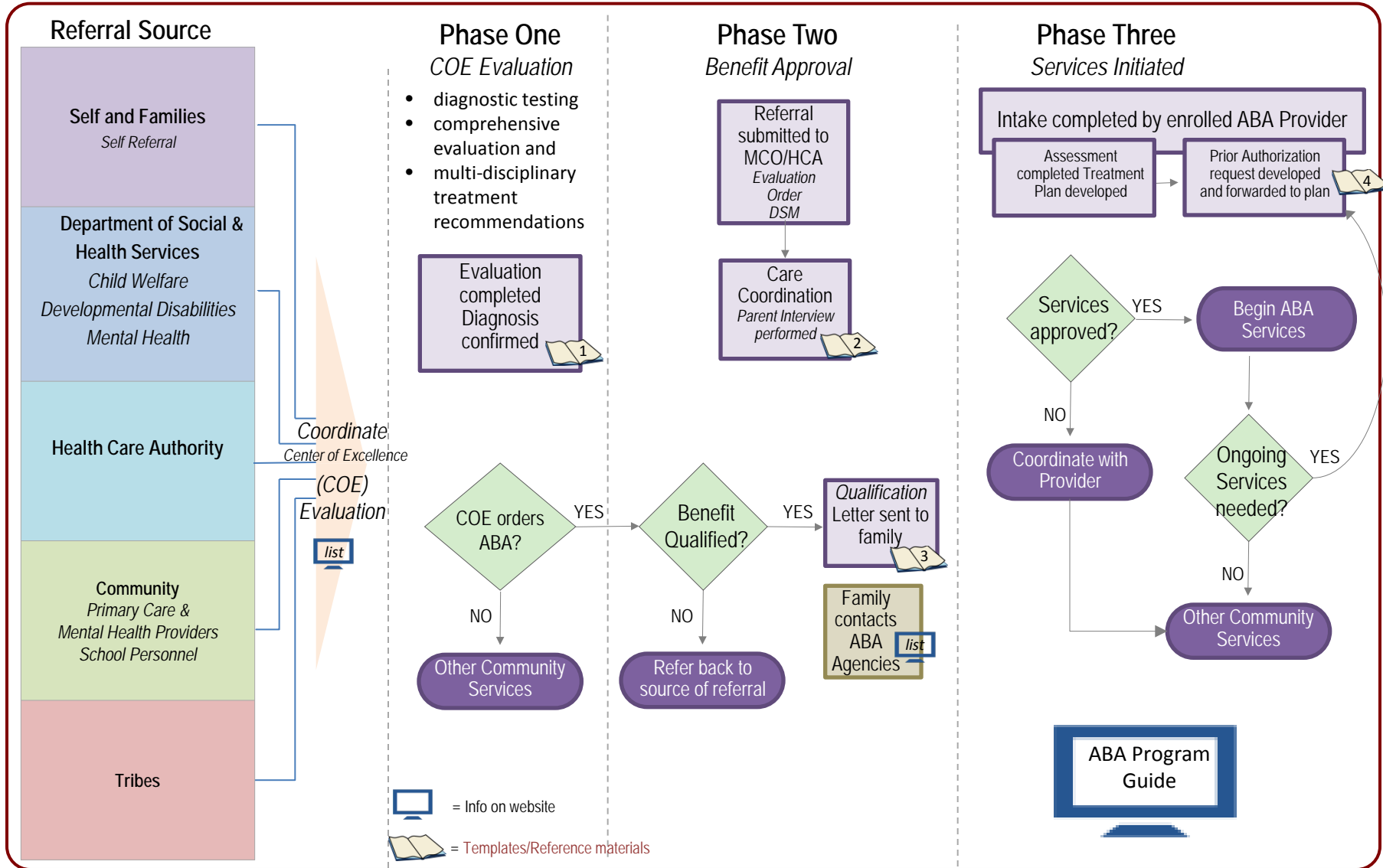
- ABA is an **empirically validated approach** to improve behavior and skills related to core impairments associated with autism and a number of other developmental disabilities.
- ABA involves the **systematic application** of scientifically validated principles of human behavior to change inappropriate behaviors.
- ABA **uses scientific methods** to reliably demonstrate that behavioral improvements are caused by the prescribed interventions.
- ABA's focus on social significance promotes a **family-centered and whole-life approach** to intervention.

Who is eligible?

To be eligible for ABA services, a client must:

- Be younger than 21 years of age;
- Be covered under Washington Apple Health; and
- Have a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder, as defined by the most current version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5); or
- Have a developmental disability for which there is evidence ABA therapy is effective.

Pathway to Care for Applied Behavioral Analysis



Pathway to Care

Step 1. **Referral** from PCP, any other health care professional, or parent for COE eval - diagnostic testing, comprehensive evaluation and multi-disciplinary treatment plan

Step 2. **Center of Excellence Comprehensive Evaluation**- diagnosis made or confirmed; treatment plan recommends/orders ABA services

Step 3. **Child assessed** by qualified, licensed/certified Behavior Analyst and outcome-oriented, time limited ABA treatment plan developed

Pathway to Care

Step 4. **Prior authorization** for ABA services request submitted

Step 5. **Authorization** determination made

Step 6. **ABA services initiated**

Step 7. **Re-authorization** required every 3-6 months, at plan's discretion.

Pathway to Care Stage One

What is the Role of the Center of Excellence?

- Conduct the comprehensive clinical evaluation
 - Make diagnosis or confirm diagnosis
 - Document behaviors observed or reported
 - Identify co-existing conditions
 - Order additional testing, as clinically indicated
 - Document of cognitive and/or developmental assessment, if available (Mullen, Weschler, or Bayley);
 - Confer with members of multi-disciplinary team;

Pathway to Care Stage One

What is the Role of the Center of Excellence?

- Conduct the comprehensive clinical evaluation (cont)
 - Document adaptive behavior assessment, if available
 - Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, or
 - Adaptive Behavior Assessment System (ABAS);
 - Document other treatment efforts;
 - Develop comprehensive treatment plan with recommendations, with orders for ABA, if clinically indicated; and
 - See child for re-evaluation if requested by the plan to assess treatment response and revise treatment plan, as indicated

Pathway to Care Stage One

Eligibility Criteria to be applied by COE

- An established diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder as defined by DSM criteria applicable at the time of the evaluation (IV or V)

or other developmental disabilities for which there is evidence ABA is effective as determined by the COE,
and

Pathway to Care Stage One

Eligibility Criteria to be applied by COE

NOTES:

- Diagnosis is made by a designated neurologist, pediatric neurologist, developmental pediatrician, psychologist or psychiatrist who is experienced in the diagnosis and treatment of autism. AND
- The provider can determine whether comprehensive testing using a validated diagnostic tool is required (ADOS and ADI), but must document *how* diagnosis was made.
 - Interview with parent and first-hand observation
 - Review of testing completed by another professional in school, the COE or the community

Pathway to Care Stage One

Eligibility Criteria to be applied by COE

- There is objective documentation by the COE which may incorporate family members observations:
 - ✓ establishing the presence of any of the **core symptoms of autism**: functional impairment or delay in communication, behavior, and or social interaction; **and**
 - ✓ that the child's **behaviors are having an adverse impact** on development and/or communication such that the child can't adequately participate in home, school or community activities because the behavior interferes; **and/or**

Pathway to Care Stage One

Eligibility Criteria to be applied by COE

- ✓ The **child exhibits behavior** in the nature of *self-injury; aggression towards others; destruction of property; stereotyped/ repetitive behaviors, elopement; or severe disruptive behavior*, where the behavior may be construed that the **physical health or safety** of the child or others may be placed in serious jeopardy; **and**

Pathway to Care Stage One

Eligibility Criteria to be applied by COE

- ✓ **less intrusive or less intensive behavior intervention have been tried** and not been successful; **OR there is no equally effective and substantially less costly alternative** available for reducing the interfering behaviors, increasing pro-social behaviors, or maintaining desired behaviors; **and**
- ✓ There is **documentation of a reasonable expectation that ABA will result in a measurable improvement** in the child's skills and behaviors.

Pathway to Care Stage Two

How are ABA Services Provided?

Independent Practice Provider Model (Option 1)

Lead Behavioral Therapist

Therapist Assistant

- Certified Counselor
- Certified Counselor Advisor

Licensed Agency Model (Option 2)

Lead Behavioral Therapist

Therapist Assistant

- Agency Affiliated
Counselors

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

Who can provide ABA Services?

Lead Behavioral Therapist

Option 1 Minimum Requirements:

- *Licensed as a physician, a psychologist or a mental health counselor; or a certified counselor who is supervised by a licensed psychologist or LMHC, and*
- Board certified BA (BCBA) or Board-qualified and ready to sit for national exams (completed 225 hours of coursework related to BA and/or 750 hours of supervised experience or 2 years of practical experience in designing and implementing comprehensive ABA treatment plans), and
- *Be enrolled as a participating provider*

Option 2 Minimum Requirements:

- *Employed or contracted with an agency licensed by the Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR)*
- Licensed mental health professional or *an agency affiliated counselor,* and
- Board certified BA (BCBA) or Board-qualified and ready to sit for national exams

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Who can provide ABA Services?

Therapist Assistants

Option 1 Minimum Requirements:

- ✓ Credentialed as a *certified counselor* or *certified advisor*
AND
- ✓ 60 hours of training and demonstrated compliance in delivering ABA services before providing services to covered individuals

Option 2 Minimum Requirements:

- ✓ Credentialed as an *Agency Affiliated Counselor*, AND
- ✓ 60 hours of training and demonstrated compliance in delivering ABA services before providing services to covered individuals

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

Who can provide ABA Services?

Agency

Option 2 – Minimum Requirements

- ✓ Be licensed as an agency under DOH or DBHR (DSHS) and
- ✓ Be enrolled as a participating provider with the plan

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

Roles in ABA Services

Lead Behavioral Therapist –

- Develop and maintain comprehensive ABA treatment plan
- Provide clinical supervision of Therapist Assistant
- Supervise delivery of services, including a minimum of 1 hour of onsite supervision for every 20 hours of service provided by Therapist Assistant

Therapist Assistants-

- Deliver services according to ABA treatment plan
- Review the ABA treatment plan bi-monthly with Lead Behavioral Therapist to review progress and confirm approval

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

What's covered?

Delivery of intensive services in a **natural setting** (Home, Clinic, School, Community, Day Care)

- 5-25 hours/week – Individualized to child need
- Includes parent training
- Outcome oriented, time-limited treatment plan

Delivery of intensive services in a **Day Program**

- 48 day unit – 3.5 hrs/day, 4-5 days/wk per written design model
- Concentrated delivery of services by Multi-disciplinary team
- Paid per diem

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

What's covered?

Parent Training Sessions

- For children on the waitlist with current ABA Program assessment and initial limited treatment plan
- Prior Authorization necessary

Point of Contact

More Information:

<http://www.hca.wa.gov/medicaid/abatherapy/Pages/index.aspx>

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