

Parents of Autistic Children of Central Maryland Mission Statement

Our Vision

Children with autism will have access to quality Applied Behavior Analysis programs through their local education agencies (Infants & Toddlers programs or local public schools) and their insurers.

Our Mission

The mission of POAC of Central Maryland is:

- to ensure access through local education agencies to early and intensive intervention based on the principles of applied behavioral analysis, direct instruction, and other teaching procedures which are based on research and that have proven to be effective for teaching children with autism, as required by IDEA 2004 and the No Child Left Behind Act, AND
- to provide education and training to parents, educators and other professionals regarding the use of research based autism interventions, particularly applied behavior analysis applying an analysis of verbal behavior (ABA/VB).

Our Specific Goals

To ensure local education agencies in the Central Maryland region provide quality ABA/VB as a method available to educate children with autism.

To ensure that quality ABA/VB in practice means the following:

- A program that provides an effective number of hours of treatment
 - The Maryland State Autism Task Force Report recommends a minimum of 10-20 hours per week of direct service intervention for children between the ages of birth and 3 years.
 - The Task Force Report recommends 15-30 hours per week of direct service intervention for children between the ages of 3 and 5.
- A program that is conducted under the supervision of a qualified consultant in ABA/VB therapy
 - Qualified consultants are degreed professionals with significant direct coursework hours in behavior analysis and at least 500 supervised hours of experience performing applied behavior interventions
- A program that is administered by trained educational assistants recruited by the local education agency



- A program that is administered on a one-to-one or at most one-to-two basis, as recommended by publications of the National Research Council's Committee on Educational Interventions for Children with Autism
- A program in which the progress of the child with autism is tracked on a standard, nationally published assessment tool that is consistent with the ABA/VB approach
 - The Maryland State Autism Task Force Report lists the Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS) as an assessment instrument specific to autism that may be selected based on the child's individual needs

To ensure that families are aware of the extent to which local education agencies in the Central Maryland region provide ABA/VB interventions to children with autism who can benefit from it.

To assist parents and professionals in finding training materials and training opportunities about the implementation of ABA/VB programs.

Our Principles

- Educational interventions should be supported by scientific research into their effectiveness to the greatest extent possible.
- ABA/VB is a research-supported intervention identified in scientific literature, though not a prescription for all children with autism.
- ABA/VB, or other research-supported treatments if identified, should be administered as discrete interventions until research is published demonstrating that blended or 'eclectic' interventions programs are effective.
- ABA/VB adopts unchanged the great majority of research-supported techniques of published Applied Behavior Analysis, including a combination of discrete trial training and natural environment teaching, errorless teaching and other proven methods.
- ABA/VB does not adopt the use of aversives found in some published ABA programs.
- ABA/VB applies of B.F. Skinner's analysis of verbal behavior as part of ABA treatment, believing it provides significant insight into the language delays of children with autism.
- Intensive intervention, in terms of both hours of teaching and individual attention from the teacher, has been shown in studies to date to be most effective for children with autism.



- Home-based and facility-based intervention options should be assessed based on the needs and history of individual children, rather than considered as prescriptions for all children who may benefit from ABA/VB
- Intervention options for children who benefit from ABA/VB should include typically developing peers to the greatest extent possible.

Our Activities

We advocate together for the support of ABA/VB services by local education agencies in the Central Maryland region and by insurers through all available avenues of public input into special education or payer policies.

We meet on a monthly basis to share information about the current level of support of ABA/VB and to set strategy for our advocacy effort. These discussions continue through the month via an electronic mailing list.

We reach out to potential member families via print and Internet media.

We share resources regarding our ABA/VB programs to assist each other in assuring high quality services to our children.

We provide training to parents and professionals regarding how to implement effective ABA procedures.

