Understanding Autism: A Way of Being: Using Applied Behavior Analysis

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Overview

- Characteristics of Autism
- What is ABA?
- ABA and Autism
- Resources
Characteristics of Autism

- Impaired speech/communication
- Impaired social skills
- Restricted interests, repetitive and stereotypic patterns of behavior
What is ABA?

ABA is not:

- Specific to autism
- A curriculum or a list of skills
- Synonymous with discrete-trail instruction
What is ABA?

A science devoted to the understanding and improvement of human behavior.

- Behavior = anything an organism can do that can be counted or measured.

Highlights
- Systematic
- Data driven
- Reliable techniques
What is ABA?

- The 3-term contingency (or the timeline of behavior)

\[ A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \]

*Antecedents* precede *Behavior* followed by *Consequences*
ABA and Autism

Addressing some of the challenges of autism:

- Impaired speech/communication
  - difficulty understanding abstract concepts
  - Low motivation
ABA and Autism

Addressing some of the challenges of autism:

- Impaired social skills
  - Poor observation skills
  - Difficulty learning in groups
ABA and Autism

Addressing some of the challenges of autism:

- Restricted interests, repetitive and stereotypic patterns of behavior
  - Self-stimulation interferes with learning
  - Hypo-versus hyper-responsive
ABA and Autism

Addressing some of the challenges of autism:

- Global issues
  - Limited repertoire of reinforcers
  - Slow rate of acquisition
  - Easily distracted
  - Unable to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant stimuli
ABA and Autism

An intensive ABA program should:

- have an individualized curriculum
- be 30-40 hours a week of programming across all domains
- be a long term commitment
- commit the necessary resources
- be BCBA supervised
- provide frequent opportunities to respond
- motivate and engage the student
- evaluate progress frequently
Resources

- LEARN ABA School Support Network: [www.learnaba.org/forums](http://www.learnaba.org/forums)
- Behavior Analyst Certification Board: [www.bacb.com](http://www.bacb.com)
- Association for Behavior Analysis: [www.abainternation.org](http://www.abainternation.org)
- Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis: [www.seab.envmed.rochester.edu/jaba/](http://www.seab.envmed.rochester.edu/jaba/)
- The Assessment for Basic Language and Learning Skills: [www.behavioranalysts.com](http://www.behavioranalysts.com)