

REACH ABA

Family Handbook



An Applied Behaviour Analysis Treatment Program
for Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders



"BELIEVING IN POTENTIAL"

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reach
CHILD AND YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

Vision Mission & Values

VISION *Communities where all individuals and their families are welcomed, included, and leading lives of well-being, based on their own individual strengths, interests, and values.*

MISSION *To provide timely, accessible and person- and family-centered community programs and services for the optimal development of children, youth and adults, where all individuals flourish and reach their potential*

VALUES

Respectfulness

Excellence

Attitude of sharing

Collaborative spirit

Honesty

Continuous improvement

Handle resources efficiently

Integrity

Learning

Diversity

Vision, Mission, Principles and Values

Vision

Communities where all individuals and their families are welcomed, included, and leading lives of well-being, based on their own individual strengths, interests, and values.

Mission

To provide timely, accessible person- and family-centered community programs and services for the optimal development of children, youth and adults, where all individuals flourish and reach their potential.

Guiding Principles

1. Appreciating childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle and basing our work with children and youth on the knowledge of child development.
2. Appreciating and supporting the bond between the child, youth, adult and family.
3. Facilitating a person-centred approach as children grow based on the belief that all people have the right to control their own lives through personal choices about relationships, jobs, living arrangements, spirituality, travelling, and recreational activities, and that all people have the right to give back to their communities through volunteering and helping others. We also believe that these rights can be reinforced and protected by making sure that people are connected to and supported by friends, family, staff, and the community.
4. Recognizing that children, youth and adults are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community, and society.
5. Respecting the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual (child, youth, adult, family member, and colleague).
6. Helping children, youth and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect, and positive regard.
7. That individuals are best nurtured by a family that knows, loves and honors them for who they are.
8. That all individuals have the right to be part of an inclusive environment that meets the needs of individuals with and without disabilities.
9. That relationships and friendships are essential to enrich our lives.
10. That all individuals are entitled to the services and supports required to ensure their full participation in our society.
11. That the involvement of families and support networks contributes to everyone's safety and well-being.
12. That services and supports must be delivered in a way that respects an individual's diverse history, culture, race, religion, gender and sexual orientation.
13. That inclusive communities enrich the lives of all citizens.

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REACH'S HISTORY

REACH is a nonprofit organization that has been providing services to children and their families since 1959. REACH currently serves the regions of Delta, Surrey and Langley. We offer a variety of services designed to meet the needs of children to ensure their optimum development. Over 1000 children and their families benefit from our services on an annual basis.

REACH'S VISION AND MISSION

MISSION: To provide timely, accessible and family-centered community programs and services for the optimal development of children, youth and adults, where all individuals flourish and reach their potential.

VISION: Communities where all individuals and their families are welcomed, included, and lead lives of well-being, based on their own individual strengths, interests, and values.

REACH IS A CARF ACCREDITED AGENCY

REACH is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), an international organization that sets standards of quality of service. This means that we have been recognized as providing responsive, high quality programs and services that meet the needs of the children and families in our community.

Services Provided by REACH Include:

- Aboriginal Supported Child Development
- Choices Program
- Delta Connex
- Infant Development Program
- Therapies Program (Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology, Physiotherapy)
- REACH ABA Program
- REACH Counselling Services
- REACH Developmental Preschools
- Positive Behaviour Support Program
- Positive Connections Program
- Respite Care Program
- Social Smart Group
- Supported Child Development

APPLIED BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS (ABA)

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) is a science devoted to the understanding and improvement of human behaviour. The focus is on socially significant behaviour and on using scientific methodology to determine the causes of behaviour and the most effective ways of improving it. Simply put, “ABA makes meaningful changes in people’s lives through the use of procedures that have been demonstrated to work” (Buchanan and Weiss, 2006, p. 9).

THE REACH ABA PROGRAM

REACH ABA is a highly structured intervention program that uses two main teaching methods consistent with the principles of ABA: discrete trial training (DTT) and natural teaching strategies (NTS). DTT is a systematic way of teaching, which can be broken down into three main components: an instruction, the child’s response, and feedback to the child. NTS also uses a systematic protocol of instruction during naturally motivating activities whereby children acquire new skills in natural contexts. NTS is based on the child’s interests, and incorporates choice, reinforcing materials, and reinforcing consequences. NTS and DTT both incorporate ABA techniques such as systematic prompting and reinforcement to help children acquire skills in such areas as imitation, communication, play, academics, fine motor skills and self-help.

REACH ABA is a skill-building program that uses the principles of ABA to teach functional skills to children with autism spectrum disorders. We are a family centred program that provides individualized services customized to the needs of each child and family. Families are the key decision makers in establishing priorities for intervention, and the ABA team provides education and training to assist families in creating a supportive environment for their children to learn and develop.

REACH ABA provides a range of service options from an interdisciplinary team consisting of behaviour consultants (BCs), speech-language pathologists (SLPs), occupational therapists (OTs), associate behaviour consultants (ABCs), and behaviour interventionists (BIs).

BEHAVIOUR PLAN OF INTERVENTION

The Behaviour Plan of Intervention (BPI) describes the child’s current skills and identifies goals in the areas of communication, cognition (academics), play/social skills, motor skills and self-help. The plan is developed collaboratively by the child’s REACH ABA team and is based on a comprehensive assessment, which includes observations of the child, and interviews with the parents and community team members. Following the development of the plan of intervention, the child’s REACH ABA team provides an individualized set of programs that target the specific goals outlined in the plan. The behaviour interventionists implement the programs during ABA sessions. The child’s progress in each program is reviewed regularly at team meetings and adjustments to teaching strategies and goals are made to ensure optimal learning and progress. All team meetings are held remotely, via Zoom, or Microsoft Teams. The child’s behaviour consultant continuously monitors the implementation of the behaviour plan of intervention.

THE REACH ABA TEAM

The REACH ABA program consists of a team of people with extensive experience and expertise. The most important team member is the family, and the family will play the most significant role in the direction of treatment for their child. The other members of the team may include the following professionals:

Behaviour Consultants

Behaviour consultants (BCs) develop and monitor the behaviour plan of intervention (BPI) by coordinating the assessment, setting goals in collaboration with the family and the REACH ABA team, and providing appropriate programming to address these goals. BCs also coordinate the development of positive behaviour support plans, which focus on reducing the occurrence of challenging behaviours by restructuring the environment and teaching alternative, appropriate behaviours.

Specifically, the child's behavior consultant, in collaboration with the child's occupational therapist and speech-language pathologist:

- Assesses the child's communication, cognitive, play, social interaction, motor and self-help skills;
- Develops and writes the child's behaviour plan of intervention (BPI);
- Provides the instructional programs that address the goals in the BPI.

In addition, the behaviour consultant:

- Observes the child during intervention sessions either in person or via video recording;
- Reviews program data collected by the behaviour interventionist, monitors the child's progress, and adjusts teaching strategies as needed;
- Monitors and updates the behaviour plan of intervention on a regular basis;
- Consults with the family and team regarding the child's development, teaching strategies, generalizing newly developed skills, and decreasing challenging behaviours.

Behaviour consultants working in our program have a master's degree and a minimum of 14 years of experience developing and directing programming for children with ASD in an intensive behaviour intervention program. All consultants are listed on the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP).

Associate Behaviour Consultants

Associate behaviour consultants (ABCs) work under the direct supervision of behaviour consultants and provide ongoing training to behaviour interventionists. ABCs communicate with the other REACH ABA team members on an ongoing basis and supervise behaviour interventionists.

Specifically, the child's associate behaviour consultant:

- Observes intervention sessions and provides training and direction to the behaviour interventionist regarding session structure and organization, the implementation of instructional programs, accurate data collection, and managing challenging behaviours;
- Consults with the child's team regarding the implementation of programs;
- Video records intervention sessions; and
- Assists in teaching the family strategies to help generalize newly developed skills into everyday activities.

Associate behaviour consultants working in our program have a bachelor's degree and at least 6 years of experience working in the REACH ABA program.

Speech-Language Pathologists

Speech-language pathologist (SLPs) collaborate in assessing, setting goals and providing programming to address the development of the child's communication skills. SLPs also provide consultation and training to help parents implement strategies that teach and develop their communication skills in everyday activities. REACH ABA SLPs do not provide direct therapy to the child. Instead, they provide the instructional programs, training and supervision to the BIs who practice the communication activities with the child each session.

The child's speech-language pathologist performs the following tasks:

- Assesses the child's communication skills and assists in the development of the behaviour plan of intervention;
- Provides the instructional programs that address the communication goals in the BPI;
- Observes the child during intervention sessions and provides direction to the BI in implementing communication programs;
- Monitors and updates communication programs;
- Consults with the family and team as needed; and
- Attends team meetings

Speech-language pathologists working in our program have master's degrees and are members of the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of BC. All speech-language pathologist have a minimum of 13 years of experience working with children with ASD in an intensive behaviour intervention program. All REACH ABA SLPs are listed on the RASP.

Occupational Therapists

Occupational therapists (OTs) collaborate in assessing, setting goals and providing programming to address the development of the child's fine motor and self-help skills. OTs also provide consultation and training to help parents implement strategies to help generalize newly developed skills. REACH ABA OTs do not provide direct therapy to the child. Instead, they provide the instructional programs,

training and supervision to the BIs who practice the fine motor and self-help activities with the child each session.

The occupational therapist performs the following tasks:

- Assesses the child's fine motor and self-help skills and assists in the development of the behaviour plan of intervention;
- Provides the instructional programs that address the child's fine motor and self-help goals in the BPI;
- Observes the child during intervention sessions and provides direction to the BI in implementing fine motor and self-help programs;
- Monitors and updates fine motor and self-help programs;
- Consults with the family and team as needed; and
- Attends team meetings

Occupational therapists working in our program have a master's degree and are members of the College of Occupational Therapists of BC. All occupational therapists have a minimum of 12 years of experience working with children with ASD in an intensive behaviour intervention program. All REACH ABA occupational therapists are listed on the RASP.

REACH ABA speech-language pathologists and REACH ABA occupational therapists provide consultation services and do not provide direct therapy.

Behaviour Interventionists

Behaviour interventionists (BIs) are responsible for providing one-to-one intervention, recording data, creating program materials, and rotating toys. BIs have training in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) including discrete trial training (DTT), natural teaching strategies (NTS), and positive behaviour support (PBS).

Behaviour interventionists perform the following tasks:

- Implement instructional programs provided by the child's behaviour consultant, speech-language pathologist and occupational therapist;
- Take data on the child's performance;
- Prepare materials and rotate toys; and
- Attend team meetings

Behaviour interventionists have a degree, diploma, or certificate in early childhood education or a related field, and/or the equivalent experience. Behaviour interventionists also have first aid training. All REACH ABA behaviour interventionists are employees of REACH Child & Youth Development Society and have WorkSafe BC coverage.

REACH ABA PROGRAM OPTIONS

The following program options are available to children with autism spectrum disorders. Please see the section on referrals, eligibility and waitlist procedures for additional information.

REACH ABA Centre Program

The REACH ABA Centre program is for families with children under age 6 who are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. It is available only as a package and includes the following services:

- A behaviour plan of intervention and instructional programs written and directed by an interdisciplinary team consisting of a behaviour consultant, an associate behaviour consultant, a speech-language pathologist, and an occupational therapist;
- 30 – 40 hours of one-to-one intervention per month (3 – 4 days per week);
- All direct intervention is provided by a behaviour interventionist at a REACH ABA centre;
- Consultation to the family to help them learn new ways to teach their child communication, self-help, play and interaction skills;
- Toys and materials required for intervention; and
- Regular team meetings, attended by the family, behaviour consultant, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, and behaviour interventionist.

Centre Locations:

North Delta – 10921 82nd Avenue, North Delta

Ladner – 5050 47th Avenue, South Delta

Surrey – #205 - 16140 84th Avenue, Surrey

Session Times:

9:00-11:30

OR

12:00-2:30

OR

2:45-5:15

Reach ABA Program is closed for all statutory holidays, last week of August, and 2 weeks during Christmas break (same as school calendar).

Fees:

All services will be charged on an hourly basis. There is no additional charge for travel. The following is an average hours and cost of services for 1 month. This is not a fixed monthly fee. Exact cost and services will vary according to family requests, staff availability and funding allocation. The cost for

the first two to three months may be slightly higher while the team develops the behaviour plan of intervention.

Rates:

- Behaviour Consultant – 1.5 hours @ \$155/hr = \$232.5
- Speech-Language Pathologist – 2 hours @ \$155/hr = \$310
- Occupational Therapist – 2 hours @ \$155/hr = \$310
- Associate Behaviour Consultant – 1.5 hours @ \$88/hr = \$132
- Behaviour Interventionist – 30 hours @ \$43/hr = \$1,290
- Approximate monthly cost \$2,274.5

If a family wishes to purchase additional services they can do so, provided the appropriate staff member(s) is/are available. Additional services will be charged at the above hourly rates. If additional sessions with a behavior interventionist are not at a Reach centre, the hourly rate will be \$48/hr.

REACH ABA Home Program:

The REACH ABA home program is for families with children under age 6 who have been diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. The REACH ABA Home program provides flexible options for families to choose services. The REACH ABA Home Program can include the following services:

- A behaviour plan of intervention and programs for each child, written and directed by a behaviour consultant and an occupational therapist or speech-language pathologist;
- 24 hours of one-to-one intervention per month;
- Children can have intervention 3 or 4 days per week for 2-hour sessions each. Sessions cannot be longer than 2.5 hours
- Reach ABA Program is closed for all statutory holidays, last week of August, and 2 weeks during Christmas break (same as school calendar).
- All direct intervention is provided by a behaviour interventionist in the family's home or daycare
- Consultation to the family to help them learn new ways to teach their child communication, self-help, play and interaction skills;
- Toys and materials required for intervention; and
- Regular team meetings, attended by the child's parent(s), associate behaviour consultant and BI. The behaviour consultant attends every second meeting. If a Reach ABA SLP and OT are a part of the child's team, they will also attend every second team meeting.

The ABA Home Program can be customized to accommodate the family's preferences. For example, families can choose either a speech-language pathologist and/or occupational therapist to add to their team. REACH ABA speech-language pathologists and REACH ABA occupational therapists provide consultation services and do not provide direct therapy. Occupational therapists provide instructional programs to help children expand their diets and learn to eat and dress independently.

They also teach self-care skills such as toileting and desensitization to haircuts, nail trims and teeth brushing. Speech-language pathologists help children develop their communication skills. For this program, families must purchase at least three sessions with a REACH behaviour interventionist per week.

A responsible family member or a designated caregiver is required to be in the home and accessible to the behaviour interventionist during all REACH ABA home sessions. REACH ABA staff can never be left alone with the child or other children in the home. REACH ABA staff cannot administer any medication to children.

In the child's home, behaviour interventionists will ask the caregiver to change a child's pull-ups or diaper when needed, or to assist the child in the toileting routine. If the child has a toilet training program provided by the behavior consultant or the occupational therapist, the behaviour interventionist will follow the steps of the toileting program.

Session Times:

The behaviour interventionists are the families' main contacts for the intervention schedule, which means that families also need to contact their behaviour interventionist directly when they need to cancel or reschedule a session. Intervention sessions may be Monday to Friday between the hours of 9:00 and 5:30, and must be 2 or 2.5 hours in length.

- Please give your BI 15 minutes for cleaning/setting up at the beginning, and 15 minutes for cleaning/closing down at the end for each session.

Fees:

All services will be charged on an hourly basis. There is no additional charge for travel. The following is an average hours and cost of services for 1 month. This is not a fixed monthly fee. Exact cost and services will vary according to family requests, staff availability, and funding allocation.

Rates:

- Behaviour Consultant – 2 hours @ \$175/hr = \$350
- Associate Behaviour Consultant – 4 hours @ \$99/hr = \$396
- Occupational Therapist or Speech Language Pathologist – 2 hours @ \$175/hr = \$350
- Behaviour Interventionist – 24 hours @ \$48/hr = \$1,152
- Approximate monthly cost \$2,248

REFERRAL, ELIGIBILITY AND WAITLIST PROCEDURES

REACH ABA services are available to children under the age of 6 with autism spectrum disorders in Delta, Surrey, and Langley. Children can be referred by parents, guardians, or service providers by contacting Carol Ywan by phone at 604-946-6622 ext. 343 or by email at caroly@reachchild.org

Children are eligible for the REACH ABA Home and Centre programs until age 6 and they must start in the program before age 5. Children are placed on the waitlist on a first come first served basis in order of the date the referral was made. At the Reach ABA centres, children who attend school have priority for the after school intervention times (i.e., 2:45-5:15). Preschool children in the home program are not eligible for after school intervention times (e.g., 3:00-5:00).

REACH ABA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Hours of Operation and Statutory Holidays

The REACH ABA Program is open Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 5:30 pm and is closed Saturdays, Sundays, and statutory holidays.

Reach ABA Program is closed for all statutory holidays, first week of September, and 2 weeks during Christmas break (same as school calendar).

Billing Procedures

All services are billed on an hourly basis and families are invoiced one time per month. Families receive by email a copy of all invoices sent to the Autism Funding Unit (AFU). Families are responsible for monitoring their own funding with the Autism Funding Unit.

Intervention Area

To promote an optimal learning environment for intervention sessions, a quiet, distraction free area is required at the place where intervention will occur. A child-sized table and chairs should be available. All pets must be kept in a space separate from the intervention area.

For the first 15 minutes of the session, the child's behaviour interventionist prepares the session and organizes the materials. For the last 15 minutes of the session, the behavior interventionist records any additional data required and puts all program materials away. The behaviour interventionist will let the child's caregiver know when the child is finished intervention.

Program Binders and Data

The child's program binder contains the individualized instructional programs that specify how to teach the child the specific skills targeted in the behaviour plan of intervention. Behaviour interventionists are responsible for taking data on each program they implement during an intervention session. During team meetings, the REACH ABA team uses this data to assess the child's progress and makes adjustments to teaching strategies as needed. Once the data are reviewed at the team meeting, completed sheets are removed from the program binder and given to the family for

their files. The instructional programs in the child's binder remain the property of the REACH ABA program.

Program Materials

REACH provides all of the toys and material required for the implementation of programs as outlined in the child's behaviour plan of intervention. One time per month, the child's behaviour interventionist rotates toys and prepares the materials needed for intervention.

Toys and materials used for the child's programs need to stay in the program bins and not be accessible to children outside of intervention times. This ensures that program materials remain novel and interesting for the child. It also increases the efficiency of setting up the intervention session, because it keeps the materials organized. There should be a designated space to store the program bins between sessions. There are typically 2 to 3 large storage bins containing specific teaching materials and toys.

Scheduling Sessions for Home Sessions

For the ABA Home Program families can have intervention between the hours of 9:00 am and 2:30 pm for preschool aged children, and between the hours of 9:00 am and 5:30 pm for school aged children. If a child's availability for intervention changes and their current behaviour interventionist is no longer available as a result of the change, parents can contact their ABC to request a new behaviour interventionist. Depending on availability, there may be a short wait for a new BI.

Cancelling an Intervention Session

To cancel an intervention session, parents need to call their behaviour interventionist's cell phone and inform him/her of the cancellation. Last minute cancellations may happen because of an illness. However, if a family knows that a session will need to be cancelled for reasons other than illness, 24-hour notice is required.

Families also need to contact their child's behaviour consultant, associate behaviour consultant, speech-language pathologist, or occupational therapist directly to cancel an appointment with them. Any travel and preparation time for the planned sessions will be charged unless at least two hours notice of cancellation has been given.

For sessions in the Centre program, if there are more than three cancellations per month, or cancellations occur for several months in a row, the family may be asked to transition to the home program.

Sick Policy (How do I know that my child is too sick for intervention?)

Because REACH ABA staff work with multiple families, it is important that contagious illnesses be contained. Families need to cancel intervention when anyone in the household is sick with a contagious illness including cold, flu, and childhood illnesses (e.g., chickenpox, slap cheek, measles,

pink eye), or if a member of the household contracts lice. If a child is too sick to attend preschool/daycare/school then the ABA session also needs to be cancelled.

Grievance Policy

At REACH we are committed to providing quality services to children, youth and families. Families may make a complaint if they believe they have not been treated fairly or respectfully, or if they are dissatisfied with the services they have received. Families should contact the staff member directly to discuss their concerns. If a family would rather speak to one of the program managers about the issue, or if the issue is not satisfactorily resolved with the staff member, families should contact the program managers Eva Major at 604-946-6622 ext. 330 or evam@reachchild.org or Miriam Elfert at 604-946-6622 ext. 324 or miriame@reachchild.org. If a family feels that the concern is still not resolved to their satisfaction, they can complete the Family Grievance form, after which they will be contacted by REACH's executive director, Renie D'Aquila. Family Grievance forms can be obtained from the REACH front desk or one of the program managers. The executive director will speak with the family filing the complaint and follow REACH's grievance procedures to attempt to resolve the issue.

Release of Information

The REACH ABA program is governed by the Freedom of Information and Privacy Act which specifies guidelines for the maintenance, safekeeping and release of documents; thus, all children's records are stored at REACH Child & Youth Development Society. The child's records, including reports, videos, photos, and family contact information may only be released to third parties with the written consent of the child's legal guardian or by court order.

Videotaping

Videotaping sessions on a regular basis is an important and required procedure for ongoing assessment and intervention planning purposes. To record intervention sessions, only a REACH ABA video camera must be used. Not all video recordings are retained; some videos are destroyed after the child's ABA team has viewed them for intervention planning. Families can request a copy of a recorded session. Families and ABA staff are not permitted to record intervention sessions or take photos with personal cameras, phones or iPads.

Health and Safety

REACH Child and Youth Development Society follows the guidelines and regulations established by WorkSafeBC, to ensure that all of its employees work in a safe environment.

Smoking

WorkSafeBC requires that all employees work in a non-smoking environment. Therefore, families are asked to smoke only in areas that are separated by a physical barrier from the work area of ABA staff and to refrain from smoking in the area for at least one hour prior to the staff person visiting.

Transportation

REACH ABA staff cannot transport children or families in their vehicles nor can they travel in families' vehicles.

Personal and Professional Boundaries

REACH ABA staff make regular visits to a family's home and can become part of the family's routine; thus, it is expected that family members and staff persons will become more comfortable with each other over time. However, staff are expected at all times to act in a professional manner and maintain appropriate boundaries with families. For example, staff should not discuss other families with whom they work, or provide advice or information to families about issues that are outside of their scope of practice (e.g., marital concerns, mental health issues, medication). While it is essential for staff to understand and work within their professional boundaries, it is also important for families to recognize the professional role of the staff person coming to their home. For example, a family's request for a staff member to enter the home without knocking, to answer the phone, or to prepare a snack would not be appropriate given the role of the staff person and the reason for being in the home. Understanding and respecting professional boundaries will ensure that the ABA program maintains a high level of quality and the focus is on the child's intervention.

Gifts

At times, families feel like they want to provide their REACH staff member with a gift. While we appreciate such kind and generous gestures, we ask that you refrain from giving REACH staff gifts of any kind. REACH staff do not expect any gifts; it is our job to provide services to your family, and we are paid for this work. Instead, we would appreciate thank you cards or notes on how the program has assisted your family. If you truly feel compelled to provide a token of your appreciation, we respectfully suggest that you make a donation to the REACH ABA program. Donations would be used to purchase communication devices and program materials/supplies (e.g., toys, books); you can specify what your donation would be used for, if you prefer.