

SUB AREAS

- ▶ Intensive, Comprehensive Intervention for Young Children
- ▶ Focused Intervention
- ▶ Treatment of Severe Behavior Problems

OVERVIEW

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is best known for its success in treating individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and other developmental disabilities (e.g., Down syndrome, intellectual disabilities). Treatment in this area is effective across an individual's lifespan (i.e., childhood, adolescence, adulthood). In young children with developmental disabilities such as ASD, the goal of intensive, comprehensive intervention is to improve cognitive, language, social, and self-help skills. Decades of research have shown that intensive ABA treatment is the most successful approach for children with autism, and it is widely recognized by a number of sources including the U.S. Surgeon General, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the National Institute of Mental Health. When applied to older individuals, ABA involves teaching behaviors essential to functioning effectively in the home, school, and community. ABA can also decrease severe problem behaviors that endanger health and safety, and limit educational, residential, or vocational options.

LEARN MORE

Initial Publication

Wolf, M., Risley T., & Mees H. (1964). Application of operant conditioning procedures to the behaviour problems of an autistic child. [*Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 1](#), 305-312.

Recommended Reading

Harris S. L., & Weiss M. J. (2007). *Right from the start: Behavioral intervention for young children with autism* (2nd ed.). Bethesda, MD: Woodbine House.

LeBlanc, L. A., & Gillis, J. (2012). Behavioral interventions for children with autism spectrum disorders. [*Pediatric Clinics of North America*, 59](#), 147-164.

Maurice, C. (1993). [*Let me hear your voice: A family's triumph over autism*](#). New York: Knopf.

Maurice, C., Green, G., & Luce, S. C. (Eds.). (1996). [*Behavioral intervention for young children with autism: A manual for parents and professionals*](#). Austin, TX, US: PRO-ED.

Additional Resources

- ▶ [Association for Science in Autism Treatment](#)
- ▶ [Applied Behavior Analysis Treatment for Autism Spectrum Disorder: Practice Guidelines for Healthcare Funders and Managers \(2nd ed.\)](#)
- ▶ [Practical Functional Assessment](#)