

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 children, youth and 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 supportive community programs and services for the optimal development of children and youth, where children, youth and families flourish and reach their potential.*

VALUES

Respectfulness

Excellence

Attitude of sharing

Collaborative spirit

Honesty

Continuous improvement

Handle resources efficiently

Integrity

Learning

Diversity

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 children development.
2. Appreciating and supporting the bond between the child or youth and family.
3. Recognizing that children and youth are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture, community and society.
4. Respecting the dignity, worth and uniqueness of each individual (child, youth, family member, and colleague).
5. Helping children and youth achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust, respect, and positive regard.
6. That children are best nurtured by a family that knows, loves and honors them for who they are.
7. That all children have the right to play and learn in an inclusive environment that meets the needs of children with and without disabilities.
8. That relationships and friendships are essential to enrich our lives.
9. That all individuals are entitled to the services and supports required to ensure their full participation in our society.
10. That the involvement of families and support networks contributes to everyone's safety and well-being.
11. That services and supports must be delivered in a way that respects an individual's diverse history, culture, race, religion and sexual orientation.
12. That inclusive communities enrich the lives of all citizens.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
REACH'S HISTORY	1
REACH'S VISION AND MISSION IS TO.....	1
REACH IS A CARF ACCREDITED AGENCY	1
Services Provided by Reach Include:.....	1
APPLIED BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS (ABA)	2
THE REACH ABA PROGRAM	2
BEHAVIOUR PLAN OF INTERVENTION	2
THE REACH ABA TEAM	3
Behaviour Consultants	3
Associate Behaviour Consultants	3
Speech-Language Pathologists.....	4
Occupational Therapists.....	4
Behaviour Interventionists.....	5
REACH ABA PROGRAM OPTIONS.....	6
Programs Available for Children Under the Age of 6.....	6
<i>Reach ABA Centre Program</i>	6
<i>Reach ABA Home Program</i> :.....	7
Programs Available for Children Over the Age of 6	8
<i>Reach ABA Over 6 Consultation Services</i>	8
REFERRAL, ELIGIBILITY AND WAITLIST PROCEDURES	9
REACH ABA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	9
Hours of Operation and Statutory Holidays.....	9
Billing Procedures.....	9
Intervention Area	9
Program Binders and Data	9
Program Materials.....	10
Scheduling Sessions.....	10
Cancelling an Intervention Session	10
Sick Policy (How do I know that my child is too sick for intervention?)	10
Grievance Policy	11
Release of Information.....	11
Videotaping	11
Health and Safety	11
Smoking.....	11
Transportation	12
Personal and Professional Boundaries.....	12
Gifts	12

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 IS TO

MISSION: To provide timely, accessible and supportive community programs and services for the optimal development of children and youth, where children, youth and families flourish and reach their potential.

VISION: Communities where all children, youth and families are welcomed, included, and leading 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:

- Delta Connex
- Infant Development Program
- Social Smart Group
- Occupational Therapy, Speech-Language Pathology, Physiotherapy Services
- Reach ABA Program
- Reach Counselling Services
- Reach Developmental Preschool South Delta
- Reach Developmental Preschool North Delta
- Parent Network for Parents of Children with Special Needs
- Positive Behaviour Support Program
- Positive Connections Program
- Respite Care Program
- 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, 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, and interviews with the parents and other appropriate 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 at monthly team meetings and adjustments to teaching strategies and goals are made to ensure optimal learning and progress. The child’s behaviour consultant 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 in a variety of fields related to positive behaviour change. 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

The behaviour consultant develops and monitors the child's behaviour plan of intervention (BPI) by coordinating the child's assessment, setting goals in collaboration with the family and the Reach ABA team, and providing appropriate programming to address these goals. The behaviour consultant also coordinates the development of, and monitors, positive behaviour support plans, which focus on reducing the occurrence of challenging behaviours by restructuring the environment and teaching the child 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
- Provides the programs that address the goals in the child's behaviour plan of intervention; and
- Reviews program data collected by the behaviour interventionist during each session, monitors the child's progress, and adjusts teaching strategies as needed.

In addition, the behaviour consultant:

- Observes the child during intervention sessions (either in person or via video recording);
- Monitors and updates the child's behaviour plan of intervention on a monthly basis; and
- Consults with the child's family and team regarding the child's development, teaching strategies, generalizing newly developed skills and decreasing challenging behaviours.

Behaviour consultants working with children under 6 have a master's degree and a minimum of 5 years experience developing and directing programming for children with ASD in an intensive behavioural intervention program. All consultants are listed on the Registry of Autism Service Providers (RASP). Behaviour consultants working with children over 6 either have a bachelor's or master's degree.

Associate Behaviour Consultants

The associate behaviour consultant works under the direct supervision of the child's behaviour consultant and provides ongoing training to behaviour interventionists. The associate behaviour consultant communicates with the other Reach ABA team members on an ongoing basis and participates in the evaluation of behaviour interventionists. Specifically, the associate behaviour consultant:

- Observes intervention sessions and provides training and direction to the behaviour interventionist regarding session structure and organization, the implementation of programs, accurate data collection, and managing challenging behaviours;
- Consults with the behaviour consultant, speech-language pathologist, and occupational therapist regarding the implementation of programs;
- Video records intervention sessions; and
- Assists the behaviour consultant, speech-language pathologist and occupational therapist in teaching the family strategies to help generalize newly developed skills into everyday activities

Associate behaviour consultants have a bachelor's degree and at least 3 years experience working in the Reach ABA program.

Speech-Language Pathologists

The speech-language pathologist (SLP) collaborates in assessing, setting goals and providing programming to address the development of the child's communication skills. The SLP also provides consultation and training to help parents implement strategies that teach and develop their child's communication skills in everyday activities. The speech-language pathologist does not provide direct therapy to the child. The 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 programs that address the communication goals in the child's behaviour plan of intervention;
- Observes the child during intervention sessions and provides direction to the BI in implementing communication programs;
- Monitors and updates communication programs;
- Consults with the child's family and team as needed; and
- Attends team meetings

Speech-language pathologists 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 5 years experience working with children with ASD in an intensive behavioural intervention program. All Reach ABA speech-language pathologists are listed on the RASP.

Occupational Therapists

The occupational therapist (OT) collaborates in assessing, setting goals and providing programming to address the development of the child's fine, gross motor and self-help skills. The OT also provides consultation and training to help parents implement strategies to help their child generalize newly developed skills. The occupational therapist does not provide direct therapy to the child. 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 programs that address the child's fine motor and self-help goals in the behaviour plan of intervention;
- 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 child's family and team as needed; and
- Attends team meetings

Occupational therapists have either a bachelor's or master's degree and are members of the College of Occupational Therapists of BC. All occupational therapists have a minimum of 5 years experience working with children with ASD in an intensive behavioural intervention program. All Reach ABA occupational therapists are listed on the RASP.

Behaviour Interventionists

Behaviour interventionists (BI) are responsible for providing one-to-one intervention, recording data, creating program materials, and rotating toys. Behaviour interventionists 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 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 each month

Behaviour interventionists have a degree, diploma, or certificate in early childhood education or a related field, and/or the equivalent experience. Behaviour interventionists have a clear criminal record check and 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.

Programs Available for Children Under the Age of 6

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 pre-existing package and includes the following services:

- A behaviour plan of intervention and programs for each child, written and directed by an interdisciplinary team consisting of a behaviour consultant, associate behaviour consultant, speech-language pathologist, and occupational therapist;
- 40 hours of one-to-one intervention per month;
- All direct intervention is provided by a behaviour interventionist at a Reach ABA centre;
- Consultation to the family to help the family learn new ways to teach their child communication, self-help, play and interaction skills;
- Toys and materials required for intervention; and
- Monthly team meetings, attended by the child's parent(s)/guardians, behaviour consultant, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, and behaviour interventionist.

Centre Locations:

North Delta – 11425 84th Avenue, Delta

Ladner - #3 – 3800 72nd Street, Delta

Cloverdale – 5337 180th Street, Surrey

Session Times:

Monday to Thursday 9:00-11:30

OR

Monday to Thursday 12:00-2:30

OR

Monday to Thursday 2:45-5:15

Fees:

All services will be charged on an hourly basis. There is no additional charge for travel. The following is an approximation of services for 1 month. Exact cost and services will vary according to family requests and staff availability.

Rates:

- Behaviour Consultant – 2 hours @ \$130/hr = \$260
- Speech-Language Pathologist - 2 hours @ \$130/hr = \$260
- Occupational Therapist - 2 hours @ \$130/hr = \$260
- Associate Behaviour Consultant – 1 hours @ \$75/hr = \$75
- Behaviour Interventionist – 40 hours @ \$34/hr = \$1360
- Approximate monthly cost \$2215

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 with the exception of sessions with a behaviour interventionist. Additional sessions with a behaviour interventionist will be charged at \$38/hr and can be at the centre, space permitting, or in the home.

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 includes the following services:

- A behaviour plan of intervention and programs for each child, written and directed by a behaviour consultant;
- 30 hours of one-to-one intervention per month;
- All direct intervention is provided by a behaviour interventionist in the family's home or in a community setting;
- Consultation to the family to help the family learn new ways to teach their child communication, self-help, play and interaction skills;
- Toys and materials required for intervention; and
- Monthly team meetings, attended by the child's parent(s), associate behaviour consultant and BI. The behaviour consultant attends one team meeting every three months.

The ABA Home Program can be customized to accommodate the family's preferences. For example, families can purchase speech and language and/or occupational therapy services and families can vary the amount of one-to-one behavioural intervention. Reach ABA speech-language pathologists and Reach ABA occupational therapists only provide consultation services and do not provide direct therapy. For this program, families must purchase at least two 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:

Families book intervention times directly with their behaviour interventionists. The behaviour interventionists are the families' main contacts for the intervention schedule, which means that families also need to contact their behaviour interventionists 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 between 2 and 3 hours in length.

Fees:

All services will be charged on an hourly basis. There is no additional charge for travel. The following is an approximation of services for 1 month. Exact cost and services will vary according to family requests and staff availability.

Rates:

- Behaviour Consultant – 2 hours @ \$150/hr = \$300
- Associate Behaviour Consultant – 5 hours @ \$90/hr = \$450
- Behaviour Interventionist – 30 hours @ \$38/hr = \$1140
- Approximate monthly cost \$1890

Programs Available for Children Over the Age of 6

Reach ABA Over 6 Consultation Services

Family education, training, and consultation services are also available. Families choose the services that their child needs. Service providers include behaviour consultants, speech-language pathologists and occupational therapists.

Fees:

All services will be charged on an hourly basis. There is no additional charge for travel.

Rates:

- Behaviour Consultant @ \$90-150/hr
- Associate Behaviour Consultant @ \$90/hr
- Speech-Language Pathologist @ \$150/hr
- Occupational Therapist @ \$150/hr

REFERRAL, ELIGIBILITY AND WAITLIST PROCEDURES

Reach ABA services are available to children and youth with autism spectrum disorders and their families in Delta, Surrey, and Langley. Children can be referred by parents or service providers by contacting Carol Ywan at 604-946-6622 ext. 343 or email at caroly@reachdevelopment.org.

Children are eligible for the Reach ABA Home and Centre programs until age 6, and children in the ABA Centre Program need to be available for all scheduled intervention sessions from Monday to Thursday. Children are placed on the waitlist on a first come first served basis in order of the date the referral was made.

*Please note that after school services are very limited.

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.

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 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 should 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 in between sessions. There are typically 2 to 3 large storage bins containing specific teaching materials and toys.

Scheduling Sessions

For the ABA Home Program, families schedule intervention sessions directly with their behaviour interventionist(s). If a child's availability for intervention changes and their current behaviour interventionist is no longer available as a result, parents can contact Sue Iseli at 604-946-6622 ext. 323 to set up sessions with a new behaviour interventionist. Depending on availability, there may be a short wait for a new behaviour interventionist.

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 Reach ABA program managers will review whether the child will remain in the 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 families feel that the concern is still not resolved to their satisfaction, they should 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, a Reach ABA video camera must be used. Not all video tapes 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 or camera phones.

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.