**ABA Terminology Explained**

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| ***ABA Terminology*** | ***Definition*** |
| Applied Behaviour Analysis ABA  The science of behaviour change. | Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) is a field of study that examines the relationship between the environment, behaviour and consequences. ABA is a scientific approach to changing behaviour by either increasing desirable skills or decreasing undesirable ones and can be used as a teaching approach with people of all ages (Alberto & Troutman, 2003) The terms IBI (intensive behaviour intervention) and ABA were used in the past to describe a more specific type of ABA, but the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board now instead uses “comprehensive ABA” and “focused ABA” instead. |
| Intensive Behavioural Intervention IBI | The term IBI is still used locally. Key characteristics of IBI include (Kinark website):​​   * IBI is the application of the science of ABA to create a program of intensive, comprehensive teaching.   •intensity in both the number of hours and the pace of instruction;  •systematic teaching methods based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)  •clearly defined goals and strategies tailored to an individual child’s particular needs (also part of ABA)  •ongoing monitoring and direct evaluation of a child’s progress to ensure rapid acquisition of skills (also part of ABA) |
| ***Terms Used Local To Describe Funding Options*** | ***Definition*** |
| Direct Funding Option (DFO) | In our area, IBI service is provided by a private provider of the family’s selection. Provider must be Kinark approved. |
| Direct Service Option (DSO) | In our area, IBI service is provided by Kinark or partner agency staff in home (1:1), in clinic (1:1), in centre (some group instruction) or in a transition classroom (mostly group instruction) |
| ***People Who Might Work With Your Child*** | ***Definition*** |
| Clinical Supervisor | Oversees a client’s IBI program and approves changes to programs. May be a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA) or a regulated health professional (e.g., psychologist). Board certified behaviour analysts will have the designation BCBA following their names. This means that they have completed a graduate course of study, a written exam and supervised work in this field. They must participate in continuing education and follow ethics standards. |
| Senior/Lead Therapist | Supervises the instructor therapists and a client’s IBI program |
| Instructor Therapist | Works directly with clients, implementing programs and collecting data |
| ***trategies Used in Teaching*** | ***Definition*** |
| Prompt levels | Full physical prompt, partial physical prompt, gesture prompt (e.g., point), full verbal prompt (e.g., tell child what to do/say), partial verbal prompt (e.g., tell the child part of what they need to do/say), time delay (e.g., wait) |
| Errorless Teaching/Learning | This is the procedure of teaching a skill with enough prompts to allow for success and no error. It is typically used when teaching new skills and prompts are faded as children move toward increased mastery of those skills. For example, an adult takes child’s hand to point to a “cookie” picture to help the child learn to ask for it. |
| Reinforcement | A therapist often begins teaching skills with a dense schedule of reinforcement (i.e., the child is reinforced very often at pre-determined intervals) and once the skill is mastered, the reinforcement schedule is “thinned” (i.e., less reinforcement is offered less often but this is decreased slowly, or reinforcement is made more natural). |
| Extinction | Not providing reinforcement for a behaviour that has been reinforced in the past in order to stop the behaviour from happening. For example, a child who screamed every time a new toy was presented and got a parent’s attention every time would no longer receive a response when she screamed. |
| Functional Communication training (FCT) | This process involves figuring out the function of a behaviour (i.e., why someone is doing something). Often this is due to a need to escape, an attempt to get attention, meet sensory needs , or get access to particular objects. A functional communication replacement is taught to replace the unwanted behaviour (e.g., asking for the item, asking for a break, requesting attention). |

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| ***Tools that May be Used to Assess Your Child*** | | ***Description*** | | |
| The Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP) | | A criterion-reference assessment tool, curriculum guide and tracking system that was based on work by B.F. Skinner in 1957. It is designed for children with ASD and others who demonstrate language delays. It assesses developmental milestones that are seen in typically developing children from 0-48 months | | |
| The Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills - Revised (ABLLS-R) | | Another tool that includes 544 skills from 25 skill areas including language, social interaction, self-help, academic and motor skills that most typically developing children acquire prior to entering kindergarten. These items are organized from easier to more difficult/complex tasks. It also uses the behavioural analysis of language developed by Skinner to examine expressive language skills. His 1957 book is called “Verbal Behaviour” . | | |
| **If you are working with a Speech-Language Pathologist and an ABA team, you may hear different terms used to talk about language and interaction. The following chart will help you to participate in conversations with your team as it explains the different terms used for the same thing. The underlying difference is that ABA views language as a behaviour just like any other behaviour, but the field of speech-language pathology looks at language development and behaviour as linked but separate.** | | | | | |
| ***ABA Terminology*** | ***SLP Terminology*** | | ***What it means*** | ***Example*** | |
| Verbal operants | Functions of communication (reasons for communicating) | |  | * Mand, tact, intraverbal, echoic, listener response, textual | |
| Mand | Request | | De*mand*ing, asking to receive or avoid something  Only operant (reason for communicating) that *directly* benefits the child, therefore often taught first. | * Child wants a cookie and says “cookie”. * Child wants a cookie and points to related picture. | |
| Tact | Label | | Saying the name of an item/action/descriptor etc. with the item/experience physically present | * Child sees a picture of a cookie and says “cookie”. * Child smells cookies baking and says “cookie”. * Child answers “What is this?” with “cookie” | |
| Intraverbal | * Answering a question * Spoken fill-in-the-blank | | Answering a question, completing a fill in, without the item physically present | * Child says “cookie” in response to “What’s your favourite food?” * Child says “cookie” in response to “you eat a…” | |
| Echoic | Vocal imitation/repeating | | Imitating what someone else says | * Adult says “cookie”, child says “cookie” | |
| Listener response | Receptive language (understanding) | | Following spoken directions | * “Show me the cookie” | |
| Feature, function, class  (receptive or expressive) | n/a | | *Features* – parts of items, descriptions  *Function* – use of item/purpose  *Class* - category | * Cookie:   *Features* – round, crunchy  *Function* – eat it  *Class* – food, snack | |
| Verbal communication | n/a | | Any form of communication | * Using signs, pictures or speech-generating devices or talking | |
| Vocal communication | n/a | | Talking only |  | |