

SOUTHWARK APPLIED BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS (ABA) OFFER (for website)

Evidence-Based Interventions:

Evidence-based refers to any concept or strategy that is derived from or informed by objective evidence; supported by a large amount of scientific research.

Southwark strives to provide best ASD practice grounded on the above criteria.

Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Specific Offer:

Put simply: Applied behaviour analysis (ABA) is the use of those techniques and principles to bring about meaningful and positive (socially significant) change in behaviour. It is the science of the study of behaviour.

Southwark SEN will consider all approaches from parents where they desire to have an existing ABA program appropriately transitioned into a mainstream school's natural education environment (AST remit), and to work collaboratively with them (if requested) when our specialist schools are similarly approached.

In addition, we as a Team advocate the use and application of ABA principles as part of our regular support of mainstream Southwark Primary schools. The terminology is appropriately changed into 'teacher-speak' so that the concepts are familiar and non-threatening.

There are occasions where we promote the use of more intensive ABA programs because a student with Autism's needs are not being met despite the implementation of ABA principles and other evidence based approaches that typically are successfully applied and embedded in the student's routine and curriculum (differentiated as necessary). In **ALL** cases, the expectations – even where the program is initially intensive – are to be as brief as possible and transition back into a mainstream school (or specialist) natural education environment as quickly as possible. We work with Board Certified Behaviour Analysts (BCBA) wherever we engage with third-party ABA service providers (whom we commission based on need, and who can best meet the student's learning profile). Behaviour Analysts adhere to a strict code of ethics which include promoting access to the least restrictive environment possible for that individual (Behaviour Analyst Certification Board's (BACB's) Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behaviour Analysts; Section 4.09). Maintaining a program of support that does not move towards independence and social competence within that natural environment contravenes that commitment. Each case is unique. However, that expectation will be applied to all Southwark Local Authority supported ABA programs to reduce any risk of a prosthetic dependency on an ABA program (a common complaint and criticism of Applied Behaviour Analysis). There is no facility for punishment procedures of any kind. We promote the use of Positive Behaviour Supports only.

A mandatory component of our ABA program support is the training of staff to adopt and embed the ABA principles so that the whole natural environment present

in the school community is as motivating and beneficial as the short-term ABA programs. The skill development of school staff is accomplished with a coaching model which again evidence supports is the most effective way of building practitioner skills in an education environment. It also allows for the school to participate in expanding the students repertoire of skills (independence and social-communicative) to peers and permanent staff members.

Examples of currently supported ABA programs in Southwark include:

Transition to Secondary School; first term Year 7.

Short-term intensive programs to develop functional academic skills in tandem with increasing independence and social competency;

Natural environment focused programs that aim to develop communication skills, social skills and independence within the school environment.

Programs focused on training school staff in effective strategies to support the inclusion of students with ASD in mainstream schools.

Brief home based interventions for students excluded and/or withheld from education (at parents' request). Transition into school with ABA support - with plan to fade higher levels immediately and transfer of instructional control to school staff;

Longer-term support - via school hiring of suitably qualified ABA Tutor in the role of classroom teaching assistant to work collaboratively with teachers and other paraprofessionals to embed best practice and fade their involvement when school designated goals (with relevant BCBA input) are achieved – especially social-communicative skills.