

## What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is the scientific study of behavior. Decades of empirical research have resulted in behavioral principles applied to solving problems in a number of fields including business, health and fitness, and most widely in the fields of education and special education.

Behavior analytical research, published since 1968, has resulted in teaching strategies for individuals with autism with scientific evidence of effectiveness through data collection and analysis. These studies relate to nearly all areas of functioning including academic skills, independence, self-care, expressive and receptive language, skill generalization, and vocational skills, to name a few. According to the *Autism Speaks* organization, many studies have shown that high quality ABA programs help many children experience important improvements in areas such as reasoning, communication, adaptability, and learning.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) has been endorsed by the U.S. Surgeon General and other State and general agencies as a proven strategy to help persons with autism spectrum disorders lead happier and more productive lives. This behavioral treatment approach sets the framework for providing direction, organization, and structure for individuals with autism so that they have the ability to learn, improve and succeed. The science-based techniques of data collection and analysis inherent in an intervention method based on Applied Behavior Analysis ensures that teaching and treatment programs are effective, or if ineffective, are adapted or replaced with programs that produce successful results.

An intensive education program, based on the principles of applied behavior analysis, has enabled individuals with autism to acquire repertoires of skills to dramatically increase all areas of functioning. As a result, they are able to lead meaningful and productive lives participating fully in home and community activities and often, vocational settings.