

# Applied Behavior Analysis Classroom Handbook and Guidelines

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## **Classrooms**

The Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) based classrooms will consist of one adult per three students (1:3). One-on-one assistants will not be assigned to particular students. All staff in the classroom will be trained to work with each student equally. The more individuals a student is able to work with, the more likely the skills that are taught will generalize to other individuals or environments that were not used in original teaching trials (i.e. parents and home).

ABA based instruction will be provided within regular school hours (8:20 am – 3:20 pm). Parents are encouraged to implement procedures developed for their student at home. Parent trainings on ABA techniques may be provided by the behavior analyst upon request. Parents are encouraged to request trainings on implementing ABA techniques for their child.

Scott County Public Schools has three ABA classrooms available. The early childhood classroom serves students two through seven-years-old. The elementary classroom serves students kindergarten through sixth grade. The secondary classroom serves students seventh through twelfth grade. Students are able to stay enrolled in Scott County Schools with an IEP until the age of 22.

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## **Assessments**

Assessments will be conducted to provide a baseline measure of the student's current performance. The following assessments will be utilized depending on the student's area of need and ability:

- **The Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP)**
  - The VB-MAPP is a developmental assessment that measures 170 learning and language milestones that are sequenced and balanced across three development levels (e.g. 0-18 months, 18-30 months, and 30-48 months). The skills that are outlined in each level correspond with the learning and language skills demonstrated by typically developing children within those age ranges.
  
- **Essential for Living**
  - Essential for Living is a curriculum based assessment for communication, behavior, and functional skills for children and adults with moderate-to-severe disabilities. Essential for Living is an assessment and curriculum that is composed of functional skills and behaviors which are essential for effective daily living. Although no score is provided with Essential for Living, the assessment is curriculum-based and provides a current and on-going measure of a student's performance. Essential for Living outlines the following eight skills (called the Essential Eight) as crucial skills for an individual to have:
    1. Making requests
    2. Waiting
    3. Accepting removals, making transitions, sharing, taking turns
    4. Completing 10 consecutive, brief, previously acquired tasks
    5. Accepting 'No'
    6. Following directions related to health and safety
    7. Completing daily living skills related to health and safety
    8. Tolerating situations related to health and safety.

- **The Woodcock-Johnson III (WJ III) Tests of Achievement**
    - The Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement is an educational assessment that measures a student’s ability in each area listed below. The score provides an age equivalent and grade equivalent for each area.
      - Letter-word identification
      - Applied Problems
      - Spelling
      - Passage Comprehension
      - Calculation
      - Writing Samples
      - Reading Fluency
      - Math Fluency
      - Writing Fluency
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## **Curriculum**

Individual programs will be developed for each student based on their level of development and academic functioning. Individual programs will be developed and monitored by the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). The following assessments and/or curriculums will be used to develop individualized programs for each student. One or more of the curriculums listed below will be used depending on the needs of the individual student.

- The **Verbal Behavior-Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP)** provides a comprehensive list of what skills a student should have depending on their developmental level is provided in the VB-MAPP. The VB-MAPP will be used to determine what areas are in need of intensive intervention and what areas should be targeted for teaching. If a student receives a score that falls in the Level 1 range, their individual programming will be consistent with areas of deficit in Level 1 skills rather than skills at a higher level (Level 3). The level of difficulty and intensity will increase based on the student’s performance.
- **Essential for Living** provides a list of skills in each of the seven skill domains. Skills are designated as must-have, should-have, good-to-have, and nice-to-have within each domain. Skills that are listed as must-have are more functional, less difficult, and should be taught first. Skills that are designated as should-have, good-to-have and nice-to-have skills are progressively less functional and more difficult skills that will be taught following mastery of must-have skills. The level of skill that is taught to each student will depend on their current level of performance on the assessment and what is determined to be most appropriate for the functional development of the student.
- The **Life Skills Program Planner** includes seven areas of focus including: functional academic skills, communication skills, interpersonal skills, independent living skills, leisure skills, pre-vocational skills, and vocational skills. A list of relevant skills for each of the seven components is provided as well as task analyses of each skill.
- The **Virginia Standards of Learning** will be used for students that are assessed using the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement. The standards of learning that correspond with a student’s grade-equivalent score on the WJ III will be used to develop

educational programs for the student. Standards that are also considered to be more functional skills will be taught first.

- The **Individualized Goal Selection Curriculum** contains 18 Areas of development including Maladaptive Behavior, Speech, Expressive/Receptive Language, Social Skills, Reading, Life Skills, Emotional and Self-Control Development, as well as other areas. There are approximately 2,000 individual tasks presented. The curriculum provides a guide for the selection of appropriate goals based on individual needs and areas of concern. The sequences of development presented serve as a framework to determine appropriate sequencing for each student.

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## **Referral Process**

Research has shown that Applied Behavior Analysis is an effective teaching method for children with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). Children with ASD or autistic like characteristics will automatically be screened for the class and will receive first priority for entry to the classroom. Children with other diagnoses and/or children who exhibit significant behavior problems that are interfering with their learning and that have a behavior intervention plan that is unsuccessful in the student's current education setting may also be considered for admittance to the classroom.

Recommendations from outside therapists and doctors will be considered but will not necessarily guarantee admittance to the class. Applicants will be screened by a committee that consists of the Special Education Director, the Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and the Autism Specialist. Children screened for the classroom will need to meet the entry guidelines specified for admittance on the following page. Children who fail to meet the entry criteria outlined for entry into the ABA classroom will be considered for alternative placement. The IEP team of the child who meets the criteria for entry into the classroom will need to determine if the ABA based classroom is the best placement for the child.

If you have questions about the referral process, please contact the following:

Brenda Robinette: 276-386-6118 or [brenda.robinette@scottsschools.com](mailto:brenda.robinette@scottsschools.com)

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Courtney Currier: 276-386-7935 or [courtney.currier@scottsschools.com](mailto:courtney.currier@scottsschools.com).

## **Entry Guidelines for Placement in an Applied Behavior Analysis Classroom**

The following entry guidelines will be utilized when placement in one of the Applied Behavior Analysis classrooms is being considered for students age three to 22 with autism spectrum disorders and/or students with significant behavior problems that are interfering with their learning in another setting.

- A. Students who exhibit some or all of the following skills will be considered for entry:
  - a. Student demonstrates emerging skills necessary for learning in individual and group settings such as imitating actions, completing matching to sample tasks, and following 1-step instructions. The student should demonstrate the ability to complete one of the three skills listed below.

- i. Student can independently imitate at least one gross motor or fine motor action or imitate a spoken word or sound within ten teaching trials.
  - ii. Student can independently match one object or picture to a sample within ten teaching trials.
  - iii. Student can independently follow at least one instruction related to daily routines and/or follow at least one receptive instruction to do an action or touch an item within ten teaching trials.
- b. Student demonstrates responsiveness to reinforcement by acquiring or approximating a novel skill within ten teaching trials.
- c. On the most recent multidisciplinary evaluation there is documentation of regression or arrests in one or more developmental areas with consequent communication deficits, social isolation, or indifference and behavioral noncompliance, none of which are due to sensory impairment or global cognitive limitation.
- d. Student demonstrates emerging communicative intent.
  - i. Student is observed to make speech sounds in the natural environment.
  - ii. Student demonstrates basic wants and needs (visually references, points to, stands next to, or takes an individual to reinforcers).
- e. Students with more than one year of educational experience, show documented difficulties making progress on 80% of IEP goals with limited responsiveness to other strategies.
- f. Students that would benefit from repetition, prompting, reinforcement, and intensive 1:1 instruction to attain skill acquisition in areas of deficit or to reduce excessive self-stimulatory or escape or avoidance maintained behaviors.
- g. Recommendation by the Board Certified Behavior Analyst after an observation has been completed.

### **Exit Guidelines for Placement Outside of an Applied Behavior Analysis Classroom**

When utilizing the exit guidelines, a student may fall into section A that references the student's skill acquisition or section B that references the student's lack of skill acquisition. The IEP team will consider either section A or section B when determining the continuation or recommendation to no longer utilize Applied Behavior Analysis Principles. Some of the guidelines below may not be applicable based on the student's placement.

- A. Students should exhibit at least 80% of the following:
  - a. Generalization:
    - i. Student uses skills acquired during training sessions outside of the original training session without prompts.

- ii. Student will spontaneously imitate at least 10 actions modeled by peers or adults in the natural environment.
- b. Language
  - i. In less than 5 teaching trials the student will be able to request novel objects, actions, and/or information.
  - ii. Student independently labels at least 20 items or actions per day without being asked to label those items or actions.
  - iii. The student will maintain a conversation on a single topic for at least four exchanges.
- c. Social
  - i. Student will initiate and maintain peer interactions for two exchanges.
  - ii. Student engages in interactive toy play with peers for up to 10 minutes with at least four social contacts with peers during that time period.
- d. Group instruction
  - i. Student learns new academic skills in a group teaching format and does not require direct instruction.
  - ii. Student will remain on-task when instructed to independently engage in a known academic task for at least 10 minutes.
- e. Behavior
  - i. The student no longer demonstrates high or sustained rates of problem behavior such as aggression, self-injury, and/or property destruction that interfere with their learning or the learning of others as determined by the IEP team.
  - ii. The student should also demonstrate reduced rates of self-stimulatory behaviors

**B. Student exhibits one or more of the following:**

- a. Student demonstrates an inability to maintain greater than 60% of the skills that have been taught in ABA over a 6-month period.
- b. Less than a 10% demonstrated skill acquisition during a consecutive 3-month period paired with at least two revisions in core programming areas, such as, academic, receptive, imitative and expressive skills.
- c. Assessments indicate that the student's scores remain scattered within subtests, between subtests or among developmental areas and the severity of scatter has not decreased from prior assessments.

## Glossary of Terms

The following words have been used throughout this document. Definitions have been provided for clarification.

- **Applied Behavior Analysis:** refers to the systematic application of behavior principles to change behavior. ABA procedures can be used to increase desired behaviors, decrease inappropriate behaviors, and to teach new behaviors to students of all functioning levels.
- **Exchange:** the reciprocal interaction between two or more individuals.
- **Generalization:** occurrence of a target behavior in circumstances other than the initial training environment (demonstrates skills across people, places, objects).
- **Independent:** The student responds to instruction(s) without additional prompts or cues.
- **Reinforcement:** application of a consequence following a behavior that increases the likelihood of a behavior reoccurring in the future.
- **Spontaneously:** is the demonstration of a response without instruction or prompting to perform the behavior.
- **Teaching trial (discrete trial):** teaching session that consists of four parts
  1. The trainers presentation ( $S^D$ )
    - a. Appropriate prompt is provided (if needed)
  2. The student's response
  3. The consequence
  4. A short pause between the consequence and the next instruction.

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