

Being an ABA therapist can be a challenging, yet rewarding role. A therapist will learn about child development, and effective behaviour management in a hands-on way. If working with several children, a therapist will learn the different ways that the triad of difficulties in ASD can present in different children.

Being an ABA therapist can give the satisfaction of seeing a young person with ASD learn and grow over time, and a sense of achievement in contributing to this process. Students in the disciplines of speech pathology, psychology, teaching, early childhood studies and occupational therapy often find that ABA work complements their learning, by giving practical experience to build on their theoretical studies.

### ***Some attributes of an effective therapist are:***

- **Energetic personality.** Many children with ASD require 'over the top', expressive people to capture their attention
- **A logical mind.** ABA involves utilising techniques such as task analysis and prompting hierarchies to teach skills. Although there is guidance by the program supervisor, an effective therapist needs to problem solve during therapy sessions in order to teach the child most effectively
- **Patience.** A child's learning can sometimes be slow and there is much repetition involved in teaching a child with ASD
- **Willingness** to continually update the reinforcement used to keep the child motivated
- **Commitment to the job in the medium term.** ABA therapy involves working with children and families. There is a big financial and emotional commitment by such families in order to run an ABA program
- **Intuition.** Knowing when something is not working with the child's program

### ***Building on these attributes is the following knowledge:***

- Understanding of the principles of ABA
- Understanding of Autism and how this impacts a child's behaviour and learning

In order to get started working as an ABA therapist, it is advisable to undertake a training program in order to learn the principles of ABA therapy.

ABIA also offers an intensive therapist training program to give more in-depth information about how to be an effective ABA therapist. It is highly recommended that all therapists complete this program.

Contact ABIA on (03) 9830 0677, or e-mail [info@abia.net.au](mailto:info@abia.net.au), to find out when the next intensive training course will commence. Some ABA service providers also run courses periodically.

### Finding Work as an ABA Therapist

In order to connect with families seeking ABA therapists, try the following:

- Register your details on ABIA's therapist list for families to contact you directly
- Place an advertisement in ABIA's newsletter
- Look for advertisements in the ABIA newsletter, newspapers, University campus, or online
- Approach private ABA providers

When taking on work as a therapist, think about how far you are willing to travel for work. Think about the ages of children you would like to work with, the timeslots you have available for therapy sessions, and what hourly rate you are prepared to work for. There are currently no regulatory guidelines about rates of pay, so you will need to negotiate a fair rate with each individual family.

Contact families and be prepared to meet them in person before committing to working with their child. You may be asked to demonstrate your skills in interaction with the child, so be prepared for this.

### Being an effective therapist

After completing training as a therapist (or you may get 'on-the-job' training), it is advisable to put together an array of reinforcers to use with the children you are working with. Many therapists put together a 'treasure box' of interesting cause-and-effect toys, such as spinning tops and bubbles, and sensory toys, such as a koosh ball and toys with flashing lights. Anecdotal reports from parents suggest that children look forward to ABA sessions when the therapist brings a 'treasure box'.

For older children, the reinforcers included could be token boards, stickers, or figurines of children's TV characters. Think also about the social reinforcers you can use. An important part of beginning to work with a child is determining which reinforcers will motivate them to learn best.

**See the tipsheets 'Running an ABA session' and 'Using Effective Reinforcement' for more ideas.**

## The Role of an ABA Therapist

The role of an ABA Therapist in any ABA program is integral to the overall success of a child's program. An ABA Therapist implements a significant proportion of the educational program. Their role is critical and the specified learning outcomes can reflect the abilities and commitment of the therapist.

An ABA Therapist works closely with the child's ABA Program Supervisor, the family, other therapists and of course the child.

The role of an ABA therapist is incredibly rewarding as therapists contribute to the education and development of a child/ren who, without certain intensive specialised intervention, would not develop the education and life skills essential for them to reach their true potential.

### What is an ABA Therapist?

The primary role of an ABA Therapist is to teach play, communication, self-help and academic skills to children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. An ABA Therapist works as part of a team, alongside the family and other therapists and is supervised and trained by an ABA Program Consultant. An ABA Program Consultant/Supervisor on the other hand has usually completed a minimum of an undergraduate degree in a health related discipline and/or a postgraduate degree in Psychology, Speech Pathology, Disability Studies and has a lot more experience than an ABA therapist. A Program Supervisor has usually had around 2yrs experience as an ABA Therapist as well as completed an internship with a recognised ABA Service Provider. An internship usually consists of the following:

*Mentored Experience:* Acceptable mentored experience must meet all of the following conditions:

- The primary duties during the mentored experience are – a) designing, implementing and monitoring behaviour analysis programs for persons and/or b) overseeing the implementation of behaviour analysis programs by others.
- Monthly contact between the trainee and the mentor. During the monthly contact the mentor discusses and evaluates the behaviour analysis programs designed by the trainee.
- The mentor must either be currently listed with the ABIA or work for a similar ABA organisation.

An ABA Therapist works one-on-one with the child. Initially the one on one therapy usually takes place within the home environment, however as the child grows and develops, the sessions can take place outside the home environment such as kinder, school, shopping centers, playgrounds etc. Moving the therapy outside of the home environment is an important part of the child's education as they need to be able to generalise the skills they learn within each session to other environments, with other people and be able to cope with other distractions that are a part of every day life.

### **How do I start?**

You can approach ABIA and add your contact details to our Therapist List. When parents are looking to employ new therapists they often contact ABIA to access this list. Please note that if you are a therapist wanting to add your details to our list, or if you are a parent wanting to access this list, you must be a member of ABIA. Furthermore, anyone wanting to add their details to the ABIA Therapist List must have completed ABIA's 3-day Therapist Training program. For details of ABIA training programs, please contact ABIA on 03 9830 0677 or e-mail [info@abia.net.au](mailto:info@abia.net.au)

### **What type of skills or qualifications do I need?**

The most important skill a potential therapist can bring to a job, is a genuine commitment and interest in working with a child/ren with autism. ABA therapy is more than just a Part-time job and should not be considered just as means of earning a few extra dollars. It is a commitment to and a potential career move for those people interested in working with children in the disability field in the long term. Essentially, the skills you need to possess are enthusiasm, patience, problem solving, creativity, discretion, the ability to think on your feet and most importantly you must be energetic. A good sense of humour and a positive outlook will also contribute immensely to the success of a good therapist. Therapists must also be able to accept constructive criticism and work both independently and as part of a team.

### **Do Therapists need training?**

Most ABA programs incorporate initial and ongoing training for therapists. Training usually takes place while working with the child and is provided by either the Program Supervisor and/or a more experienced therapist. ABIA's 3-day Therapist Training program is highly recommended for anyone wanting to practice as an ABA Therapist or who works with a child with an ASD. For details of ABIA training programs, please contact ABIA on 03 9830 0677 or e-mail [info@abia.net.au](mailto:info@abia.net.au)

## **What is the job role of an ABA Therapist?**

In the initial stages an ABA Therapist will just be building rapport with the child they will be working with. Building rapport may take several sessions as all children are different and a therapist will need to get to know a child's likes and dislikes, what makes them laugh and how to motivate them to want to learn. Knowing how to motivate a child with autism and provide the right kind of reinforcement to encourage learning will be one of the most important skills an ABA Therapist will learn. Children with autism may not necessarily be interested or motivated by the same things that typically developing children are interested in. To some degree therapists need to be detectives in finding out what makes the child they will be working with "tick" or as one ABA Service Provider once said "Find out what floats their boat".

## ***Some of the tasks therapists will be involved in are as follows:***

- Providing regular one on one therapy sessions which include teaching new skills and managing challenging behaviours
- Observing and recording a child's progress
- Communicating with Program Supervisor, parents and team
- Participating in clinic/ team meetings
- Maintaining and revising student's program folder

## **Who are therapists responsible to?**

If a therapist is employed by a family as opposed to directly through a private ABA Service Provider then the primary responsibility of the therapist is to the family who has employed them to work with their child. If on the other hand a therapist is employed by a Private ABA Service Provider then their primary responsibility is with the organisation they are employed with.

## **How do you become an ABA Therapist?**

There are various ways to attain work as an ABA Therapist. As mentioned earlier, one way is to register your interest on the ABIA Therapist List. Families have access to this list when looking to employ new therapists. In addition to this you can also approach some of the Private ABA Service providers and let them know you are interested in doing some therapy work. In general, a Private ABA Service Provider will require that any potential therapists have at least undertaken an intensive course in ABA before they will even consider you. The demand for therapists often exceeds the supply, so generally there is plenty of work out there.

## **What can a Therapist expect to be paid?**

Payment can vary from family to family, or provider to provider and will depend on a therapist's experience and academic qualifications. However, as a general rule, therapist's pay can range from anywhere between \$15.00 (inexperienced) to \$25 (experienced) per hour. Again, rate of pay depends on the experience of the therapist and the rate the family or private provider is able to pay.

### **How are therapy sessions structured?**

Most ABA sessions can run anywhere from 1.5 to 3.0 hours, depending on age, ability and stage of program. A session of 1.5-3 hours may seem like a long time for a young child to concentrate, however, it includes many small play breaks throughout. Typically, a very young child is only working with a therapist for 1-5 minutes at a time. The child is then free to have a short 1-5 minute play break whilst the therapist records his/her data and prepares for the next task. Approximately every hour the child is given a much longer break of about 10-20 minutes.

### **Where will the therapy take place?**

A Major goal of any ABA program is for the child to be able to generalise the skills they learn during therapy to everyday life. Initially, a significant part of the therapy will take place in and around the home. But with time and confidence (of both child and therapist) more therapy/ incidental learning can take place outside of the home environment. This is very important for the child as they need to practice what they learn throughout therapy in the wider community. Therapy can take place in the following environments:

- Home
- Community
- Supermarkets
- Shopping Centres
- Child Care Centres
- Kindergarten
- School
- Park
- Indoor Play Centres
- Birthday Parties

### **Do therapists work on their own?**

Initially a therapist will overlap with either the Program Supervisor or another more experienced therapist, who will provide training and guidance. As mentioned earlier the first few sessions will be focused on establishing some rapport with the child and becoming acquainted with the program. In addition to this therapists are expected to attend regular (usually fortnightly) Supervision meetings where he/she will be expected to work with a child in front of the Supervisor and other therapists working on the program. During this time the Program Supervisor will provide feedback to the therapists and parents on their performance. The Supervisor will also update the program and discuss any concerns that either the parents or therapists may have.

### **What are the ages of the children I will be working with?**

The age of a child can vary however, most children tend to be between 2-8yrs.

### **What happens if there is conflict between the parent/ Program Supervisor and the therapist?**

Conflict can arise in any given situation. The best way to handle this is to be honest and non-confrontational from the outset. Try to resolve the matter quickly and amicably. Don't forget parents are often under a great deal of stress as they are not only trying to come to terms with their child's diagnosis they are also trying to run and fund their child's ABA Program. There may be situations where for whatever reason, the arrangement simply does not work. It may be better for all concerned to terminate the relationship and seek work with another family.

### **What are the benefits of being an ABA Therapist?**

Therapists have the opportunity to work with some wonderful yet challenging children. With a therapists help children with autism can develop new skills which in turn help to reduce a lot of the frustration and behavioural outbursts that are often apparent in children with autism who have not had appropriate intervention. The benefits for Psychology Students, Speech Pathology Students, OT Students and Disability Study students are invaluable. Working as a therapist provides much needed hands on experience for these students. Many students find that therapy work leads into prospective career opportunities for individuals wanting to work in the Disability Sector. Individuals trained in ABA are now becoming well recognised for their training and expertise in behavioural intervention.

### **Do therapists need to use their own materials and car?**

It is recommended that therapists create their own "Treasure Box" so that when they roll up to their next therapy session, they can draw the child's attention and interest to what they are carrying in their "Treasure Box". It can make therapy interesting and the child can look forward to the therapists arrival to see what they have in their "Treasure Box". The child will also associate the therapist with a pleasant experience and hopefully look forward to sessions with them.

**What about Insurance, Sick Leave and Work cover?**

In most instances, families or private organisations will hire therapists on a casual basis. Casual employees are not entitled to holiday or sick leave. In regards to work cover, the family or organisation that is employing the therapist is responsible for this. In some cases, therapists will be employed by families on a contract basis and will be responsible for their own taxes, work cover etc. In this case therapists will also need to apply for an ABN through the tax office. Every family or private organisation will differ in terms of how they wish to employ their therapists. It is important, therefore, for a therapist to find out the terms of employment before commencing work.

**What are the future prospects for an ABA Therapist?**

The experience and training therapists receive while working as ABA Therapist is priceless. Where else can students get “hands on” experience whilst also being trained and paid on the job! Most ABA Therapists are generally Psychology, Speech Pathology, OT and Teaching students who gain extra experience and expertise by working as a therapist. Some therapists go on to become full time therapists and ABA Supervisors, where they supervise and run ABA programs themselves.

Contact ABIA on 03 9830 0677 or e-mail [info@abia.net.au](mailto:info@abia.net.au) for information on what criteria is needed to be listed as a Private ABA Service Provider with ABIA. Therapists who wish to work as an ABA Supervisor with an already established Private ABA Service Provider will need to directly contact the relevant organisation they wish to work for and ask them for details on their trainee ships etc. For a list of current ABA Service Providers, contact ABIA on 03 9830 0677 or e-mail [info@abia.net.au](mailto:info@abia.net.au) .



*“Helping children with autism reach their potential”*

# ABIA

Autism Behavioural Intervention Association trains, educates, and supports parents, carers, and professionals working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Our purpose is to raise awareness about Applied Behavioural Analysis--its scientific basis and potential positive life outcomes--and to promote it as the preferred method of care and treatment for children with Autism.

**Our services include:**

- Professional development programs
- Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) therapist training
- An annual calendar of workshops and seminars
- A resource library with hundreds of ASD-specific educational resources
- A quarterly newsletter (plus monthly e-alerts)
- Ongoing information and professional support

Attend any one of our scheduled training programs to enhance your professional development, or call and ask about our in-house course delivery by an ABIA specialist (tailored specifically to meet your organisation's needs).

**Discounts available for group bookings!**

**ABIA: Improving the quality of life for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and their families**

Autism Behavioural Intervention Association Inc (ABN 85182741277)  
Level 1, 121 Maling Rd, Canterbury VIC 3126 | PO Box 239 Canterbury VIC 3126  
P: 03 9830 0677 | F: 03 9830 0211  
W: [www.abia.net.au](http://www.abia.net.au) | E: [info@abia.net.au](mailto:info@abia.net.au)



Autism Behavioural Intervention | **ABIA**  
ASSOCIATION



“Helping children with Autism reach their potential”

ABIA

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Group discounts apply

### ‘Making it Work’ with an ASD student in your classroom or kindergarten

ABIA is pleased to offer Professional development specifically designed to equip teachers and integration aides to meet the challenges of teaching children with an ASD.

As more and more children with an ASD enter early childhood settings and mainstream education, teaching and support staff have expressed a need for training that caters to the unique needs of this group. *Making It Work* up-skills both students and educators and helps facilitate a positive school/early childhood experience for all.

*Making it Work* offers a range of topics covering practical classroom and playground strategies that is delivered as a one-day program (or shorter seminar topics specific to your needs – contact ABIA for a quote).

### Do you work with children with ASD? Become an ABA therapist!

*The ABA therapist’s role is to teach play, communication, self-help and academic skills to children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. ABIA’s therapist programs focus on developing and acquiring these skills, and working one-on-one with the ASD child.*

#### Level 1 ABA Therapist Training

This highly sought after three-day course imparts the practical skill and theoretical knowledge required to work as an Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) therapist. For those seeking employment or study in the education or disability fields, this credential is highly regarded.

#### Level 2 ABA Therapist Training

This training is suitable for therapists or parents who have completed Level 1 Training and have a minimum of six months therapy experience.

This course builds on Level 1 training, covering new skills and includes a two-hour therapy session with a child, and debriefing with an experienced ABA supervisor.

### 2-hour topical Seminars

ABIA is proud to present a series of practical and topical seminars for parents of children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and professionals working with ASD children and families. Based on ABA principles, each seminar imparts skill and knowledge, and provides specialist information, to more confidently manage complex yet common behavioural issues:

- TOP TEN WAYS TO MANAGE A CHILD'S BEHAVIOUR
- EATING ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS
- CHOOSING A CURRICULUM
- PROGRAMS FOR HIGH FUNCTIONING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM
- FINDING ORDER IN CHAOS
- TASK ANALYSIS
- TOILETING
- GENERALISATION
- REINFORCEMENT
- TEACHING PLAY

To register or for more information, contact ABIA on 03 9830 0677 or e-mail [info@abia.net.au](mailto:info@abia.net.au)

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# Level I ABA Therapist Training

## “Become an ABA Therapist”

This highly sought after three-day course imparts the practical skill and theoretical knowledge required to work as an Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA) therapist.

The ABA therapist's role is to teach play, communication, self-help and academic skills to children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. This course focuses on developing and acquiring these skills, and working one-on-one with the ASD child. Many professionals, educators and parents, have benefited greatly by understanding and applying ABA principles.

Upon course completion participants will receive a certificate. For those seeking employment or study in the education or disability fields, this credential is highly regarded.

Topics covered include:

- Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Generalisation & maintenance of behaviours.
- Task Analysis.
- Functional Behavioural Assessment.
- Problem Solving.
- Reinforcement.
- Behaviour management strategies.

Trained ABA professionals, with extensive experience in the Autism field, facilitate the program.

If you are genuinely interested in learning more about Autism and behavioural intervention, this training program is highly recommended.

### VENUE



Autism Behavioural Intervention Association | **ABIA**

Autism Behavioural Intervention Association  
Level 1, 121 Maling Rd, Canterbury

### TIME

9.30am – 4.30pm (see dates below)

### COST

ABIA member/Student	<b>\$500</b> (inc. GST)
Non-member	<b>\$550</b> (inc. GST)
HCWA/FaHCSIA funding	<b>\$580</b> (inc. GST)

### REGISTER

Complete registration form below and return to ABIA

### CONTACT

For more information contact ABIA on  
**(03) 9830 0677** or email **info@abia.net.au**

✂ Please detach this section and return with payment

### Registration Form/Tax Invoice: Level I ABA Therapist Training

COMPLETED REGISTRATION FORM CONSTITUTES A TAX INVOICE FOR GST - RETAIN A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS.  
Program runs subject to minimum numbers. You will receive confirmation (or cancellation) of registration as applicable.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Mob \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

### 2012 Program Dates (Please tick preferred date)

**FULL PROGRAMS:** ~~Apr 23-30, May 7; May 23-25; June 13, 20, 27~~

**NEW PROGRAM DATES:**  May 8-10 (Tue-Thurs)  June 7, 14, 21 (3xThurs)

**How did you hear about ABIA?**  Website  I am a member  Ad: \_\_\_\_\_  Other: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I would like to become a member:  Student \$45  Family \$50  Sole Practitioner \$70  Org \$120

### HOW TO PAY (payment processed when program is confirmed; typically within 2 weeks of program start date)

BY VISA#  BY ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER  BY CHEQUE  BY FaHCSIA FUNDING\*\*  
 BY MASTERCARD# Invoice and account details will be provided when program confirmed Make cheque payable to ABIA \$50 credit card bond required to secure registration  
#incurs 1% surcharge

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

POST: **Level I ABA Therapist, ABIA, PO Box 239, Canterbury VIC 3126**

FAX: **03 9830 0211** | SCAN/EMAIL: **info@abia.net.au**



## JOIN NOW & RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING BENEFITS:

- ✓ Quarterly news and monthly e-alert
- ✓ Use of ABIA Resource Centre
- ✓ Parent coffee/information mornings
- ✓ Discount registration to seminars, workshops, education programs
- ✓ Information and support on ABA

## TAX INVOICE (ABN 85 182 741 277)

COMPLETED MEMBERSHIP FORM CONSTITUTES A TAX INVOICE FOR GST - PLEASE RETAIN A COPY FOR YOUR RECORDS

*Privacy & confidentiality: ABIA assures that all personal information is securely stored and used only by our organisation for member communications. Committing to an annual membership indicates consent to receive email alerts and ABIA quarterly news.*

Name .....

Organisation .....

Child's Name ..... Age .....

Address .....

.....

..... Postcode .....

Home ..... Business ..... Mobile .....

Email .....

## HOW TO PAY

I enclose a cheque/money order made payable to ABIA

By Electronic Funds Transfer:

Account name: ABIA; BSB: 013 440; Account number: 354057442  
Please include name as reference and email remittance to info@abia.net.au

Please debit my card:  VISA \*\*  MASTERCARD \*\*  
\*\* incurs 1% surcharge

Card number \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_ | \_\_\_\_\_

Exp Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Name on Card .....

Signature .....

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES

**(Concession rates will be negotiated for parents/carers experiencing financial hardship. Membership renewals are due every 12 months. Price includes GST)**

Parent / Carer	\$ 50.00
Student / Therapist	\$ 45.00
Sole Practitioner (1-5/small practice)	\$ 70.00
Other (Educational Org (kinder, school), Community Org / Govt Dept)	\$ 120.00

***I would like to make a donation to support ABIA*** \$ .....

*(Donations to ABIA are tax deductible. A receipt is issued for amounts of \$2.00 or more.)*

**TOTAL PAYMENT** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

***Please forward your completed form to ABIA***

***Post: PO Box 239, Canterbury, VIC 3126; Fax: (03) 9830 0211; Scan/Email: info@abia.net.au***