

# Autism Spectrum Disorder Diagnosis

Learning that your child has Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), or other type of developmental delay, can be overwhelming.

**We're here to help.**



# 1 in 36 children are diagnosed with **autism**.

## What is **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)**?

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a scientific approach to learning and behavior. ABA therapy is an intensive, individualized teaching approach that can help your child develop the skills that he or she is not developing naturally, such as communication, social interaction, and play skills. These skills are the foundation for learning and independence later in life.

ABA as a treatment for children diagnosed has been endorsed by organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, National Academies of Science, Autism Speaks, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NIH), and the Surgeon General.

## How can **ABA** help my child?

### **ABA Therapy can:**

- Increase communication
- Build social relationships
- Teach play and leisure skills
- Address picky eating
- Help young children learn to potty train
- Set children up to reach their full potential

## Funding for **ABA therapy**

ABA, an intensive behavioral intervention, is the gold-standard treatment for children diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder. Although it is the recognized standard of care for children with an autism spectrum disorder, it can be very expensive. We provide suggestions below for ways families can obtain and pay for services.

### **Determine if you have insurance coverage for ABA therapy**

Many health insurance plans now cover the treatment of autism, including ABA therapy. Visit [www.littleleaves.org](http://www.littleleaves.org) for guidance on how to determine if you do. If so, your insurance company may refer you to a network of providers, or you may be able to choose one on your own. To find one, ask your child's professionals, other families, or local autism community resources for names of providers in your area. You may also check the Behavior Analyst Certification Board website ([www.bacb.org](http://www.bacb.org)) to find certified providers near you.

ABA is based on the principles of learning theory and has the following key elements for young children with autism:



### **Individualized, socially significant goals.**

Therapeutic sessions are tailored to the specific needs of the child, and focus on helping the child develop skills that will meaningfully enhance the ability to function in his or her family and community.



### **Individualized attention.**

Each child receives one-on-one teaching from a therapist at all times.



### **Individualized motivation.**

Therapists uncover what motivates each child (tickles, playing with a truck, high-fives, etc.) and uses them to reward appropriate behaviors, which leads to skill development. According to learning theory, rewards reinforce desired behaviors, increasing the likelihood the child will repeat them.



### **Learnable tasks.**

Skills are broken down into smaller parts to make them easier for a child to learn.



### **Multiple learning opportunities.**

Therapists are constantly creating opportunities for the child to learn. With multiple learning opportunities, the child is able to repeatedly practice targeted skills.



### **Generalization.**

ABA works to ensure a child has truly mastered a new skill so that it can be applied not just in one particular setting or with one particular person, but in any situation, especially in the settings where they naturally occur. For example, when a child learns to brush his or her teeth, he or she must be able to do it not just during therapy with the red toothbrush, but at home with any toothbrush.



### **Continuous assessment.**

Therapists continuously collect data to monitor a child's progress and then make data-based decisions about the course of treatment, such as when a skill is mastered, or when a different approach may be needed to teach it.



### **Intensity.**

Organizations such as the American Academy of Pediatrics suggest that young children with autism receive 20 – 40 hours of intensive ABA per week. Neuro-typical children are learning from their environment all day long. Since children with autism need a more structured approach to learning, it is important to maximize their time in therapy (i.e., their “learning time”) each day.

# Our Locations

## Maryland:

Columbia  
Frederick  
Germantown  
Lutherville  
Middle River  
Millersville  
Owings Mills  
Silver Spring  
White Marsh

## Virginia:

Alexandria  
Ashburn  
Chantilly  
Midlothian  
Reston  
Tysons Corner

## Florida:

Coral Springs  
Miami Lakes  
Weston

## About Little Leaves Behavioral Services

Little Leaves, a division of FullBloom, is a full-time, center-based Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) program for young children with autism spectrum disorder, run in a preschool-like setting. It is designed for children ages 1-6 who have been recommended for intensive ABA services. Each client works one-on-one with a trained behavior technician, addressing individualized goals with a focus on social communication, social interactions, and school readiness skills. The company operates centers in Maryland, Virginia, and Florida. Little Leaves is accredited by the Behavioral Health Center of Excellence.

## Contact Little Leaves today:

202-420-8359 | [www.littleleaves.org](http://www.littleleaves.org)



Behavioral Health Center of  
Excellence® (BHCOC®) Accredited



Approved CEU  
Provider