What To Expect When Expecting ABA

Disclaimer – The following recommendations have been specifically tailored to ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) services within the state of Florida. While many of these guidelines may be applicable across various states, insurance requirements and policies can vary significantly by region. It's important to understand that exceptions and nuances exist, and there may be situations that do not align perfectly with the recommendations below. If your supervising BCBA provides guidance that appears to differ from the information here, it is strongly advised to engage in open dialogue with them to gain clarification before drawing any conclusions.

Parent Training Requirements:
Most insurance providers expect that Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) conduct parent training sessions at least once per month. These sessions are typically billable and are considered a crucial component of comprehensive ABA services.

Minimum Therapy Hours:
Generally, insurance companies are reluctant to approve fewer than 10 hours per week of one-on-one therapy (RBT-delivered direct hours) unless it has been formally documented that the client is in the process of fading out of services.

School-Based Services:
Insurance approval for therapy during school hours can be challenging to obtain. ABA services are not intended to replace academic instruction and therefore should not be provided during lessons such as math or reading unless there is a clear and compelling behavioral justification (e.g., severe problem behavior that directly impacts participation or safety).

Academic Instruction:
It is outside the professional and ethical scope of BCBAs, BCaBAs, RBTs, and BCBA-Ds to deliver academic instruction, including tutoring or assisting with homework. However, ABA professionals may observe and collect data on behavioral responses that occur during academic activities to inform treatment.

Scope of Practice:
Teaching academic content is not within the defined scope of practice for ABA professionals. Treatment goals and interventions should remain strictly focused on behavioral objectives.

Professional Boundaries:
ABA providers must maintain clear and appropriate professional boundaries. This includes

avoiding dual relationships, such as attending personal family events or accepting high-value gifts from clients or their families.

Supervision Requirements for RBTs:
To maintain certification, Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs) must receive supervision from a qualified supervisor (BCBA-D, BCBA, or BCaBA) for at least 5% of their total monthly direct therapy hours. As a result, you may observe increased BCBA presence for clients receiving a higher volume of therapy hours.

School Access Limitations:
Not all educational institutions permit ABA professionals to deliver services within classroom settings. This is often determined by individual school or district policies.

Goal Transparency:
There should be open and ongoing communication regarding all treatment goals approved by insurance. BCBAs should ensure transparency with both parents and, when appropriate, the client, to foster collaboration and understanding.

Overlap with Other Services:
Insurance typically does not allow ABA services to be billed simultaneously with other therapies such as Occupational Therapy (OT), Speech-Language Pathology (SLP), or Physical Therapy (PT) unless there is a documented and approved behavioral need warranting the overlap.