

Acronyms and Definitions

- **Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)**

ABA is an evidence-based therapeutic approach that focuses on understanding and improving socially significant behaviors. This includes communication, social skills, daily living activities, and behavior reduction. ABA is most commonly used to support individuals with autism and developmental disabilities, but its principles can be applied across many populations and settings.

ABA Provider Credentials

- **Board Certified Behavior Analyst – Doctoral Level (BCBA-D)**

A BCBA-D is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst who has completed a doctoral degree (typically a PhD or PsyD) in behavior analysis or a closely related field, in addition to meeting all standard BCBA requirements. This credential is distinguished by advanced research experience, often including published work and academic contributions to the field. While BCBA-Ds have the same scope of practice as BCBAs, they often work in leadership, academic, or supervisory roles. They are less common in clinical settings.

- **Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)**

A BCBA is a professional who holds a master's degree in behavior analysis or a related field. Individuals must complete a verified course sequence, accumulate supervised fieldwork hours, and pass the BCBA certification exam. BCBAs are responsible for designing individualized treatment plans, supervising direct service staff, training caregivers, and ensuring the overall quality and ethical delivery of ABA services.

- **Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA)**

A BCaBA is a paraprofessional who holds a bachelor's degree and has completed a verified course sequence and required supervised fieldwork. BCaBAs must pass a certification exam and work under the supervision of a BCBA or BCBA-D. They assist with implementing

treatment plans, collecting data, and supervising behavior technicians, but they cannot operate independently.

- **Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)**

An RBT must have a high school diploma or GED, completed a 40-hour training program, and passed the RBT certification exam. RBTs provide one-on-one therapy directly to clients under the close supervision of a BCBA or BCaBA. They are the primary implementers of ABA programs and play a critical role in collecting data and supporting skill development and behavior reduction.

- **Behavior Technician (BT)**

A Behavior Technician is a staff member who performs duties similar to those of an RBT, such as delivering direct 1:1 therapy. However, BTs may not have completed the formal RBT certification process. Their training and qualifications vary by company and state. Not all insurance providers will approve services delivered by a BT, especially if the provider is not credentialed or supervised according to insurance standards.

Insurance Terminology

- **Authorization (Auth)**

An "authorization" is the official approval from an insurance company to begin ABA services. This typically follows an assessment conducted by a BCBA and includes the number of hours approved for therapy, parent training, and supervision. No services can begin until an authorization is in place.

- **Reauthorization (Re-auth)**

A reauthorization is the process of renewing approval for ABA services once the initial authorization period ends—usually every 6 to 12 months. This process involves submitting updated progress reports, treatment plans, and in some cases, re-assessments, to justify continued services.