

TRANSITION CHECKLIST: MOVING FROM ABA PROGRAMS TO SCHOOL PROGRAMS

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The goal of this checklist is to build upon the information from the article: *Transitioning from ABA Programs to School Programs*, and to provide some additional guidance. The success of a student's transition from an ABA program to a school is dependent on a number of factors, including the skills the child/student has gained, how they were prepared for the transition process, the relationships between the ABA program/provider and the school district, and how the school is prepared to receive the child. The transition process is also impacted by the reason for transitioning. Potential reasons include the child has met all goals in their treatment plan, funding has been discontinued, family has chosen to remove their child, or the ABA center/program has decided to terminate services. As such, the transition will need to be individualized for each child and situation. This checklist just provides some ideas and recommendations.

Families moving their child to a school program should review the document *Navigating the Course: Finding your way through Indiana's Special Education Rules* at <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/specialed/navigatingthecourse.pdf>.

Schools and ABA programs function under different regulations, laws, and standards. It is helpful if both parties (school and ABA providers) are aware of these differences.

Service Plan:

In many cases, a service plan has been established with the school district when the child is placed in an ABA program. Service plans vary significantly across students. Having a service plan in place can help to facilitate a smooth transition. Decisions about the following may be included in the plan:

- Ancillary services (e.g., speech, physical therapy, occupational therapy) to be received while in ABA.
- Process and timelines for increasing school services (e.g., gradual, all at once).
- Sharing of information (e.g., what the school needs and ABA can provide). Family should sign for mutual exchange of information.
- Behavior programming (options available/legal obligations in schools may differ than in ABA programs).
- Goals worked on in ABA programs.
- Teacher and/or other school personnel may observe student in ABA Center or other relevant settings. Observation may occur via video provided by ABA program regarding current programming, treatments, challenges, etc.

ABA providers should consider the following ideally 9-12 months prior to the transition:

- Family members are informed about transition process and a potential date is identified. Ideally a schedule for the transition should be developed.
- Target skills for daily living and classroom routines to enhance success in educational setting (e.g., working in a group, walking in line) and to enhance independence.
- Identify foundational skills needed, and address how generalization and maintenance will be addressed.
- The ABA program should begin approximating the physical structure of the learning environment (classroom) and adult-to-student ratio in school.
- Reduce the child's dependence on a single instructor and begin to provide attention and reinforce at a rate that reflects the realities of school.
- Conduct parent training regarding managing homework completion or in meeting other school expectations.
- Based on school report, use supplies and materials that are more commonly found in educational setting.
- Prepare student for the transition using social stories, visual supports, and other means deemed necessary.
- Encourage parental participation throughout the child's school experience. This may include meeting other parents, attending workshops, connecting with specialists and the child's teacher, etc.
- Provide materials that can transition with the child to the school setting (e.g., sign dictionary, picture schedule, etc.) and offer explanation/training to school on how to use materials.
- ABA program completes recent assessment, documents progress on goals and provides report to parent and school.
- ABA provider summarizes information concerning how the child learns, their communication system, behavior program, and instructional strategies that work.

Family, ABA Provider/program and school set pre-meeting to discuss transition process. The following topics are discussed:

- Discuss potential placements (options are presented). Family may decide to visit placement options. Family may opt to have student visit as well.
- If problematic behaviors occur, there should be a discussion of safety precaution. Need to have full disclosure of safety risk and behavior challenges.
- Determine timeline for transition (e.g., gradual, all at once).
- Share relevant information (e.g., what school needs and ABA can provide, evaluations conducted by ABA program).
- Discuss training needs of staff. This will differ depending on previous training of staff. In some cases, extensive training may be required. In others, none will be needed.
- Discuss goals worked on in ABA programs and potential application to school setting.
- Provide parents with information about services available in schools.
- According to timeline established in state law, case conference meeting is scheduled.
- Schools may request families to sign for student to be evaluated to determine educational needs.
- Discussion of how and if family will continue to have their child involved in ABA.

Case Conference meeting held. Parents can invite others to the case conference. If ABA program staff members attend, it is at the invitation of the family.

- School will develop an IEP (individualized education program). In schools, students are expected to engage in programs/goals reflecting state standards. ABA treatment plan goals are expected to reflect medical necessity as opposed to state standards.
- Determine behavior programming, including the need for a Functional Behavior Assessment (options available/legal obligations in schools will differ from those in ABA programs).
- Discuss the possibility of extended school year services to allow for smooth transition to school.
- Present levels of performance can be discussed with input from ABA providers.
- Facilitate the restructuring of language regarding goals from ABA provider to school to comply with state standards
- Assess the physical environment in relation to the student's need (e.g., number of students, volume, activity level) across relevant school settings (e.g., lunch room, classroom, playground, etc.).

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