

# Implementing ABA in a School District

Liz Mackie, M.Ed, CCC-SLP, BCBA  
Elementary Special Education Coordinator  
Fairfax County Public Schools  
5/24/07

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Questions Answered

- Why ABA?
- What is FCPS doing?
- What does it look like?
- How did we get here?
- How are we measuring outcomes?
- What if I have limited resources?



5/11/2007

2

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



## Why ABA?

### Definition

- ABA is a science that uses procedures derived from behavioral principles to systematically improve socially significant behaviors for learners of all ages
- Based on Learning Theory
- ABA is scientifically validated as an effective intervention for autism, New York State Department of Health, Early Intervention Program, Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities

### Research

- "Thirty years of research demonstrated the efficacy of applied behavioral methods in reducing inappropriate behavior and in increasing communication, learning and appropriate social behavior", US Surgeon General
- Effective in increasing behaviors and teaching new skills (Goldstein, 2002; Odom et al., 2003; McConnell, 2002)
- Effective in reducing problem behaviors (Horner et al., 2002)

5/11/2007

3

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## What is FCPS doing?

- Implementing an ABA program
- Funding additional resources
- Working with national consultants
- Providing comprehensive training
- Using a variety of curriculum and assessment resources
- Providing summer services
- Extending staff contracts
- Collaborating with parents
- Collaborating with local universities



5/11/2007

4

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## School Board Allocation Supports Increased Resources

### Staffing

- ABA Specialist supports design, training, and implementation of services
- Team of 12 ABA Coaches provide training and support to schools
- Preschool Autism Class (PAC) staffing 6:3, students to staff
- Elementary Enhanced Autism Class staffing 2 to 1, students to staff
- Team of 19 central ABA instructional assistants to provide temporary 1:1 instructional support as needed



### Training

- Substitute and hourly funds
- Consultant fees

5/11/2007

5

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## National Consultants

- Ron Leaf, Ph.D., Autism Partnership
- Todd Streff, M.S. BCBA, Great Strides Behavioral Consultant



- Initial consultations provided training to staff and guidance to the district
- Goal to increase internal capacity to provide training and support to schools
- Continue to provide advanced training to staff
- Current focus on training and support to the ABA Specialist and ABA coaches

5/11/2007

6

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Staff Development

Mandatory for teachers and instructional assistants

- Core Staff Training
  - ABA Fundamentals
  - VB Fundamentals
  - 5 day Hands-On Training
- Monthly Training

Training database and statistics maintained and reported to principals quarterly

- Other
  - School based training by the ABA coaches
  - Advanced Hands-On
  - Intensive Behavioral Workshops
  - Professional Crisis Management
  - ABA/VB training for school administrators
  - Ongoing training and support from consultants



5/11/2007

7

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Curriculum and Assessment Resources

- Early Academic Curriculum Guide developed by FCPS with consultant support
- Verbal Behavior Screening Assessment from Mark Sundberg
- Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills- Revised (ABLLS-R) for each school to be used as a resource
- Uniform data collection system



5/11/2007

8

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Summer Services

- PAC classes
  - 6 weeks part of IEP, not ESY
  - Teachers and Instructional Assistants on unique 11 month calendar to provide continuity in the summer
- Elementary classes
  - Maintain 2:1 ratio
  - Receive ABA coach support and training
  - Provide ABA services



5/11/2007

9

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Collaborating with Parents and the Community

- Quarterly meetings with representatives from the community
- Co-sponsoring workshops
- Offering monthly parent workshops
- Collaborating with private service providers



5/11/2007

10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## What Does It Look Like?



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Curriculum and Instruction

- Skills broken down and taught systematically
- Multiple opportunities throughout the day and across activities, no down time, natural environment teaching
- Prompts to facilitate learning with systematic fading of prompts
- Meaningful and relevant curriculum, high expectations
- Strong emphasis on behavior, language, and social skills
- A fun, inviting classroom!



5/11/2007

12

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Data Collection

- Daily probes
- Student record books
- Behavioral data as needed
- Analysis of data to measure effectiveness of intervention
- Use of curriculum planning form to facilitate identification of targets using a verbal behavior analysis



5/11/2007

13

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Reinforcement

- Frequent reinforcement assessments
- Use of contingent positive reinforcement for target behaviors/skills
- Use of reinforcement for absence of inappropriate behaviors
- A variety of reinforcers used differentially
- Minimal reaction to inappropriate behaviors



5/11/2007

14

---

---

---

---

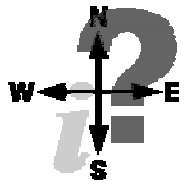
---

---

---

---

How did we get here?



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

	2002/03	PAC begins, 11 classes, consultant provides training to staff, support team identified within FCPS staff, 2 classrooms targeted by consultants
	2003/04	Summer Hands on training, PAC expands, elementary classes selected, consultant training, support from OSE staff, panel talks with other school systems and national consultants, committee works on expanded ABA/VB model
	2004/05	School board allocation, enhanced autism services begin, 29 PAC, 85 Elem., ABA specialist, 9 ABA coaches, 17 ABA IAs, 2 consultants monthly, 8 week PAC summer program, Parent workshops, quarterly meetings with parent community
	2005/06	31 PAC, 115 Elementary classes, 10 ABA coaches, 19 central ABA IAs, 6 week PAC summer program, training by ABA staff, monthly consultant support targeting ABA staff
	2006/07	34 PAC classes, 120 Elementary classes, ABA training mandatory, 12 ABA coaches, 19 central ABA IAs, consultant support reduced, 11 month contracts for PAC staff

5/11/2007

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Program Evaluation Components

- Parent satisfaction surveys
- Staff satisfaction surveys
- Student outcome data
- Training statistics
- Measurement of implementation benchmarks

5/11/2007 17

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### What if I have limited resources?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## How School Districts Can Implement ABA Programs

Limited Resources	Moderate Resources	Generous Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Hire a consultant to assist with initial planning and program development</li> <li>•Identify special education staff members to become resident experts</li> <li>•Resident experts attend ABA training sponsored by local organizations</li> <li>•Start small, target a few classes</li> <li>•Utilize state autism council as resource for staff training</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Hire an ABA specialist to oversee program development and staff training</li> <li>•Hire a consultant to work with the ABA Specialist on an intermittent basis</li> <li>•ABA specialist attends conferences and workshops by nationally known experts in the field</li> <li>•Identify classrooms for support</li> <li>•Identify staff members to support implementation and to work with ABA specialist</li> <li>•Offer stipends for staff to attend training in summer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Hire a consultant to provide ongoing support to staff and assist with program development and training</li> <li>•Hire an ABA specialist to oversee program</li> <li>•Hire ABA "coaches" to provide support to classroom staff</li> <li>•Consider extended services in the summer for students</li> <li>•Offer incentives to pursue coursework in ABA and autism</li> <li>•Budget funds for stipends and substitute costs for training</li> </ul>

5/11/2007

19

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Important Considerations

- Involve stakeholders
- Clearly define your philosophy and focus
- Establish the culture
- Define what ABA is and is not
- Identify support personnel for training and coaching
- Develop a consistent, systematic training plan
- Recruitment and retention
- Develop a plan for ongoing collaboration and communication with stakeholders
- Build it and they will come!



5/11/2007

20

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



For more information including:

- Frequently asked questions
- Information on staff
- Information on training
- Power Point presentations

visit our website at

<http://www.fcps.edu/ss/ABA/>

5/11/2007

21

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---