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## **ABA Patient Handbook**

Dear Family,

Welcome to IMPACT Therapy! If you are already part of our family of companies in another way, welcome to the ABA Department. Thank you for your interest in Applied Behavior Analysis.

In this document, you will find a collection of policies and procedures necessary for our department to run smoothly. Your child, their success, and their safety when they are in our care are of utmost importance. Your child is the primary beneficiary of services at IMPACT Therapy regardless of the funding source. Conflicts are resolved in the best interest of the patient regardless of other stakeholder interest (i.e. third party payors, etc.). You are expected to be knowledgeable of these policies and procedures, as they may be referenced throughout your child's treatment.

This handbook was designed to contain general information and guidelines. It is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all possible situations you may encounter during your child's therapy treatment. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the content of this handbook, please reach out to your child's BCBA or the Director of ABA Services. Our front office can direct your questions to the appropriate party by calling (850) 325-6301.

We are excited to have you with us!

Kevin Kolka  
Owner/CEO

Ashlyn O'Neil, MA, BCBA  
Director of ABA Services



## **About Us**

IMPACT Therapy was founded in 2006 to provide families with a central location for children to receive first-rate therapeutic treatment from expert, individually licensed therapists. By 2012, services had expanded to include a wide variety of therapy types, as well as the addition of IMPACT Academy and IMPACT Preschool. In our therapy clinic, IMPACT currently offers speech, occupational, and physical therapies in addition to Applied Behavior Analysis.

Started by parents with a need for specialized programs, IMPACT is focused on building a community for all children, especially those with special needs. IMPACT's family of companies collectively serves children aged 6 weeks through 22 years old with varying disabilities. We are the only full-service, comprehensive private education center in the region.

For almost two decades, IMPACT has grown but remained focused on empowering and educating all children with a model that utilizes therapeutic intervention to provide a solid foundation for each child to have positive social, emotional, physical, and academic success. We believe that every child has the potential to succeed and deserves high quality educational opportunities based on their individual developing strengths.

## **IMPACT Mission**

To provide comprehensive services in response to community needs in the areas of education, child development, and therapeutic services.

## **Diversity Statement**

At IMPACT Therapy, we are committed to creating and sustaining a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment for all our staff and patients. We believe that universal acceptance is a key factor of fulfilling our mission to provide comprehensive services in multiple areas of our expertise.

We are committed to maintaining an action-oriented approach to upholding an environment that reflects our core values. These values are rooted in protecting and supporting our staff and patients with an inclusive and equitable organizational culture. IMPACT is taking the following steps to ensure our organization continues to meet these standards:

- Assuring administrative staff understand and guide our organization to be held accountable in the domains of diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Conducting regular assessments of policies and procedures to ensure our DEI efforts are effective
- Providing ongoing training opportunities for our staff to increase awareness and delivery of culturally humble service delivery
- Ensuring current staff are treated fairly and promoting these values in recruitment, hiring, and retention processes
- Always providing high-quality care to all patients regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or other personal characteristics

We recognize that creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization requires ongoing effort and a willingness to adapt and change. We are committed to this journey and to making our organization a place where everyone feels valued, respected, and supported.

## Translation Services

We believe that language should not be a barrier to accessing high-quality care. IMPACT Therapy will collaborate with your preferred translation service for families who speak languages other than English. These services are often available through your insurance. Due to the large variety of languages spoken, we are unable to guarantee that we have a staff member able to serve as a translator. If you have questions regarding the languages spoken by our providers, please contact our front office at 850-325-6301. Translation services for provided paperwork can be provided upon request.

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## Standard Practice Policy

At IMPACT Therapy, we use standardized assessments and criterion-referenced assessments for all ABA clients to evaluate their skills, needs, and progress within domains. These assessments are updated at least annually. However, it is recommended they are updated every 6 months or more often, if clinically warranted.

FBA's (Functional Behavior Assessments) are used to evaluate variables that could be contributing to the client's behavioral deficits. These practices are used continually during treatment to ensure effective intervention and response to behaviors. Any potential changes in treatment are discussed with caregivers to ensure consent throughout the client relationship.

During the assessment process, information is gathered via direct and indirect methods to determine the level of intensity that is necessary for success. While non-clinical factors may influence the volume of services we are able to provide, BCBA's will document professional recommendations for the individual.

- Factors that are considered when determining clinical recommendations for service hours include: age of client, environments where client spends the most time, norm- and criterion- referenced assessment scores, caregiver training needs, skill strengths and deficits, and recommended intervention type (i.e. focused or comprehensive).
- Factors that are **not** considered when determining clinical recommendations for service hours include: schedule availability for services, funder restrictions, staffing restrictions/limitations, or setting restrictions.

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## **Patient Assent Policy**

It is our policy that informed consent and patient assent are obtained several times throughout the client relationship. This can range from before the initial assessment through discharge of services. Consent will be obtained from caregivers unless the client is 18 years of age and able to provide consent independently.

If the individual is not able to provide independent consent, these attempts will be modified to fit the client's skill and understanding level. Some examples could include offering choices or explaining in developmentally appropriate language. Appropriately identified methods will be used to explain that treatment outcomes cannot be guaranteed. Consent for treatment can be withdrawn at any time by anyone in the client party.

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## **Family Satisfaction**

IMPACT Therapy is committed to fostering a positive relationship among clients, their families, and the ABA team serving your child. Frequent analyses of satisfaction of our therapeutic efforts will be conducted to ensure effective delivery of services. Your child's supervising BCBA and the Director of ABA Services strive to continue a relationship throughout services where complaints and concerns can be voiced in a timely manner. At all times, the organization will attempt to address and resolve the concern in a reasonable period of time. Confidentiality and privacy will be preserved while ensuring adequate investigation, corrective action, and to the extent required by law. IMPACT Therapy will not retaliate against anyone who submits a complaint and will not tolerate any form of retaliation against families utilizing this procedure.

Clients and their families are encouraged to share internal concerns or feedback with the Director of ABA Services so that appropriate adjustments to services delivery can be made. If preferred, conversations can also be directed to the Director of Human Resources by calling the front office at 850-325-6301.

It is encouraged that concerns be shared internally. However, if the complaint cannot be remedied internally, then claims may be reported to an outside organization such as the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (<https://www.bacb.com/contact-us/>) or BHCOE d/b/a Jade Health (<https://www.bhcoe.org/become-a-bhcoe/report-a-compliance-concern/>).

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## **Caregiver Training and Participation Policy**

Caregivers are in a position where they have a unique ability to make a positive difference in their children's lives. Caregiver participation in ABA programming is a very important element that has the potential to greatly contribute to the child's success. It is a requirement of your insurance and IMPACT Therapy that caregivers are involved in the development of treatment planning. Continued involvement throughout the client relationship is necessary for success. Individualized goals for caregivers will be identified through direct and indirect assessment methods.

It is expected that caregivers participate fully in all meetings, trainings, and consultations given by their child's Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). In these meetings, caregivers will be equipped with the knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about their child's care (i.e. impacts of participating in non-evidence-based practices, benefits of evidence-based practices, etc.). The ABA Department at IMPACT Therapy will not implement non-behavior-analytic interventions, therefore, we cannot support non-evidence-based practices that interfere with the child's programming or progress. If these concerns arise, they will be discussed with caregivers. Efforts to remedy gaps in understanding will be documented and continually visited throughout the client relationship.

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## **Onboarding Policies**

When a referral is received by our Referral Coordinator, your insurance benefits will be verified to ensure that the desired services will be covered. You will be contacted with the result of this verification before being placed on the waitlist.

If you are interested in ABA services but are not able to immediately begin services based on staff availability, additional resources will be shared with you in the interim. Following the completion of all intake documentation, the Director of ABA Services will be in contact to share these resources within one month. If you are interested in learning more about options for private pay ABA services, please contact the front office at (850) 325-6301.

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## **Discharge Policies**

The goal of ABA services is for us to ultimately work ourselves out of a job. We want your child to succeed and be able to be age-appropriately independent in various aspects of their daily lives. Inevitably, this will lead to an eventual discharge from ABA. When this time comes, you will be well-informed of what to expect.

When your child is nearing the graduation of services, your child's BCBA will discuss the upcoming intent to discharge with you during your monthly caregiver training meetings. This decision will be based on transition benchmarks that were outlined at intake and current assessments of your child's skills. At this time, a clear timeline will be provided from the current level of care to discharge of direct services. Fade out plans will be introduced for all behavior reduction programming. A subsequent authorization based solely on caregiver training will be discussed as an option, if it is warranted. You will have the opportunity to voice concerns or urgent needs before services are stopped. This will be documented in writing.

Additional discharge criteria are noted in your child's care plan such as lack of attendance to sessions, non-adherence to care plan policies, etc.

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## **Incident Reporting**

IMPACT Therapy completes Incident Reports to document patient and staff injury. These reports are completed following an incident that leaves a visible mark on either party to include, but is not limited to redness, bruising, bleeding, etc. Appropriate first aid will be administered. In the clinic, first aid kits are located in the kitchen cabinet above the sink. If services are to occur in the home, it is a requirement that a first aid kit is present. The appropriate incident reporting form will be filled out entirely with details of the incident and lasting marks left.

If the injury is severe, caregivers will be contacted immediately. Otherwise, caregivers will be informed when they arrive to pick-up. The Incident Report will be presented to be signed. A copy can be made for caregivers upon request. Following parent signature, Incident Reports will be signed by the Director and saved for 1 year.

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## **Medications**

Medication will not be administered by ABA staff. This includes over-the-counter or prescription medications.

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## **Illness Policy**

Our organization is committed to providing outstanding services to your child(ren). For ABA services to be successful, it is important for all staff and clients to be feeling their best. The following are symptoms of communicable disease as defined by the Department of Children and Families (DCF):

- Fever - greater than 100.4
- Severe coughing
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Suspected pink eye
- Unexplainable rash
- Lice

In an effort to keep our clinic as clean and sanitized as possible, your child must be free of all aforementioned symptoms for 24 hours without symptom-reducing medication to return to sessions. In the event of widespread infection, the Director of ABA Services will reach out with event-specific protocol.

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## **Patient Bill of Rights**

- A patient has the right to respectful care given by competent personnel.
- A patient has the right to every consideration of his privacy concerning his/her own medical care program. Case discussion, consultation, examination and treatment are considered confidential and should be conducted discreetly.
- A patient has the right to expect that all communication and records pertaining to his/her medical care should be treated as confidential except as otherwise provided by law.
- The patient has the right to expect emergency procedures to be implemented without unnecessary delay.



- The patient has the right to good quality care and high professional standards that are continually maintained and reviewed.
  - The patient has the right to full information in layman's terms concerning diagnosis, treatment and prognosis, including information about alternative treatments and possible complications. When it is not medically advisable to give such information to the patient, the information shall be given on his behalf to the patient's next of kin or to another appropriate person.
  - A patient has the right to therapy services without discrimination based upon race, color, religion, sex, sexual preference or national origin.
  - The patient who does not speak English is permitted to bring an interpreter to his/her therapy sessions.
  - The facility shall provide the patient, upon written request, access to all information contained in his/her medical records.
  - The patient has the right to expect good management techniques to be implemented within the facility out of consideration for the use of the patient's time and to avoid the personal discomfort of the patient.
  - The patient has the right to examine and receive detailed explanations of his/her bill.
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### **ABA Session Requirements**

The requirements listed below are in place to ensure clear communication of expectations so that ABA services may be delivered safely and effectively.

Caregiver Presence Policy: For all sessions conducted outside of the clinic setting (i.e. school, home, community, etc.), responsible adult presence is required. This responsible person must be over the age of 18 and designated by the client's primary caregiver. The responsible adult must be readily accessible during therapy. Parents and responsible adults have the opportunity to actively engage in the ABA session, where it is appropriate, if desired.

Signing Documentation: Caregivers or the responsible adult present are required to sign all session documentation as verification that the services occurred. If this is unable to be completed before the staff member leaves the session, the caregivers and staff member should ensure the signature is obtained within 48 hours.

Cancellations & Reschedules: Parents and staff are required to give 24-hour advance notice for cancellations. If 24-hour notice is not given or you miss a scheduled session three times in a 3-month period, you will forfeit your child's permanent therapy time.



At this time, you will be put on the call-in list until another permanent therapy spot becomes available. When appropriate notice is given, the therapy team will make all efforts to reschedule therapy appointments, when possible.

Family Training: Caregivers are required to attend family training and actively participate in the client's treatment. This is a necessary component to ensure that ABA services are effective and create lasting change. Family members and the BCBA are responsible for coordinating training sessions and goals to address deficits in all caregiver's knowledge of ABA. This includes increased understanding of the principles of ABA and specific skills necessary to continue the teaching and development of the client in the absence of ABA staff members.

Crisis Plan: In the event of an environmental emergency, such as a tornado, flood, etc., the staff at IMPACT Therapy will make every effort to evacuate the child to a safe area and call 911. If a medical emergency occurs, our staff will call for assistance and give aid, as qualified. In the event of a behavioral emergency, our staff will utilize principles of Safety Care training for physical intervention, as trained and needed, to prevent injury to the child and others. For all crises identified, the family and BCBA, if not already present, will be contacted following the incident as soon as feasible.