

How does the Group Language Therapy Program combine with individual Discrete Skills Training to provide each child with appropriate, meaningful language skills?

The individual skills taught in the child's ABA sessions are immediately reinforced in group language therapy, so that the child is able to use his/her communication skills for meaningful interactions with others. These discrete skills are used within meaningful social interactions so the child will learn to use appropriate communication skills within a preschool setting or an age-appropriate naturalistic environment.

The child learns to use skills taught in ABA to interact with peers, follow directions within a group, participate in pretend play activities and appropriately direct others within the environment. During group therapy sessions, the child engages in group activities which promote appropriate communication in order to participate in turn-taking games, academic activities (singing, using letters/numbers, comprehending stories and following directions), self-help activities, pretend play activities with peers and successfully requesting needs within a classroom situation.

Since the discrete skills learned in ABA sessions are immediately taught and reinforced in the group setting, the child's use of these skills seems to generalize quicker and easier into his/her daily environment. The generalization of these skills helps to promote the meaningful use of language skills for the child in many daily social environments. Group language therapy helps to engage the child in appropriate social and conversational interactions in which he/she can direct others and initiate interactions.

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Therapeutic Language Center program for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders



Program Overview

This program is an early intervention program for children (ages 18 months to five years) diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, which meets on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Our program combines one-to-one individual instruction, based on applied behavior analytic principles, with Group Language Therapy to establish and promote appropriate language development and early academic skills. While all children in the program receive both group and individual instruction, the programs for individual instruction are based on the individual needs and capabilities of each child. Daily assessments are conducted with each child in order to evaluate their progress within the program. Parents will receive a copy of this assessment each day to keep them informed of each child's progress.

What is Applied Behavior Analysis?

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a science that utilizes the principles of behavior to improve socially significant behavior. Language development and self-help skills are some of the socially significant behaviors we address in our program. We continually assess each child's progress in order to determine which intervention to use and the success of that intervention.

What is Discrete Trial Training?

Discrete Trial Training (DTT) is an instructional method based ABA principles and is the primary instructional method used in our one-on-one sessions. DTT is a highly structured and direct teaching method that has been validated as an effective method to teach new behaviors to children with autism. The essential components of DTT are: breaking down complex skills into smaller manageable skills; providing many opportunities to practice skills and receive feedback; and reinforcing contingencies to promote responding.



What are the instructional programs for the individual session?

While each instructional program is tailored to each child, there is an established curriculum in place. Once enrolled in the program, each child is assessed to determine the best starting point. Beginning programs focus on pre-instructional skills such as sitting and attending, making eye contact, imitating and discrimination. The child then progresses to skills such as requesting preferred items, labeling common objects/functions/classes of common objects, following multi-step directions, personal information (name, address, phone number), answering WH questions, and listening comprehension. Final/advanced skills focus on Kindergarten readiness skills such as early reading skills, early math skills, pronouns, object descriptors (big, little), and handwriting. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of all skills, but rather a sample of the skills we target.

What kind of ABA program is this?

ABA is a science out of which many intervention methods have been established for promoting positive behavior changes for individuals with autism. Our program does not subscribe to a specific method or approach to intervention because we know, based on ABA research, that no one method is the right fit for every individual. Our goal is to incorporate various established methods to produce the best outcome for each child. Our ability to combine individual instruction with Group Language Therapy allows us to utilize many intervention methods supported by sound research.

Occupational Therapy Services

Occupational therapy services are available at BRSHF to address self care skills (includes feeding skills), fine motor skills, and sensory processing concerns. Occupational therapy services can be provided through consultation and/or direct intervention. A current doctor's prescription is required for all children receiving OT services (consultation or direct). Through the consultative model, a licensed occupational therapist consults with speech therapist, ABA therapist and aides to enhance the child's overall performance in the program to include sensory motor activities, feeding, self help and fine motor skills. If a child appears to need more intervention than what is available through consultation, he/she is then referred for an occupational therapy assessment. In order for an occupational therapy assessment to be conducted parent consent as well as a current doctor's order is required. Once the evaluation is complete, parents will be given a copy of the assessment along with recommendations for treatment.