

starting a **LOVAAS** **PROGRAM**

When a child is diagnosed with autism, finding appropriate treatment can seem overwhelming. Not only is there a multitude of approaches, but each approach has its own practitioners.

The research and literature for interventions based on applied behavior analysis are vast. We believe that an approach based on the Lovaas ABA model is essential and supported by solid research data. Here is a practical, step-by-step guide to beginning a program utilizing the Lovaas Model of Applied Behavior Analysis. For each step, more detailed information is available from the Lovaas Institute.

optional:

Purchase a book on applied behavior analysis.

There are a number of books and videos available that give either a broad overview or in-depth look into what a program based on applied behavior analysis entails. Remember that research in the field is ongoing and so information is sometimes outdated in terms of the practical implementation of a program, while other information is still current.

Further, an intervention program based on applied behavior analysis is not a one-size-fits-all model. Therefore, any program suggestions found in the literature should be considered a small set of examples that will not necessarily be appropriate for all children.

Visit the Resources page on our website (www.lovaas.com) for a short list of books and articles.



the SEVEN STEPS

step 1 Contact the Lovaas Institute via email, phone, or mail.

In addition to providing clinic-based services in a number of major U.S. cities, the Lovaas Institute also provides consultation services to families and schools throughout the country. Our consultants are senior employees at the Lovaas Institute, closely supervised, and thoroughly trained in teaching the Lovaas Model. Consultants provide continuous training of parents and their team.

We can be reached at the phone number and address on the back of this pamphlet, or refer to the Contact Us page on our website, www.lovaas.com, to locate the intake coordinator responsible for your city or state.

step 2 Begin the application process.

At the Lovaas Institute, a medical evaluation and psychological evaluation, including diagnostic information, must be included with the application.

Standardized tests and/or a videotape may also be required, depending upon regional requirements and the type of services for which you are applying.

step 3 Determine if financial aid is available.

Some states are partially or fully funding behavioral treatment programs. School districts are required to provide a free, appropriate education for all children. Funding from insurance companies is sometimes mandated by law. Local parent groups can often provide more detailed information.

step 4 Assemble a treatment team.

If admitted into clinic-based services, instructors are provided as part of the treatment. When receiving consultation services, parents hire their own team of instructors. Many parents recruit instructors through posting flyers at local colleges, placing ads in college or local newspapers, and asking family and friends to help.

Each instructor should work 6-12 hours per week, divided over 2 or more days, to maintain a close relationship with a child, parents and programs. Each team should have at least three instructors so that your child does not become dependent on one or two people and learns to generalize learned behaviors across persons from the beginning. Parents are also encouraged to provide some of the therapy themselves.

step 5 Prepare an area of the house for therapy.

While therapy needs to be conducted in a variety of environments, it is helpful to have one area of the house set aside as the main area for therapy. Parents often use a spare bedroom, basement play area, or even a child's bedroom in this manner. In this room teaching materials are

(continued next panel)

step 5 (continued)

organized, distractions may be minimized, a routine established and last but not least, parents may secure some privacy in the rest of the house.

It is important that age-appropriate toys are available in the therapy room for use in teaching as well as for your child to play with during breaks.

step 6 Gather initial supplies.

Because our program seeks to teach skills that your child will need in everyday life, you may already have many of the teaching materials around the house.

However, additional items you will be asked to provide include a large, three-ring binder for therapy notes and data, tabbed dividers, a three-hole punch, a calculator, storage containers for teaching materials, a child-sized table and chairs, play sets (e.g., farm, tool bench, dollhouse) and other age-appropriate toys.

step 7 Prepare for the initial consultation.

Upon the receipt of all requested materials, an intake interview will be scheduled and conducted. Once your application is approved, the Institute will assign a consultant to your family. The consultant will work with you to schedule the initial consultation.

An initial consultation lasts approximately 18 hours (6 hours a day, for 3 days). The consultant will devote the majority of these hours to working specifically with you, your team, and your son or daughter. Follow-up consultations are recommended to continue on a regular basis, generally one day a month.