

ABA POLICY AGREEMENT

This document is specifically about ABA policies and should be considered in conjunction with all other documents you completed and signed during your initial intake appointment (as all apply during the course of our professional relationship together), including the following: **The Agreement for Behavioral Health Services, the Financial Agreement, the Credit Card Authorization Form, the Notice of Policies and Practices to Protect the Privacy of Your Health Information (regarding HIPAA), and the New Client Information Sheet.** Clients may also request a copy of the Estimate of Fees which provides a breakdown of fees for self-pay services, as well as a general average range of 'allowed amounts' across different insurance companies at this point in time (for reference).

LOCATION OF SERVICES:

- Most ABA services are provided through a clinic-based model *in our Mandarin office location*. If in-home, community, and/or school/daycare ("off-site") services are deemed clinically necessary, we will explore scheduling logistics and details of your insurance policy to determine if, when, and how off-site services may be provided. Each insurance company has its own rules regarding off-site services, with some requiring special approval, dictating provider type, and/or limiting duration and time. There is no guarantee that 'off-site' services will be available and/or will be able to continue once started. Please note, any cases that receive off-site ABA will be required to have at least 1 session per week in the office setting for supervision purposes; deviations from this policy are rarely permitted but will be considered on a case-by-case basis under extenuating circumstances. Specific rules and additional policies apply to off-site services and these details will be provided to clients before this change in service delivery is made.

HOURS:

- ABA sessions are generally available between the hours of 8:30 am and 6:00 pm, Monday through Friday, with occasional early morning, late evening, or weekend sessions provided as needed; however, availability may vary depending on clinical need, therapist openings, and logistics. Please be aware that Beacon *ends all sessions by 1:30 pm the first Friday of every month* for staff training purposes.

TEAM APPROACH OF ABA/ THERAPIST ASSIGNMENTS:

- ABA cases are treated via a team approach. Dr. Adrienne DeSantis King, PhD, BCBA, NCSP and Dr. Paras Nabizadeh, PsyD, BCBA, the Directors of Beacon, serve as the supervising clinical behavior analysts over all ABA cases at Beacon. Clients will typically meet with one or both of the directors at the initiation of ABA services and periodically throughout care as well. We are available to assist at any time if you have questions or need guidance regarding other areas of your child's life (e.g., mental health needs, testing needs, navigating the school system and services, etc.). All ABA cases are supervised by a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) assigned to the case, and may have 1 to 3 Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT therapists) providing direct care. Depending on insurance rules, other BCBA's or BCaBA's may provide direct care as well. We will periodically introduce your child to new therapists to generalize their skills, assist in coordinating schedule needs, and to introduce your child's case to additional providers to facilitate the ability to expand your child's team if/when needed. The number of therapists assigned to a case will be determined by the number of hours of ABA that your child receives, as well as logistical variables related to client/therapist schedules and client clinical needs. Please note, it is likely that your child may have different therapists throughout their session, especially if session duration exceeds 3 hours; we have found a multitude of benefits when breaking longer session times into smaller chunks.
- We do our best to accommodate client requests for specific therapists; however, therapist assignments will ultimately be made by the case/clinical supervisors, with consideration for your child's needs and logistics. Although our goals is to keep your child's treatment team as consistent as possible, therapist assignments will change throughout the year and there is no guarantee of specific therapists on your child's case. If changes are needed, new therapists are provided with training and supervision on your child's case as they begin working with your child.
- BCBA staff serve the primary role of case supervisor and parent trainer. At times, if your insurance policy permits, BCBA staff may be able to provide direct ABA therapy; however, this may be done on a temporary basis until RBT staff are available to take over direct therapy, with the BCBA providing continued case supervision and parent consultation. There is no guarantee that a BCBA will provide direct therapy to any client for any length of time.

SCHEDULING ABA:

- ABA requires a commitment of a *MINIMUM of 6 hours per week, though services may be provided for up to 35 or even 40 hours per week*. Additionally, *each ABA session must be a MINIMUM of 3 hours in length*. The Intensity is determined by clinical need, insurance authorization, and client and staff availability/logistics. The benefits of ABA are reduced at lower levels of intensity, and logistically, therapist schedules rarely allow for deviations from these time requirements. Beacon may permit variance from these minimums under certain circumstances, on a case-by-case basis. If Beacon is able to accommodate less than 3 hours at a time and/or less than 6 hours per week for a client, there is NO GUARANTEE that this option will be available on an ongoing basis. If an increase in intensity is deemed necessary at any point, clients will be informed of this recommendation and discussed with parents.
- When clients begin ABA services, we will start you off by offering whatever openings are available and may offer openings 'last minute' in the event of cancellations. Once logistics and staffing become more coordinated, you will be offered set recurring days and times for your ABA sessions. We will gradually build up your child's schedule to optimal levels of intensity as they adjust to attending ABA and as staffing changes become finalized. If you wish to be considered for last-minute openings due to cancellations, please let us know! The director will reach out to you via text typically between 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm if an opening becomes available! The final ABA schedule is sent to staff no later than 8:00 pm every evening, so please respond no later than 7:30 pm (or by the time stated in the text) if you wish to take the open slot.
- ABA schedules may be modified at any time, though schedule changes at the beginning and end of every summer, as well as during the winter holiday break (these time frames correspond with typical transitions in school schedules); however, changes to schedule and/or therapist assignment may occur at other times as well, due to the complicated nature of ABA scheduling. For clients that attend ABA less intensively during the school year but wish to increase intensity over school breaks we do our best to increase service intensity during such times but CANNOT guarantee the availability of staff to accommodate increased ABA hours. If ABA intensity is increased over breaks, there is no guarantee that your child's schedule and team during school break will remain the same during the rest of the year. Clients that wish to increase hours over breaks and plan to continue increased ABA hours after breaks will be given priority of scheduling.
- If you wish for your child's weekly ABA schedule to be modified significantly, you must inform the case supervisor of your scheduling needs at least 30 days to the date that schedule changes need to take effect. Although we do our best to coordinate, there is no guarantee that we will be able to accommodate your schedule change requests.
- For clients that receive speech/language therapy, OT, and/or PT at the partner agency (North Florida Therapy Associates; NFT) next door to our clinic – we are happy to assist in coordinating your child's ABA schedule with their NFT schedule when possible! Please let us know if you are obtaining services with NFT.

PARENT/GUARDIAN PARTICIPATION:

- Parent participation in treatment is a critical component of therapy. Parents must meet with the supervising therapist at least once per month, if not more. Parent sessions may be between 15 and 120 minutes in length; they may be formally scheduled ahead of time or may be conducted spontaneously after drop off or before pick up if the BCBA is available and time permits. Parents must adhere to parent training requirements set forth by the BCBA and/or ABA policy of your insurance plan. Please be aware, failure to adhere to this requirement and/or meet your insurance policy's parent participation requirements may adversely impact your ABA insurance coverage by your insurance.

OBTAINING AUTHORIZATION/UPDATING TREATMENT PLAN GOALS:

- Treatment plans are required to be updated every 6 months by a BCBA supervisor. For some insurances, parents MUST complete specific paperwork and surveys in order for us to obtain reauthorization. At times, insurance may require additional assessments or forms from other providers; the licensed psychologists at Beacon may be able to complete some of the required tasks needed for your child's ABA authorization (e.g., submission of a referral, administration of certain measures, etc.); however, the directors will inform you of the need for any coordination with providers outside of Beacon to assist in obtaining your child's ABA authorization. Please note—failure to complete the required tasks within the required time frame will result in a delay of authorization and a pause (or termination) of services, with no guarantee or the ability to resume services in the same capacity as before.

CLIENT/CHILD'S NAME: _____



ABA POLICY AGREEMENT

CLINIC ARRIVAL/DEPARTURE PROCEDURES:

- When arriving for clinic session/at pick up, please ring the bell in the lobby to let us know that you have arrived. If you have been waiting more than 10 minutes past your child's session start time/end time, please ring the bell again and/or find a staff member for assistance!
- At drop off, please remain with your child in the lobby until the session start time.
- At pick up, if you wish to debrief/review session progress with the therapist, please make arrangements with the therapist ahead of time to do so; this will be done during the final 15-30 minutes of your child's session, not after session time has ended. Additionally, a brief communication log can be provided at the end of session if you feel this will be helpful; please discuss with your child's case supervisor.

ABA ATTENDANCE POLICY:

- **BEACON CANCELLATIONS/ THERAPIST ABSENCE:** If your child's therapist is ill/unable to attend session, supervisors will work to find coverage to prevent the loss of therapy hours for your child. Coverage may not be offered for certain clinically complicated cases or for cases with whom no one familiar with your child's case is available; this will be discussed with cases individually for whom this may apply. If session must be cancelled for any reason, the director and/or the case supervisor will TEXT you to let you know as soon as possible!
- **CLIENT ILLNESS:** Sessions must be cancelled for child illness to prevent the spread of germs. Illness is defined as: Fever of 100 or higher, vomiting and/or diarrhea, respiratory discharge (including yellow/green runny nose), open sores that are not able to be covered, lice, communicable diseases, positive COVID test, and/or having known bacterial infections. In order to return to therapy, the patient must be symptom free/on antibiotics for 24 hours or a doctor's note must be provided attesting the child is not contagious. If your child is in session but unable to participate in therapy due to signs of illness or impairing fatigue (e.g., sleeping for more than 5 minutes, inability to prevent falling asleep/difficulty waking) parents will be called and will be required to pick up the child within 30 minutes of the call
- If you need to cancel or if you are running late for drop off/pick up, PLEASE TEXT BOTH the case supervisor (BCBA), and the clinic director/scheduler Adrienne DeSantis King at (904) 800-8543 as soon as possible to inform them. The director will often communicate with parents via text as well to facilitate any schedule changes or additions. Please do not hesitate to text after/before business hours to inform us of an unexpected cancellation! The sooner we know, the better!
- Clients are expected to attend at least 80% of scheduled ABA hours every month. Please note, cancellations, no shows, and early pickups/late drop offs due to illness or significant fatigue ARE included when calculating this percentage; with that said, medical excuses will be considered on a case by case basis.
- Because your appointment time is held exclusively for you, there will be a charge for a missed appointment or cancellation with less than 24 hours notice: a \$75 fee will be charged to your credit card on file; this must be paid before you can be seen for your next appointment. This fee may be waived with provision of a doctor's note or under special circumstances; however, it will continue to count towards your monthly attendance percentage.
- For clients that exhibit recurring or excessive late/unexcused cancellations/no-shows, or fail to attend > 80% of scheduled sessions in a month, Beacon reserves the right to (1) adjust schedule and/or therapist assignments, (2) charge clients by each missed hour (\$25/hr RBT, \$75/hr BCBA), (3) require adherence to an attendance agreement, and/or (4) give notice that services will be terminated within 2 weeks (clients will be provided with referrals to other providers to ensure continuity of care).
- If a client does not show for a clinic session or does not show up/answer for a school/home-based session within 15 minutes of start time, the therapist has the right to cancel session ('late cancellation' fee will apply and count towards the attendance percentage).
- If clients are dropped off or picked up more than 15 minutes before OR after the session start/end time (without prior agreement with therapist), \$5 will be charged for every 15 min.
- If you need to occasionally pick up your child from sessions earlier than scheduled, please let your therapist know in advance. If sessions are ended more than 15 minutes early on a repeated basis, your therapist reserves the right to change the end time of your child's session to an earlier time. If it is determined that this change may be necessary, this will be discussed with you before the formal change is put into place.
- If your child will miss more than 3 consecutive days of therapy due to other plans/vacation, please inform your therapist and supervisor at least 2 weeks in advance to avoid a \$75/day fee. Please note, if you miss more than two weeks of therapy in row, the same schedule/therapists cannot be guaranteed. You are responsible for payment of any fees incurred (charged to credit card on file), as insurance is unable to be billed for any of these fees.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

- AT A MINIMUM, EVERY CLIENT IS RESPONSIBLE FOR PROVIDING ITEMS THAT WILL REMAIN IN HIS/HER INDIVIDUAL BIN/BAG (your therapist will inform you when supplies run low so that you may replenish; approximately once a month):
 - 1 roll of Lysol/disinfectant wipes OR antibacterial wet-wipes
 - 1 food storage container (approximately 8 cups in size)
 - 1 bag non-perishable edible reinforcer that will last at least a month (may not be applicable for some cases, your therapist will let you know if so!)
 - 1-2 changes of clothes (shirt, shorts/pants, socks, underwear/pull ups/diaper) (may not be applicable for some cases, your therapist will let you know if so!)
- Caregivers are responsible for all materials related to a client's basic needs and treatment program. If specific items are necessary in order to address treatment goals (e.g., communication devices, 'chewy' items, food for feeding targets, reinforcers, toileting materials/additional changes of clothes (if potty training), etc.) these items MUST be provided in a usable manner at EVERY session or remain at the clinic in your child's personal ABA bin. Beacon may request parents to purchase such items. If parents disagree with the necessity of such items or refuse to/are unable to purchase the items, the directors, case supervisor, and parents may meet to discuss alternative options, though Beacon reserves the right to discharge client if the absence of the requested items hinders our ability to provide effective treatment. If parents agree to purchase the necessary items but fail to provide necessary materials within a certain timeline/ despite multiple requests, Beacon may pause services until the items are provided. On occasion, with client consent, Beacon may purchase the required item and charge client for the cost.
- We recommend sending your child to each session with a bag/backpack that contains items listed above, as well as a lunch and any necessary utensils/plates (if present during lunch hours; snacks (non-'junk'), and a drink/water bottle. Please do not send toys or 'favorite' items from home that could become easily lost/broken.

MEDICATION:

- If your child requires medication to be administered during session, or requires emergency medication to be used in a crisis situation, please send this medication to each session. A separate consent form must be completed and kept on file for medication provision; your case supervisor will review medication administration procedures with you in detail. If your child has ANY ALLERGIES, this must be documented, along with emergency procedures!

PAYMENT FOR SERVICES/USING INSURANCE:

- Please refer to the **Agreement for Behavioral Health Services** and the **Financial Agreement** that you read and signed at the start of your services at Beacon for very important details regarding insurance, fees, and payment policies. These documents apply to all services provided at Beacon.
- Beacon reserves the right to charge clients for costs for therapist time or services or materials beyond standard care. This may include: therapist travel time to non-clinic locations, fees associated with requirements by schools or daycares for Beacon staff to enter such settings (e.g., fingerprinting, badge requirements, etc.).

I, _____, parent/guardian of _____, hereby acknowledge that I have read the information in this ABA Policy Agreement, and agree to abide by its terms during our professional relationship. Further, I attest that I have read, signed, and agreed to all other applicable documents, policies, and agreements provided to me at the start of services at Beacon (listed in the first paragraph of this ABA Policy agreement), copies of which I can find at www.beaconpediatric.com or by requesting from the directors at Beacon.

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____