



THE HSC HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Health Services for Children with Special Needs, Inc.

# HEALTH Connection

FALL 2019

HSCSN's Newsletter for Families with Children and Young Adults with Special Health Care Needs

Visit us online at [hshealth.org/health-plan](https://hshealth.org/health-plan)

## ABA Therapy Helps Children at Home, in School

If your child has autism, applied behavior analysis (ABA) is a therapy that should be on your radar.

In many cases, children with autism have trouble with everyday tasks, like brushing teeth or getting dressed. Some of these children also find it hard to make friends at school or stay focused in class.

ABA uses positive reinforcement, such as praise, a toy, playtime, or other rewards, to help children with autism:

- Improve their language skills.
- Decrease problem behaviors, such as tantrums.
- Do better at school by improving attention, social skills, and learning at their level.

Here are four forms of ABA:

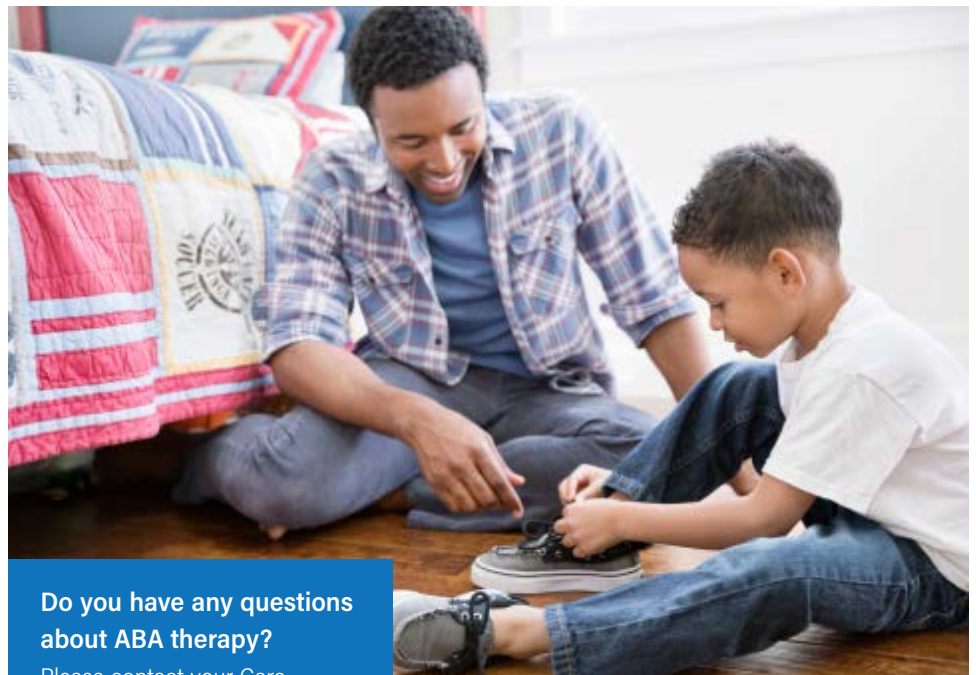
- 1. Positive Behavior Support:** This method looks at why a child does a certain behavior and supports him or her in replacing it with a new behavior. For example, working to earn a reward—like praise—can help children choose positive actions, such as raising a hand in class, in place of negative ones, such as calling out answers.
- 2. Discrete Trial Teaching:** With this method, a teacher chooses a specific goal and breaks it into small steps. After a child does a step, he or she earns a reward, such as a favorite snack. With practice, the child can complete the whole task, such as putting on shoes and tying the laces.

**3. Pivotal Response Treatment:** This method targets more than just behavior. It helps children learn broad skills. For example, it might be used to help increase a child's desire to learn. It can also help a child start a conversation or monitor behavior.

**4. Early Intensive Behavioral Intervention:** This therapy is typically for children younger than 5. At play, children are

offered many chances to interact and speak with others. This teaches social and verbal skills that they can use in daily life. Research shows that early treatment can significantly improve children's development.

Every child is unique. ABA therapy can be tailored to your child's specific needs.



**Do you have any questions about ABA therapy?**

Please contact your Care Manager at **202-467-2737**.





## Help Your Children Make It to Class

According to a report in the journal *Pediatrics*, about 13% of all U.S. children miss 15 or more school days each year. Starting as early as preschool and kindergarten, kids who miss too much school lose out on more than just learning. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) warns that being out of school a lot puts children at risk of:

- Getting poor grades.
- Dropping out of school.
- Using drugs and alcohol as teens and young adults.

The good news is that you can do a lot to make sure your child shows up to school:

### **Help keep your child from getting sick.**

Make sure your child stays up-to-date with shots and has both a medical and dental checkup every year. Teach your child how and when to wash his or her hands with soap and water. Key times are:

- After coughing, sneezing, or blowing his or her nose.
- Before eating.
- After using the bathroom.

Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to help kill germs when you do not have soap and water.

**Keep your child home only when you have to.** The AAP says good reasons for missing school are:

- A fever higher than 101 degrees.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- A bad cough.
- A toothache.

**Work with your child's doctor.** Schedule health care visits for outside of school hours when you can. If your child has asthma, allergies, seizures, or another condition that causes him or her to miss school often, talk with your doctor about how to manage symptoms better.

# What Does EPSDT Mean for Your Child?

**H**ealth Services for Children with Special Needs, Inc., connects members with important Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) services in the District of Columbia. Here is how EPSDT services can help your child:

**E stands for EARLY.** Many sicknesses can be stopped before they start or before they get worse. Children should have immunizations, or shots, that help keep them from getting certain diseases. Medical and dental checkups can also find and stop health problems early.

**P stands for PERIODIC.** Periodic means regular. Regular checkups are important to make sure children are growing well and that no new problems have developed.

**S stands for SCREENING.** Screenings are tests that look for health problems. One type of screening is a blood lead test. Remember that blood lead tests must be done twice by your child's second birthday.

**D stands for DIAGNOSIS.** If a screening shows something unusual, the doctor studies it further and makes a diagnosis. The diagnosis states what the doctor thinks the symptoms and test results mean.

**T stands for TREATMENT.** Treatment controls or cures a diagnosed health problem. When the health problem is controlled, it does not get worse. When the health problem is cured, it goes away completely.

If you have not set up your child's next doctor visit yet, please schedule one soon. Free checkups include:

- Full physical exam.
- Growth and development check.
- Hearing and vision screenings.
- Health education for parents and youth.
- Oral health assessments.
- Lab testing, such as blood lead tests.
- Mental health checks.
- Treatment or service referral.

Find out how you can get a \$15 gift card for having yearly medical and dental checkups! Call your Care Manager at **202-467-2737**.

## Beautiful Beginnings: Start Your Pregnancy Off Right

Are you thinking about having a baby? Or are you already pregnant? This advice can help keep you and your baby healthy.

### Eat foods rich in folate or folic acid.

These B vitamins support the rapid growth of your baby, especially the brain and spine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) also recommends that women take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid each day. So put these items on your next shopping list:

- Prenatal vitamins with 400 mcg of folic acid.
- Beans, oranges, and spinach.
- Cereal with folic acid.

**Stay active.** Regular physical activity can help you get to and stay at a healthy weight before and during pregnancy. Being too heavy can lead to problems during your pregnancy, such as gestational diabetes or high blood pressure. Working out at a moderate intensity, such as brisk walking, can also reduce back pain and constipation. Talk with your doctor about what exercises are right for you.

**Do not smoke.** Avoid secondhand smoke. The CDC warns that smoking can cause early pregnancy loss or your baby to be born too soon, before 37 weeks. Premature babies are more likely to have:

- Asthma.
- Cerebral palsy.
- Hearing or vision loss.
- Meningitis.

It is best to quit smoking before you get pregnant. If you are already expecting, quitting can still help protect your baby. Talk with your doctor before taking any medicine or herbal products that are meant to help you quit. For tools and tips that may help you stop smoking, visit [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov).

**Work with your doctor.** Prenatal care can help you stay healthy and better prepare you for the birth of your baby. Talk about how to manage any conditions you have, such as asthma, diabetes, or high blood pressure. Share a list of all the medicines and vitamins you take. Your doctor can help you stop taking any that are not safe for pregnancy or find one that is safer.



We can help you get the care you need. As soon as you know you are pregnant, call your Care Manager at **202-467-2737**.

## Keep Your Benefits Call Today!

Do you lose Medicaid eligibility this month? If you lose eligibility, you will not be able to:

- Take your child to the doctor.
- Get medicine your child needs.
- Use transportation services.

HSCSN can help so that you do not lose your medical benefits. Call us Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at **202-467-2737**.



THE HSC HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Health Services for Children with Special Needs, Inc.

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For more information, visit:  
**hshealth.org**.

For reasonable accommodations,  
please call **202-467-2737**.

# 2 Ways to Make This School Year Great

You can take steps now to help your child at school all year long. Finding the right kind of support can help your family work through the challenges related to a learning or physical disability, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), or autism. Here are ways to help your child thrive this school year:

## 1 TEAM UP WITH TEACHERS

The national organization Children and Adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (CHADD) suggests you sit down with your child's teacher to talk about his or her diagnosis, behaviors, and needs. It can also help to share past problems and any concerns you have now. Try to decide how you will handle likely challenges. To stay on top of progress and setbacks, set up other times to talk with your child's teacher during the school year.

## 2 SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Some children may qualify for special education services, such as tutoring, speech therapy, and physical therapy. If your child receives special education services, the school will create an Individualized Education Program (IEP). This written plan sets out goals for your child. It also says what services your child might need to meet these goals.

Eligibility for these services is based on an educational evaluation. To ask for this kind of evaluation, you can write a request and send it to the school. Keep a copy for your records.

To see a sample letter and find other helpful parent resources, visit **chadd.org**.



If you do not speak and/or read English, please call 202-467-2737 between 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. A representative will assist you. English

Si no habla o lee inglés, llame al 202-467-2737 entre las 7:00 a.m. y las 5:30 p.m. Un representante se complacerá en asistirle. Spanish

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Nếu bạn không nói và/hoặc đọc tiếng Anh, xin gọi 202-467-2737 từ 7 giờ 00 sáng đến 5 giờ 30 chiều. Sẽ có người đại diện giúp bạn. Vietnamese

如果您不能講和/或不能閱讀英語，請在上午 7:00到下午 5:30之間給 202-467-2737 打電話，我們會有代表幫助您。Chinese

영어로 대화를 못하시거나 영어를 읽지 못하는 경우, 오전 7시 00분에서 오후 5시 30분 사이에 202-467-2737번으로 전화해 주시기 바랍니다. 담당 직원이 도와드립니다. Korean

Si vous ne parlez pas ou lisez l'anglais, s'il vous plaît appeler 202-467-2737 entre 7:00 du matin et 5:30 du soir. Un représentant vous aidera. French



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GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR