



SC ABA

South Carolina Association for Behavior Analysis

LICENSURE OF BEHAVIOR ANALYSTS

Background – ABA Changes Lives

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) is a natural science approach to understanding and changing behavior. ABA is comprised of evidence-based procedures that are effective for building useful skills and reducing problematic behaviors in many clinical and nonclinical populations when designed, overseen, and/or implemented by Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs). ABA is practiced by BCBAs in a range of settings where clients live, learn, work, and play. Consumers of ABA services include, but are not limited to, individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities, brain injuries, physical disabilities, and difficulties associated with aging, as well as typically developing children and adults.

Problem – High Demand, Low Supply, No Consumer Protection

With the highest autism prevalence rate in the country and thousands of families desperate to find treatment for their loved ones, the demand for ABA services far exceeds the available supply of qualified and competent behavior analysts. Such a combination of high demand and low supply creates a fertile environment for untrained professionals to capitalize on this need and falsely portray to unsuspecting families that they can provide ABA expertise. As this need for ABA services continues to grow, sole dependence on a national and voluntary board certification process will not be adequate to protect consumers or prohibit abuses by under- and untrained professionals. Yet, there is no legally authorized state entity that regulates behavior analysts. Most important, the needs of individuals who receive inadequate treatment will not be met, and the psychological and financial costs will rise for families and the state.

Solution – License Behavior Analysts

Consistent with 30 other states to date, South Carolina needs a licensure act for behavior analysts that will protect both consumers of ABA services and appropriately trained professionals. A licensure law for behavior analysts would provide a local, legally authorized mechanism to protect consumers, employers, and state agencies from individuals who make false claims regarding the necessary competence or whose practice is not consistent with the profession's ethical and disciplinary standards. We envision a future in which all who call themselves behavior analysts and practice ABA meet the standards set by the profession and the state provides consumers with a stronger layer of protection as the practice of ABA would be overseen by both a state licensing board and the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB).

The proposed law would:

1. assign behavior analysts to regulate the practice within an omnibus board
2. make passage of the only psychometrically and legally validated professional examination in ABA an underlying requirement
3. require ongoing BACB certification to obtain and maintain a license to practice ABA in the state

All applicants for licensure will have had their degrees, coursework, and supervised experiential training in ABA verified by the BACB, saving the state licensing board a great deal of labor and money.

Next Steps With your leadership and support, we can provide safeguards for the increasing number of children and adults who benefit from ABA services throughout their lives and ensure that the bona fide practice of ABA continues to grow to meet the current and future needs.

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