

Below, please find our written testimony in opposition to SB 1105.  
I have attached our scanned testimony with our signatures.

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Testimony in Opposition to SB 1105

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My husband and I are the parents of a 13 year old son with Autism and we are extremely concerned about the proposed amendments to the law that was passed last year by the CT General Assembly. This current law clearly identifies the necessary credentials and training needed to implement and oversee Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) programs for children in the public school setting.

Our son has received ABA for the past ten years. In our experience a properly administered program consists of many of these intrinsic components:

- Intensity - Analysis of recent studies shows that there is a direct correlation between the number of hours of intervention and the outcome of the therapy. Programs that are more intensive in hours produce better and longer lasting results. Research indicates that 40 hours per week is appropriate for the majority of children with autism. A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) will make recommendations for hours based on research and the child's needs, not what the school district is willing to fund.
- Data Collection – ABA is data-driven! Data is used to measure progress on the acquisition of new behaviors and new skill development of comprehensive skills including language, social, play or leisure, motor, academic, and self help. The BCBA will oversee the collection of data and analyze it to measure a child's progress, evaluate the effectiveness of the student's individual program, and to identify skills and/or behaviors that need to be taught. The BCBA is trained in a variety of data collection methods and will adjust the child's program based on the results of the data.
- Analyzing Behaviors – Are they attention seeking, sensory motivated, self-stimulatory or, are the tasks at hand too difficult or complex for the child? BCBA's are trained in behaviors. Emphasis on the importance of looking at the ABC's (antecedents, behaviors, and consequences) of behaviors, redirecting and teaching more appropriate behaviors, and developing systematic instructional plans to assist the child to move beyond the interfering behavior in order to teach new skills. A BCBA will develop programs to teach skills through the use of reinforcement, shaping, prompting, fading, chaining, extinction, and discrimination.
- Breaking Tasks Down Step-by-Step with very little distraction, focusing on one thing at a time, with repetition and verification of skills learned.
- 1:1 Learning Environment – children with significant needs that impact their

learning, or children that exhibit behaviors make them unavailable to learning, may require additional instructional support in a 1:1 setting.

- Program Addresses ALL Developmental Domains - an effective program will address all aspects of the child's disability. Deficits in communication, attention, social, play, gross motor, fine motor, self-help, cognitive and academic skills, and behavioral challenges are targeted in the child's individualized ABA curriculum. The BCBA will work collaboratively with the child's teachers and other therapists to address these developmental gaps.

- Reward System for all the hard work and the skills gained. The BCBA will identify which reward will work best for the child.

- Emphasis on Generalizing Skills – the BCBA's program has a systematic, continuous plan for generalizing skills learned so the child can use that skill in other settings.

- Goal is Independence in a Typical Setting - the goal is to increase the skill levels of the child to the extent that the program is no longer required in order to maintain success in a typical setting. While this is not a goal that can be realized by all children, the BCBA should be building skills to achieve independence to the maximum extent possible.

- Quality Supervision – The BCBA meets regularly with the parents, shadows implementing the ABA program, school personnel and other therapists to discuss the child's progress, identify new areas of strength and weakness, and adjust the program curriculum. The BCBA will perform observations of the child in all settings (home, school, community) and provide supervision to the ABA shadows implementing the program making adjustments as necessary.

Well-designed ABA teaching programs result in positive outcomes that are durable over time.

The proposed amendments to the current law would enable anyone who is certified in any other special education area to oversee and implement a program as complex as this without proper training. School Psychologists, Speech Pathologists and Special Education teachers are not trained to provide ABA services. These professions ARE NOT INTERCHANGEABLE! Even more concerning is the vague language "including, but not limited to" leaving room for just about anyone to step into this crucial role. These services are critical to our children and to allow any other profession to administer a child's ABA program will be detrimental to the children and the desired goal of the program itself!

Our children need your help! Please vote in opposition of SB 1105.

Sincerely,

Patricia and Kenneth Sylvia