



Policies and Procedures

Mission

Focus on Behavior, Inc. utilizes teaching strategies rooted in the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis and tailored to each learner's unique needs and strengths to develop essential skills that will help each child reach their fullest potential.

Core Beliefs

- Although each learner has unique needs and strengths and rates of skill acquisition may differ, we believe that every child can learn.
- We believe in individualizing instruction to teach each child the skills that are important for them to learn at that time. This means focusing on teaching skills that are meaningful and functional for the individual.
- We focus on learning, helping each child to acquire new skills.
- We believe that we are part of a team, along with parents, caregivers, teachers, and other therapists. We use this team approach to work together to help each child achieve success.

Intake Procedures

The initial appointment will be used to complete preliminary assessments. During this appointment one team member will work with the child to assess their current skill levels based on the assessment tool that is appropriate for the child. Anecdotal notes will be kept, data will be collected, and ABC data will be recorded on problem behavior as needed. Meanwhile, a supervisor will conduct an interview with the child's parents to obtain background and other pertinent information.

Parents will be asked to complete the intake packet of forms in addition to providing interview information. The information gathered from all of the various sources will be combined to develop the report for the Initial Skills Assessment and the Individual Treatment Plan.

Parent Participation Policy

- **Attendance:**

Parents are expected to be on time for their child's sessions. The allotted time for the session will begin and end as scheduled, even if your child arrives late. It is important that cancellations are kept to a minimum. ***Please give a 24-hour notice for cancellations.*** We reserve the right to charge a \$50 late cancellation fee when not provided this notice.

- In case of infectious illness, (fever, vomiting, diarrhea, etc), it is important that therapy sessions are cancelled in order to prevent the spread of the illness. If your child does have an illness, please let us know as soon as possible. For example, if you keep your child home from school due to illness, it would be best to let us know that morning instead of waiting until the afternoon of their scheduled session. PLEASE NOTE, The \$50

cancellation fee will be waived for up to three consecutive sessions due to illness. After three consecutive cancellations, we may require a doctor's note to further waive

- o A \$1.00 per minute late charge will be made when you pick up your child after the session's scheduled end time. Please note that this is NOT billable to insurance and will be an out-of-pocket expense.
 - o In addition, if you are planning to miss sessions due to a scheduled appointment or vacation, please let us know as soon as possible. If a cancellation is necessary due to inclement weather conditions, parents will be notified via phone call as soon as the conditions are apparent. Efforts will be made to reschedule the session at a later date.
 - o In the event of a required evacuation (such as due to a hurricane), the clinic will be closed during this time. Families will be contacted within 48 hours of the evacuation being lifted and will be informed of scheduling arrangements at this time.
- **Training:**
Parents are asked to be available to participate in parent training upon request. This will allow us to work with you as a team and will thus help your child to benefit the most from their services.
 - **Follow-through with protocols:**
Consistency is vital to your child's success. Therefore, it is important that treatment protocols be followed at home, not just during therapy sessions. This is *especially* important for behavior reduction procedures, potty training, and communication training.
 - **Presence at clinic when required:**
Parents are encouraged to be on hand at the clinic for all of their child's one-on-one sessions to observe and in case they are needed for participation. However, parents are required to be present at the clinic during any sessions where there are less than two staff members present. If you leave while your child is in session, make sure to arrive 5-10 minutes before his/her session is scheduled to end in order allow time for their therapist to discuss the session with you.
 - **Observation:**
Parents and caregivers are encouraged to use our observation area to watch their child's session. All observers are required to sign the agreement for observation. Food and drinks are not allowed in the observation area.
 - **Availability and Scheduling:**
Parents are asked to be flexible with available times for sessions and provide the Clinical Director with several options for their child's therapy schedule. A client's therapy schedule will remain the same week-to-week. Only clinical supervisors are authorized to make schedule changes. If you wish to add sessions or change session dates/times, contact Kari or Julie. *Please note that the hours your child is scheduled are based on the recommendations of the Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and are part of your child's treatment plan. Any reduction in hours must be approved by the BCBA and should be based on the child's progress.*

- **Communication:**

It is important that parents and staff maintain an open line of communication. In line with this, please make sure to inform the staff of any changes that may affect your child (such as a new home, different medication, change in sleep schedule, different babysitter, etc). Also, please let us know of any significant changes in behavior you see at home.

- **Provision of necessary materials:**

Focus on Behavior utilizes behavioral approaches that work to capture each child's motivation to maximize learning. In addition, communication training begins with teaching a child to request for items they want. For many children, the cancellation these items are food (Skittles, raisins, Doritos, etc). We ask that parents please make sure to provide such items so that we can help your child be as successful as possible. It is also important that parents provide necessary materials for toilet training, when applicable. This means sending your child dressed in the appropriate clothing and providing extra clothing as needed. *Consistency is vital* to successful behavioral programming!

Procedures for failure to meet participation requirements:

Step 1 – Verbal reminder from Clinical Director or Clinical Supervisor

Step 2 – Written reminder from Clinical Director or Clinical Supervisor

Step 3 – Meeting with parents, child's therapist(s), and supervisor

If the failure to meet participation requirements continues, services will be terminated according to the ethical requirements of the Behavior Analyst Certification Board Guidelines for Responsible Conduct.

Other policies relating to Ethical Concerns:

(1) Please understand that Focus on Behavior staff will not be able to carry on personal relationships with clients and their parents. This means that therapists are unable to accept gifts or invitations to participate in social gatherings. Such conduct could constitute a dual relationship, which is in violation of the aforementioned BACB Guidelines and may impair a therapist's objectivity.

(2) We understand that parents often may want to try a variety of treatments to see if they may produce positive results in their child. However, at Focus on Behavior, we utilize and endorse research-based strategies only. We do not promote alternative treatments that are not proven effective through scientific research. If you are interested in a specific treatment, we will be happy to share with you our knowledge of current research on that treatment or to learn about it ourselves in order to most accurately answer your questions.

Confidentiality

All services are confidential except to the extent that you provide us with written authorization to release specified information to specific individuals, or under other conditions and as mandated by Florida and Federal law and our professional codes of conduct/ethics. These exceptions are discussed below.

To protect the client or others from harm

If we have reason to suspect that a child is being abused, we are required to report this (and any additional information upon request) to the appropriate state

agency. If we believe that a client is threatening serious harm to him/herself or others, we are required to take protective actions which could include notifying the police, an intended victim, a minor's parents, or others who could provide protection, or seeking appropriate hospitalization.

Professional consultations

Psychologists and Behavior Analysts routinely consult about cases with other professionals. In so doing, we make every effort to avoid revealing the identity of our clients, and any consulting professionals are also required to refrain from disclosing any information we reveal to them. If you want us to talk with or release specific information to other professionals with whom you are working, you will first need to sign an Authorization that specifies what information can be released and with whom it can be shared.

Records

We will review initial assessment results with you following completion of our report, and offer you opportunities to ask questions and discuss the results with us. You will receive a written report along with an Individual Treatment Plan for your child. We are also happy to review data, graphs, and other ongoing assessment information with you upon request.

Rates:

We accept and file most private insurance. If your insurance does not cover our services and you do not receive any other outside aid to assist in payment, you may appeal for a reduced rate. This reduced rate is determined based on the type of session/level of services, availability, and client need.

If your insurance covers your child's therapy, you are still responsible for any deductible, copay, or coinsurance that is assigned as patient liability by your policy. We are happy to file your insurance for you, but in order to continue doing so, all families must make every effort to pay their portion of our fees.

Please be aware that there is a great deal of paperwork and planning for each individual client's treatment that happens "behind the scenes." Time spent conducting supervision, updating programs, and holding team meetings will be reflected on your account as "case management."

Phone calls and emails are not billed hours. We are happy to assist you through these methods as our schedules allow. Please limit phone calls to business hours (Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 6:00 pm).

Observation outside of the clinic (in home, at school, etc), IEP development, or attendance at your child's IEP meeting are additional services that Focus on Behavior offers. Please contact the Clinical Director if you are interested in these services.

Payment Procedure:

ALL clients will be required to make a payment upon arrival for sessions, as is customary in professional offices where services are provided. Because charges and insurance co-payments may vary based on the level of service rendered at each appointment, payment for **PREVIOUS** session will be made upon arrival for that day's session. This will help to ensure the greatest accuracy of the estimated amount due.

If the person bringing your child to therapy is not the party responsible for payment, then contact Julie Clements, office manager, to set up a payment arrangement that complies with payment policy.

Accepted payments include cash, check, major credit cards and online payments. Please note, a \$35 fee is charged for returned checks. The account will be put on a 'cash only' basis after an insufficient funds check is received. Payments should be made online or given to the office manager or other administrator present.

Structure of sessions:

Parents should remain with their child in the lobby until the child's therapist comes to take them to a therapy room. Siblings should also remain in the lobby. There is a designated play area where children may play while waiting.

A one-on-one session will include instruction both at the table and in a more natural setting (playing, requesting a snack, interacting with a peer, etc). Please be aware that for all activities there are specific objectives being targeted for instruction. Data collection and note-taking are a part of the session. For some clients this may occur throughout the session; for others, most data will be recorded at the end of the session. For this reason, your therapist may end the direct intervention portion of your child's session 10-20 minutes (depending on the session's length) prior to the end of your appointment time. This allows the therapist to complete all data and clinical notes and to neaten the therapy room.

Skills that your child has already mastered will be interspersed throughout the session. This means that sometimes you may see your child working on something that they already know how to do. That's okay! We do this to make sure that these skills are being maintained, to keep the pace of instruction, vary tasks, and ensure that the child experiences a high level of success.

Goals for treatment and discharge procedures:

- Individual treatment goals are based on assessment results for each individual client. As goals are mastered, additional goals are identified and targeted.
- At least twice annually, the client's progress will be reviewed with the client (as appropriate) and his/her parent(s).
- Once a child has mastered all treatment goals, and it is determined by the clinical supervisor in collaboration with his/her parents(s) that he/she no longer needs ABA services, the child will be dismissed from receiving services.
- After determination that dismissal will be appropriate, the team will meet with the parents to review progress and obtain written consent to terminate services.

Client Feedback:

At Focus on Behavior, we value your feedback and are always striving to find ways to better serve not only the child but to make the environment as comfortable as possible for family members. We encourage you to openly communicate your suggestions for improvements. In addition, we will periodically (at least annually) provide each client with a Client Feedback Questionnaire. We ask that you please answer the questions as candidly and fully as possible in order for us to make any necessary improvements.

Procedure for complaints:

In the event that there is ever dissatisfaction with services, parents should report this at their earliest convenience. In the case of a complaint, contact the Clinical Director in writing (via letter or email) to set up a meeting to discuss the complaint. Email address: kwoznick@focusonbehavior.com

I, _____, acknowledge that I have read and understand the policies and procedures of Focus on Behavior, Inc. I understand that these policies are subject to change and that I will be notified in writing of any changes/updates. My signature below represents my agreement with the information in this document.

Signature: _____

Date: _____