



EXAM CONTENT OUTLINE

CERTIFIED PROGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR ANALYST-AUTISM INTERVENTIONIST™





EXAM CONTENT

The development of valid assessments begins with an analysis of practice that identifies the major domains of responsibility and associated tasks, as well as the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) needed for competent job performance. Experts in the field of progressive ABA methodologies that are used in the treatment of individuals diagnosed with ASD delineated and validated these essential domains, tasks, and KSAs and developed a comprehensive assessment content outline (also known as the test blueprint). The assessment content outline resulting from the analysis of practice is organized into five major domains and documents the essential tasks which are evaluated in the assessments. The process used to develop the written assessment blueprint and the performance assessment rubric includes input and perspectives from practitioners, trainers, and educators who represent a diverse range of practice settings and geographical locations.

The five domains and the percentage of questions allocated to each area of the AI Multiple-Choice Assessment are shown below:

Learning Objectives

01 Implements behavioral and instructional plans (55% assessment)

01.01 Prepares for a session (e.g., gathers materials, creates session plan based on objectives, arranges learning space) by taking relevant client information (e.g., skill set, learning history, parent concerns) into consideration.

01.02 Implements a progressive approach to ABA.

01.03 Adjusts implementation of ABA-based methods and procedures based upon in-the-moment analysis of relevant contextual variables (e.g., instructional format, current client response progression, client health, assent).

01.04 Provides support in various settings (e.g., school, virtual, community).

02 Collects and interprets data on treatment and behavior intervention plans (10% of assessment)

02.01 Collects data across a variety of behavioral and instructional targets.

02.02 Creates graphical representations of data to help inform treatment decisions.

02.03 Interprets data and graphs within and across sessions to help inform treatment.

02.04 Summarizes objective notes about the events of a session to meet organizational and funder requirements and communicate across the intervention team.

03 Engages in feedback exchange with the supervisor (15% of assessment)

- 03.01 Adjusts or continues implementation of ABA-based methods and procedures based upon feedback exchanges with supervisor(s).
- 03.02 Provides rationale(s) to supervisor(s) for strategies used throughout a session.
- 03.03 Requests additional support from supervisor(s) when needed.
- 03.04 Applies feedback as general guidelines rather than prescriptive rules.
- 03.05 Follows up with supervisor(s) and communicates any questions and progress related to previous feedback.
- 03.06 Demonstrates professionalism during feedback exchanges with supervisor(s).

04 Interacts effectively and compassionately (10% of assessment)

- 04.01 Interacts effectively and compassionately with clients.
- 04.02 Interacts effectively and compassionately with caregivers/families.
- 04.03 Interacts effectively and compassionately with intervention team.
- 04.04 Interacts effectively and compassionately with other allied professionals.

05 Demonstrates professionalism (10% of assessment)t

- 05.01 Maintains PBAAC certification(s).
- 05.02 Participates in the advancement of the profession and practice through involvement in committee(s),community, and other professional opportunities.
- 05.03 Operates within the scope of practice of a CPBA-AI.
- 05.04 Operates within one's own area(s) of competence.
- 05.05 Acknowledges, validates, and collaboratively considers the expertise of others.
- 05.06 Engages in ethical and responsible behavior consistent with the CPBA-AI Code of Ethics.
- 05.07 Demonstrates professionalism across contexts.
- 05.08 Engages in socially valid and culturally responsive behaviors (e.g., statements, practices) when interacting across contexts.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities



01 Content Area: 1: Principles, concepts, and history of behavior analysis

01.01 Basic Concepts

- 01.01.01 Dimensions of ABA.
- 01.01.02 Basic elements of behavioral contingencies (e.g., antecedent, behavior, consequence).
- 01.01.03 Basic principles of behavior analysis (e.g., reinforcement, extinction, stimulus control).
- 01.01.04 Major contributions of the founders of ABA (e.g., Baer, Sulzer-Azaroff, Wolf).

02 Content Area: 2: Foundational knowledge of autism and interventions

02.01 Basic Concepts

- 02.01.01 Core features of autism spectrum disorder.
- 02.01.02 Behavioral differences between sexes, genders, and age across the autism spectrum.

02.02 Etiology and Seminal Studies in Autism

- 02.02.01 Foundational and pertinent literature as it relates to autism as a diagnosis.
- 02.02.02 Foundational and pertinent literature as it relates to autism and ABA-based interventions.
- 02.02.03 Results, claims, limitations, ethical concerns, and harm of false claims (e.g., vaccines, psychogenic theories, epidural) as they relate to autism.

02.03 Intervention Evaluation

- 02.03.01 Differences between scientific, pseudoscientific, and antiscientific procedures currently available as intervention alternatives.
- 02.03.02 Processes to promote the most effective, efficient, and ethical practices for the benefit of the client.
- 02.03.03 Ethical processes when non-evidence-based procedures are included in an intervention plan.

02.04 Caregivers and Siblings

- 02.04.01 Advantages and disadvantages of the major roles family members and caregivers could play within the course of ABA-based intervention.
- 02.04.02 Common outcomes for caregivers (e.g., financial, family dynamics, understanding and connecting with beneficial resources).
- 02.04.03 Common outcomes for siblings (e.g., resilience, self-competence, isolation).

02.05 Quality Learning Environments

02.05.01 Key elements of successfully collaborating across multiple learning environments (e.g., creating a behavioral culture, developing collaborative relationship, being an active listener).

02.05.02 Key components of a quality learning environment (e.g., high rates of reinforcement, meaningful curriculum, ongoing supervision/training).

02.05.03 Key attributes of quality teaching (e.g., systematic, adaptable, collaborative).

03 Content Area 3: Respondent behavior and conditioning

03.01 Basic Concepts

03.01.01 Components of respondent conditioning.

03.01.02 Possible operant and respondent variables controlling behavior.

03.01.03 Respondent procedure(s) that should be implemented based upon relevant contextual variables.

03.02 Acquisition & Extinction

03.02.01 Components of respondent acquisition.

03.02.02 Components of respondent extinction.

03.02.03 Application of respondent acquisition.

03.02.04 Application of respondent extinction.

03.03 Respondent and Conditioning Procedures

03.03.01 Components and steps of respondent conditioning procedures (e.g., graduated exposure, systematic desensitization, flooding).

03.03.02 Application of respondent conditioning procedures (e.g., graduated exposure, systematic desensitization, flooding).

03.03.03 Conditions under which specific respondent conditioning procedures may be more preferred or appropriate.

03.04 Generalization

03.04.01 Characteristics of respondent generalization.

03.04.02 Application of respondent generalization.

04 Content Area 4: Operant behavior and contingency arrangement

04.01 Basic Concepts

04.01.01 Components of operant conditioning.

04.01.02 Variables that contribute to the effectiveness of reinforcement-based procedures (e.g., motivating operations, timing, response effort).

04.01.03 Major considerations in providing putative reinforcement (e.g., age appropriate, consistent, preferred) and why they are important.

04.02 Identifying Reinforcers

04.02.01 Methods of progressive (e.g., in-the-moment reinforcer analysis) and conventional approaches (e.g., multiple stimulus without replacement, paired stimulus preference assessment) to identifying possible reinforcers.

04.02.02 Critical variables that influence the selection of possible reinforcers.

04.02.03 Components of methods designed to identify possible reinforcers (e.g., observing vocal and non-vocal behavior, providing opportunities to sample a variety of stimuli).

04.02.04 Conditions under which a specific reinforcer identification method may be more preferred or appropriate.

04.03 Conditioning Reinforcement

04.03.01 Importance of conditioning new, novel, and a variety of reinforcers.

04.03.02 Components of conditioning stimuli to potentially function as reinforcers (e.g., engaging in favorable affect, demonstrating novel ways to interact with the stimuli, incorporating individual preferences).

04.03.03 Application of conditioning procedures (e.g., engaging in favorable affect, demonstrating novel ways to interact with the stimuli, incorporating individual preferences).

04.03.04 Conditions under which a specific conditioning method may be more preferred or appropriate.

04.04 Graduated Reinforcement

04.04.01 Components of graduated reinforcement procedures (e.g., quality, quantity, intensity).

04.04.02 Application of graduated reinforcement procedures (e.g., quality, quantity, intensity).

04.04.03 Progressive and conventional approaches to graduated reinforcement procedures.

04.04.04 Conditions under which a specific graduated reinforcement procedure may be more preferred or appropriate.

04.05 Schedules of Reinforcement

04.05.01 Schedules of reinforcement (e.g., fixed, variable, interval).

04.05.02 Application of schedules of reinforcement (e.g., interval, compound, concurrent).

04.05.03 Ways to thin schedules of reinforcement, shift control to naturally available reinforcers, and fade the use of supplemental reinforcement.

04.05.04 Behavioral patterns of different schedules of reinforcement (e.g., ratio, variable, mixed).

04.05.05 Conditions under which a specific schedule of reinforcement may be more preferred or appropriate.

04.06 Punishment

04.06.01 Important considerations in the use of punishment-based procedures (e.g., immediacy, consistency, intensity).

04.06.02 Range (i.e., low- to high-intensity) of possible punishers based on relevant contextual variables.

04.06.03 Aversive procedures (e.g., corporal punishment versus non-corporal punishment) and the controversy surrounding their use (e.g., push to eliminate punishment in practice).

04.06.04 Punishment-based procedure implementation that is documented, effective, ethical, and is designed to minimize negative side effects.

04.06.05 Current perspectives on the use of punishment-based procedures.

04.07 Contingency Systems

04.07.01 Contingency systems (e.g., level system, token economy, response cost).

04.07.02 Components of contingency systems.

04.07.03 Application of contingency systems.

04.07.04 Progressive and conventional approaches to the use of contingency systems.

04.07.05 Conditions under which a specific contingency system may be more preferred or appropriate.

05 Content Area: 5: Principles and dynamic application of behavioral tools

05.01 General Teaching

05.01.01 Interventions that ensure maximum learning opportunities.

05.01.02 Breaking skills down into their contextually relevant and necessary component parts.

05.01.03 Systematic development of skills.

05.01.04 Methods to promote generalization of acquired skills/behaviors.

05.02 Prompting and Flexible Prompt Fading

05.02.01 Prompting systems (e.g., flexible prompt fading, most-to-least, constant time delay) as they relate to ABA-based intervention.

05.02.02 Prompt types (e.g., model, positional, physical) as they relate to ABA-based intervention.

- 05.02.03 Challenges and methods to minimize prompt dependency.
- 05.02.04 Inadvertent prompts and their potential negative impact.
- 05.02.05 Application of prompting systems.
- 05.02.06 Progressive (i.e., flexible prompt fading) and conventional (e.g., most-to-least) approaches to prompting.
- 05.02.07 Strengths and limitations of prompting systems (e.g., flexible prompt fading, most-to-least, constant time delay).
- 05.02.08 Considerations for selecting prompting and/or shaping.
- 05.02.09 Conditions under which a prompt type or system may be more preferred or appropriate.

05.03 Shaping

- 05.03.01 Components of a progressive approach to shaping (e.g., identifying next targets, increasing variability, expanding response classes).
- 05.03.02 Application of shaping (e.g., identifying next targets, increasing variability, expanding response classes).
- 05.03.03 Progressive and conventional approaches to shaping.
- 05.03.04 Conditions under which shaping may be more preferred or appropriate.

05.04 Task Analysis

- 05.04.01 Components of a task analysis for a given skill.
- 05.04.02 Conditions under which a task analysis method may be more preferred or appropriate.
- 05.04.03 Methods to create a task analysis (e.g., watch an expert, complete task yourself)

05.05 Chaining Procedures

- 05.05.01 Types of chaining procedures (e.g., forward, backward, whole task).
- 05.05.02 Application of chaining procedures.
- 05.05.03 Conditions under which a specific chaining procedure may be more preferred or appropriate.

06 Content Area: 6: Progressive teaching procedures and approaches

06.01. Discrete Trial Teaching (DTT)

- 06.01.01 Components of a progressive approach to DTT (e.g., flexible rotation of stimuli, shaping attending, instructive feedback).
- 06.01.02 Application of progressive and conventional approaches to DTT.
- 06.01.03 Data collection procedures when implementing DTT based on relevant contextual variables.

06.01.04 Rationales for the components of a progressive approach to DTT (e.g., instructive feedback, flexible prompt fading).

06.01.05 Successive targets within the instructional period based on observation of the learner's current performance (e.g., success rate, attending, novelty).

06.02 Cool versus Not cool (CNC) Procedure

06.02.01 Components of the CNC procedure (e.g., correct and incorrect demonstrations, role-play, reinforcement).

06.02.02 Application of the CNC procedure.

06.02.03 Conditions under which the CNC procedure may be more preferred or appropriate.

06.03 Teaching Interaction Procedure (TIP)

06.03.01 Components of the TIP (e.g., rationale, correct and incorrect demonstrations, role-play).

06.03.02 Application of the TIP.

06.03.03 Conditions under which the TIP may be more preferred or appropriate.

06.04. Incidental Teaching

06.04.01 Components of incidental teaching (e.g., arranging the environment, following the client's lead, withholding access to potential reinforcers).

06.04.02 Application of incidental teaching.

06.04.03 Conditions under which incidental teaching may be more preferred or appropriate.

06.05 Observational Learning

06.05.01 Components of observational learning strategies (e.g., observing a peer, providing reinforcement for engaging in similar behavior, vicarious punishment).

06.05.02 Application of progressive and conventional approaches to DTT.

06.05.03 Conditions under which observational learning strategies may be more preferred or appropriate.

06.06 Group Instruction

06.06.01 Key components of providing effective group instruction.

06.06.02 Progressive and conventional approaches to group instruction.

06.06.03 Roles (e.g., group leader, shadow support) and responsibilities (e.g., reinforcement, prompting, teaching) when implementing group instruction.

06.06.04 Teaching methods implemented within group instruction (e.g., choral responding, teaching interaction procedure, cool versus not cool).

- 06.06.05 Application of group instruction.
- 06.06.06 Conditions under which group instruction may be more preferred or appropriate.

06.07 Clinical Judgment

- 06.07.01 Components of a progressive approach to ABA.
- 06.07.02 Procedures, results, limitations, and contributions of foundational and current pertinent literature on a progressive approach to ABA (e.g., Leaf et al., 2016; Lovaas, 1987).
- 06.07.03 Components of clinical judgment.

07 Content Area: 7: Curriculum

07.01. Curriculum knowledge and implementation

- 07.01.01 Rationales for short (e.g., micro, small picture) and long-term (e.g., macro, big picture) goals.
- 07.01.02 Methods to facilitate generalization of skills to new contexts.
- 07.01.03 In-the-moment adjustment of program implementation.

07.02. Learning how to learn

- 07.02.01 Key components and pre-requisites of learning-how-to-learn programs (e.g., responsiveness to contingencies, attention, tolerance of adversity).
- 07.02.02 Clients' current strengths and weaknesses in learning how to learn skills.
- 07.02.03 Conditions under which refinements are necessary to learning-how-to-learn programs.

07.03. Academic

- 07.03.01 Key components and pre-requisites for academic programs.
- 07.03.02 Clients' current strengths and weaknesses in academic related skills.
- 07.03.03 Conditions under which refinements are necessary to academic programs.

07.04 Language

- 07.04.01 Key components and pre-requisites for language programs (e.g., expressive and receptive language, matching, non-verbal imitation).
- 07.04.02 Clients' current strengths and weaknesses language related skills.
- 07.04.03 Conditions under which refinements are necessary to language programs.

07.05. Self-Help/Daily Living

- 07.05.01 Key components and pre-requisites of self-help/daily living programs (e.g., brushing teeth, making bed, showering).
- 07.05.02 Clients' current strengths and weaknesses in self-help/daily living related skills.
- 07.05.03 Conditions under which refinements are necessary to self-help/daily living programs.

07.06. Social

07.06.01 Key components and pre-requisites of social programs (e.g., sharing, turn-taking, inviting a peer to join in).

07.06.02 Clients' current strengths and weaknesses in social related skills.

07.06.03 Conditions under which refinements are necessary to social programs.

07.07. Recreational and Leisure

07.07.01 Key components and pre-requisites of recreational and leisure programming.

07.07.02 Client preferences and skills necessary to make decisions about leisure activities.

07.07.03 Developmental norms, age, and peer group appropriateness.

07.07.04 Conditions under which refinements are necessary to recreational and leisure programs.

08 Content Area: 8: Intervention Planning Components

08.01 Basic Concepts of Behavior Intervention and Support

08.01.01 Proactive and reactive approaches to decreasing the probability of behavior.

08.01.02 ABA-based procedures and methods consistent with the least restrictive, yet potentially most effective intervention.

08.02 Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

08.02.01 Variables that can influence the occurrence of a behavior (e.g., escaping demand, gaining attention, respondent behavior or access to materials).

08.02.02 Components of an FBA (e.g., interviews, observation, functional analysis).

08.02.03 Application of FBA (e.g., inform recommendations for behavior plan, determine functional replacement skills).

08.03. Functional Replacement Skills

08.03.01 Appropriate skill(s) to teach based upon behavior function and goals (e.g., functional communication training).

08.03.02 Application of interventions designed to develop functional replacement skills.

08.04 Antecedent-based Procedures

08.04.01 Antecedent-based procedures (e.g., restricting access, reducing demands, making accommodations).

08.04.02 Application of antecedent-based procedures.

08.05. Differential Reinforcement Procedures

08.05.01 Components of differential reinforcement procedures (e.g., differential reinforcement of low rates of responding [DRL], differential reinforcement of alternative behavior [DRA], differential reinforcement of other behaviors [DRO]).

08.05.02 Application of differential reinforcement procedures (e.g., DRL, DRA, DRO).

08.06. Extinction

08.06.01 Components, advantages, and disadvantages of extinction-based procedures.

08.06.02 Application of extinction-based procedures.

08.06.03 Conditions under which to implement extinction-based procedures and methods to mitigate possible negative side effects.

08.07. Response Cost

08.07.01 Components, advantages, and disadvantages of response cost.

08.07.02 Application of response cost.

08.07.03 Conditions under which to implement response cost and methods to mitigate possible negative side effects.

08.08. Time-In

08.08.01 Components, advantages, and disadvantages of time-in procedures.

08.08.02 Application of time-in procedures.

08.08.03 Conditions under which to implement time-in and methods to mitigate possible negative side effects.

08.09. Time-Out

08.09.01 Components, advantages, and disadvantages of time-out procedures (e.g., exclusionary, non-exclusionary).

08.09.02 Application of time-out procedures.

08.09.03 Conditions under which to implement time-out and methods to mitigate possible negative side effects.

08.10. De-Escalation Strategies

08.10.01 Phases of the escalation cycle.

08.10.02 Decision-making at each phase of the escalation cycle.

08.10.03 Conditions under which to implement de-escalation strategies.

08.10.04 Environmental factors that promote de-escalation.

08.10.05 Communications needed when implementing de-escalation strategies.

09 Content Area 9: Preparation, Decision-Making, and Analysis

09.01. General Application

09.01.01 Necessary methods to prepare for a successful teaching session (e.g., having all reinforcers, toys, and materials in working order, environmental set up conducive to learning).

09.01.02 Components of a successful teaching session (e.g., maximizing teaching time, balancing alternation of work and free time).

09.01.03 Teaching session analysis and making necessary changes to maximize progress.

09.02. Data

09.02.01 Strengths and limitations of data collection procedures (e.g., discontinuous, continuous, estimation) and the conditions under which each may be preferred or appropriate.

09.02.02 Application of data collection procedures (e.g., discontinuous, continuous, estimation).

10 Content Area 10: Collaboration, Clinical Skills, Sensitivity, and Ethics

10.01. Ethics

10.01.01 Components of the Progressive Behavior Analyst Autism Council (PBAAC) Code of Ethics

10.01.02 Signal detection (i.e., identify variables that contribute to ethical dilemmas) as it relates to ethical contexts.

10.01.03 Common ethical errors and appropriate remedies.

10.01.04 The role of a human rights committee.

10.02. Socially Valid Outcomes

10.02.01 Characteristics of socially valid outcomes (e.g., meaningful, long lasting, improves quality of life).

10.02.02 Procedures that are socially valid to relevant stakeholders.

10.03. Cultural Responsivity

10.03.01 Cultural diversity, responsivity, and sensitivity.

10.03.02 Differing cultural variables (e.g., nationality, age, socio-economic status) and how they affect intervention decisions and necessitate adjustments to clinical practice.

10.03.03 Interactions consistent with cultural humility.

10.03.04 Cultural differences and how they might impact clinical decisions and practice.

10.03.05 Implicit bias, its effects, and how to mitigate implicit bias.

10.03.06 Neurodiversity and challenges/concerns facing the autistic community.

10.04. Caregiver Support

10.04.01 Methods to discriminate among caregiver support, education, and training.

10.04.02 Components of caregiver support (e.g., affirmation, receptivity, follow-up questions).

10.04.03 Components of professional behavior (e.g., dress, affect, punctuality) that strengthen or weaken relationships with caregivers.

10.05. Professional Collaboration

10.05.01 Components to develop successful professional collaborative relationships.

10.05.02 Application of professional collaboration.

10.06. Professionalism

10.06.01 Components of working professionally with others using clinical sensitivity.

10.06.01 Breadth and depth of scope of practice.

10.06.03 Areas of need or continued growth.

10.06.04 Application of working professionally with others using clinical sensitivity.

10.06.05 Alternative perspectives about behaviorism and behavior analysis.