

Speech, Language and Behavioral Services

Specializing in Verbal Behavior and the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis for children with autism and other developmental disabilities



Integrating Children and Knowledge of Washington



ICAN of Washington, Inc. is a private practice located in Bethesda, MD, serving Montgomery County and parts of Washington, D.C. and Northern Virginia. Whether you seek speech, language or behavioral intervention, ICAN of Washington, Inc. prides itself in providing dually certified Speech Language Pathologists (SLP) and Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) as consultants for your child's program.

In addition to speech and language therapy, our clinicians are responsible for developing and monitoring home programs based on the science of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), with emphasis on B.F. Skinner's analysis of Verbal Behavior (VB). The SLP/BCBA is also responsible for training home instructors, family members and other professionals on specific teaching procedures and behavior plans. Having knowledge of **speech and language development** helps prioritize the appropriate goals and skills relevant to each child. The **behavioral component** helps give a unique perspective on how to reach the goals in the most effective and efficient manner while keeping the child eager and engaged during learning environments. If your child is not excited to be in therapy, we look at what we can do to modify our teaching procedures while continuing to follow the science of ABA, and the empirical evidence surrounding our recommendations.



What is a VB Program? Each program incorporates teaching the child across all units of language, using Discrete Trial Training (DTT) and Natural Environment Teaching (NET), by means of errorless teaching techniques and manipulation of the child's motivation. Each specific teaching procedure can be linked to empirical research. The combination of specific teaching procedures and establishing motivational moments throughout the child's day ensures success for the child.

WHO We Serve: ICAN specializes in assessment and treatment of children with:

- Expressive and receptive language delays associated with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental delays
- Behavior problems
- Articulation disorders
- Reading difficulties
- ADD/ADHD
- Developmental Apraxia
- Auditory Processing Disorders (CAPD)
- Language-Based Learning Disabilities
- Pragmatic language disorders (social skills)

ICAN of Washington, Inc. Provides Three Main Services:

1 Consultative/Home Programming After completion of required trainings (see back cover), our consultant will observe your child in his/her natural environment and school setting. The consultant will also review at least one video review of your child before meeting with your team in your home. During the initial consultation, our consultant will provide training of team members (including family members, caregivers, home instructors hired by the family, and teachers). Our consultant will utilize teaching procedures based on the methods of Applied Behavior Analysis with emphasis on B.F. Skinner's analysis of Verbal Behavior. Specific goals for your child will be based on your child's recent VB-MAPP (Sundberg, 2009) and/or the ABLLS-R (Sundberg & Partington, 2006). The consultant will train team members on how to monitor the child's skills through data collection on a daily basis. When needed, the consultant will also train families on specific behavior plans in order to increase or decrease target behaviors. While training is an on-going process throughout each consultation, the amount of time necessary to initially train the team can vary based on the team-members' knowledge of the science of ABA with emphasis on Verbal Behavior. The initial training typically takes between 8-10 hours. These initial consultations can be scheduled across several weeks during the first month while we work with you and your team. Follow-up consultations are scheduled on a monthly basis and typically are between 3-6 hours each consultation. There are pre-requisites for utilizing our consultative/home programming option discussed on our website, www.icanofwashington.com

2 Clinic Your child will be seen on a rotating basis by a dually certified Speech Language Pathologist/Board Certified Behavior Analyst, and a Verbal Behavior instructor. Our clinic option utilizes teaching procedures using methods of Applied Behavior Analysis with emphasis on B.F. Skinner's analysis of Verbal Behavior. Our sessions include a combination of individual natural environment teaching, intensive teaching, and

independent play pairings and activities. Instruction is on a 1 teacher, 1 child ratio. Specific goals will be individualized based on each child's recent VB-MAPP (Sundberg, 2009) and/or the ABLLS-R (Sundberg & Partington, 2006). Skills will be monitored through data collection on a daily basis and shared with parents and team members. Observations are welcomed and encouraged throughout each session in order for your team members to learn from the professionals doing hands-on work with your child. Clinic is offered in Spring and Summer. Sessions are typically in 4-week increments and your child will be seen between 6-12 hours per week, depending on the session of interest. Once enrolled, clients are required to attend the full session. No partial sessions are offered.

Additional Services:

- Speech and language evaluations
- Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) for the reduction of maladaptive behaviors or increase in functional behaviors
- Training services for parents, professionals, and home therapists
- Individual Education Plans (IEP), goal development/attendance at IEP meetings
- Observations of school settings
- ABLLS-R/VB-MAPP assessments
- SRA/Direct Instruction programs
- Collaboration with other professionals

Individual Speech and Language Therapy Sessions

Our Speech Language Pathologists provide individual sessions focusing on specific skills from your child's recent VB-MAPP (Sundberg, 2009) and/or the ABLLS-R (Sundberg & Partington, 2006). Teaching methods also follow the science of Applied Behavior Analysis with emphasis on B.F. Skinner's analysis

of Verbal Behavior. The therapist will also focus on articulation and specific speech production goals. The Speech Pathologist will also act as a critical piece in the home program, as she/he will communicate with the main consultant and home team in between monthly consultations. The SLP will also carry through with any behavior plan currently in place in the home and school.

Autism Spectrum Disorders

It is estimated that 1 in every 88 children are diagnosed with autism every year. Of these children, 1 in 54 are boys. The diagnosis of autism can initially be saddening and overwhelming to any family member. Parents often walk out of the professional's office bewildered and many times confused as to what to do next. There are so many unanswered questions about the vast amount of therapies used to treat Autism. ICAN of Washington, Inc. has been providing answers to these questions since 2001. Here, Board Certified Behavior Analyst/Speech Language Pathologists train families and caretakers around the metropolitan area in providing effective, evidence-based language, communication, and behavioral intervention through the use of Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA) with emphasis on B.F. Skinner's analysis of Verbal Behavior. While there are other programs developed for children with autism that differ in philosophy, there is a lack of research to support the various intervention programs. Currently, **ABA is the only intervention that is supported by the Food and Drug Administration as an effective treatment for Autism Spectrum Disorders.**

What is Autism? Autism is a complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life. Autism impacts the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Children and adults with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interaction, and leisure or play activities. The disorder makes it hard for them to communicate with others and relate to the outside world. In some cases, aggressive and/or self-injurious behavior may be present. Persons with autism may exhibit repeated body movements (hand flapping, rocking), unusual responses to people or attachments to objects and resistance to changes in routines. They may also experience sensitivities in the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste.

Evaluation of Autism: Diagnosing Autism: psychologists, neurologists, psychiatrists and developmental pediatricians can diagnose Autism Spectrum Disorders. If you are concerned that your child may fall somewhere on the Autism Spectrum, talk to your pediatrician, who may refer you to a specialist. Please see our **RESOURCES** page for professionals you can contact in our area.

- Remember that Autism is a set of symptoms, particularly communication, that needs to be addressed. You will need to have several professionals involved in your team, including a Board Certified Behavior Analyst, a Speech Language Pathologist *who has training in Applied Behavior Analysis* (preferably also certified as a BCBA or BCABA), and your classroom teacher.
- Remember that it is not ethical for a professional to call himself or herself a Behavior Specialist without being board certified through the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). To find a certified BCBA or BCABA, you can look at www.bacb.com.

Characteristics of Autism: Characteristics of autism can occur in isolation or in combination with other conditions. There is a wide spectrum of autism, and each child and their individual symptoms may vary significantly from one another.

The major symptoms of autism include:

- Failure to develop normal socialization skills
 - Lack of eye contact
 - Interest in objects rather than people
 - Lack of "attachment" or emotional bonds
 - Unresponsive emotionally
 - Lack of desire to be held or touched
 - Prefers to be alone
- Communication disorders
 - Echolalia
 - Memorized language learning (verbatim reiteration of dialogue from videotapes, advertisements)
 - May be non-verbal
 - Lack of intonation or inflection
 - Use of a phrase or sentence continuously out of its typical context
 - Questionable apraxia of speech
- Rigidity/Inflexibility
 - Need for sameness/routines
 - Lack of creative-imaginative play
 - Desire to hold objects daily
 - Extreme reactions to change
- Abnormal responses to sensory input
 - Overreaction to loud noises
 - Acute awareness of background noises which most are able to ignore
 - Fascination with lights, venetian blinds, color patterns, using peripheral vision, textures to feel
 - Spinning items or themselves around
 - Walking on tip toe or back and forth from different floor textures
 - Little response to pain.
 - Aversion to different food textures
 - In general, using the senses of taste and smell rather than hearing and vision.

What is ABA and VB?

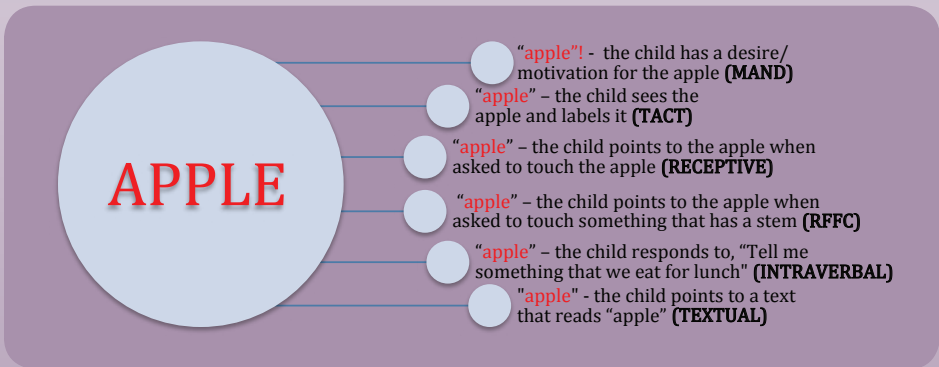
Verbal Behavior (VB) is, in fact, Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Verbal Behavior is **not** a separate approach, therapy, or entity. It is the application of the science of ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) with emphasis on B.F. Skinner's analysis of Verbal Behavior.

In 1957, B.F. Skinner published *Verbal Behavior*, outlining his analysis of language as behavior. Skinner classified language into operants or functional units of language (Receptive, Mimetic/Echoic; Mands, Tacts, Intraverbals). The application of these verbal operants into teaching is known as Verbal Behavior (VB).

What sets Verbal Behavior aside from other language intervention therapies?

Skinner's analysis of Verbal Behavior breaks language down by its **function** rather than its form. For example, if your son wants milk, can he ask for it when he wants the milk, label it when asked, "what is it?", identify milk when you ask him to get the milk from the refrigerator, and answer "what is something you pour into cereal?". Other cognitive-linguistic approaches focus only on "receptive" and "expressive" language (in this example, labeling "milk" and following a direction to "get the milk"). Furthermore, other cognitive-linguistic approaches to language intervention focus on increasing a child's syntax (grammatical structure of a sentence or phrase), before the child masters the true meaning of a single word. Cognitive-linguistic approaches often emphasize labeling and identifying specific objects in the child's environment before emphasizing the mand (requesting items, people, and actions based on the child's specific motivation).

An approach based on the application of the science of ABA with emphasis on Verbal Behavior would first build a core **mand** repertoire across several objects, people, and activities ("ball", "throw", "mommy", "climb", "swing", etc.) before adding on a complex phrase. Furthermore, Skinner believed that a learner did not truly understand a word until he mastered it across all the verbal operants (i.e. **mand, tact, receptive, intraverbal**). An ABA/VB approach would teach the learner all the functions of words.



In this example, a learner does not know the complete meaning of "apple" unless the learner can ask for the apple when he/she wants the apple (**mand**), label the apple when the apple is on the table and when asked, "What is that?" (**tact**), identify the apple when asked, "go get the apple" (**receptive**), talk about the apple when asked about its feature function or class, "find something that has a stem and we eat it", (**Receptive by Feature Function or Class—RFFC**), and talk about the apple when the apple is not present "Tell me something you eat for lunch." (**intraverbal**).

Verbal Behavior places heavy emphasis on **mand** (request) training as it is a critical element teaching functional communication and also helps to reduce problem behavior. Empirical data supports the importance of teaching the **mand** first and further supports the fact that laying a solid manding repertoire for your child may lead to an easier acquisition of the other areas of language (**tact, receptive, RFFC, interverbal**) mentioned above. Children with autism require and deserve explicit language training using effective teaching procedures that are supported by evidence and research.

Our Staff



Cynthia D. Onder, MA, CCC-SLP/BCBA

Cynthia Onder is Director and founder of ICAN of Washington. She is a nationally certified Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP), as well as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). For over 16 years, Cynthia has been serving children diagnosed with Autism, Down Syndrome, and other language-based learning difficulties. Cynthia has extensive experience working with children with Apraxia of speech, Dysarthria, Dysphasia, articulation disorders, reading difficulties, auditory processing, and other language disorders. She is responsible for implementing and monitoring ABA/VB programs including conducting assessments, writing goals and objectives as well as training home instructors, school staff, and family members. Cynthia supervises professionals studying for their BCBA certification. She has been invited to speak at a variety of organizations, educating parents and professionals on ABA/Verbal Behavior in the Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Cynthia is also PROMPT trained (Prompts for Restructuring Oral Muscular Phonetic Targets).



Morgan McCloskey, MA, CCC-SLP/BCBA

Morgan joined ICAN, Inc. in May, 2007. She is a nationally certified Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) and a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Ms. McCloskey's primary responsibilities include evaluation and treatment of children with developmental speech and language disorders including autism and other related disorders. Morgan also implements and monitors ABA programs and conducts parent and teacher training for home instruction utilizing teaching procedures of ABA with emphasis on B.F. Skinner's analysis of Verbal Behavior. Morgan attends the Carbone Clinic in New York multiple times per year for direct supervision and hands-on training with several clients. Morgan also supervises professionals seeking supervision for their BCBA certification. She has experience in treatment of individuals with voice and fluency disorders, reading difficulties, neurogenic communication disorders as well as Apraxia, Dysarthria and Dysphasia. Ms. McCloskey has training in RDI (Relationship Development Intervention) and is PROMPT trained.



Macarena Fernandez, MA, CCC-SLP/BCBA

Macarena ("Macky") Fernandez joined ICAN of Washington, Inc. in June, 2010. She is a nationally certified Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) and a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA). Her primary responsibilities at ICAN include evaluation and treatment of children with developmental disorders, including autism and other related disorders. Ms. Fernandez implements and monitors ABA programs with emphasis on B.F. Skinner's analysis of Verbal Behavior, and applies the science of ABA during her speech and language therapy sessions. Macky also conducts trainings on the science of ABA for home instructors, parents and teachers. Macky attends the Carbone Clinic in New York multiple times per year for direct supervision and hands-on training with several clients. In addition to her work with children with autism, she brings extensive experience working with children with Apraxia of speech, Asperger Syndrome, fluency disorders, reading difficulties, and neurogenic communication disorders. Macky is also PROMPT trained.

Other Resources

Links for Autism:

Autism Society of American:

www.autism-society.org

Autism Speaks:

www.autismspeaks.org

First Signs of Autism:

www.firstsigns.org

Links for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) with emphasis on Verbal Behavior:

ICAN of Washington, Inc.:

www.icanofwashington.com

Carbone Clinic, NY:

www.carboneclinic.com

Dr. Mark Sundberg, PhD, BCBA:

www.marksundberg.com

Dr. Jim Partington, PhD, BCBA:

www.partingtonbehavioranalysts.com

Dr. Patrick McCreevey, PhD, BCBA:

www.behaviorchange.com

Behavior Analyst Certification Board:

www.bacb.com

Christina Burk, BCBA:

www.christinaburkaba.com

Establishing Operations, Inc:

www.establishingoperationsinc.com

Pediatricians:

Capital Medical Group:

301.907.3960

Bethesda Pediatricians,

Dr. Gatto, Deutish and Walters: 301.299.8930

Potomac Pediatricians,

Dr. Karen Glassman: 301.279.6750

Dr. Ann Hellerstein: 301.258.7700

Dr. Lainie Hoover: 301.540.0811

Disclaimer: ICAN of Washington, Inc. does not have any affiliation with the professionals listed above. This list is not comprehensive, but rather a list compiled from professional experience and recommendations from clients.

Developmental Pediatricians:

Pediatric Care Center,

Dr. Belsito: 301.564.5880

Children's First Pediatrics,

Dr. Cathleen J. McGrath, M.D., F.A.A.P.:

301.990.1664

Georgetown Pediatricians,

Dr. David Nelson: 202.444.2000 (*main number*)

Children's National Medical Center:

202.476.5000 (*main line*)

Pediatric Neurologists:

Dr. Zimmerman: www.kennedykrieger.org/patient-care/faculty-staff/andrew-zimmerman

Dr. Sylvia Edelstein, Kids Neuro:

301.320.6665

Dr. Chuck Conlon, Neuro-Developmental

Pediatrician: 301.530.9200

Children's National Medical Center:

202.476.5000 (*main line*)

Dr. Di Fazio: 240.826.6588

Neuro-Psychologist:

Dr. Carmen Lopez, Kennedy Krieger:

443.923.7620

Children's National Medical Center,

Dr. Angela Marie Bollich: 301.765.5430

Psychiatrists:

Dr. Matthew Biel, Pediatric and Adolescent

Psychiatry, Georgetown: 202.687.8188

Dr. C.T. Gordon: 301.230.1808

Dr. Parr, MD: 202.476.5544

Psychologist:

Dr. Penny Glass, Children's National

Medical Center: 202.476.2132

Dr. Jody Bleiberg: 301.493.4198

Dr. Kimberly Jesse: 301.951.4499 x4831

Dentists with experience with Special Needs:

Drs Morgenstein & Levy: 301.881.6170

Social Skills Camps/Groups:

Basic Concepts: 240.447.8013

Contact Us

NOW WHAT?! If your child has been diagnosed with Autism or other related disorders, here is a checklist for the next steps:

- ☑ Obtain and complete an ABLLS-R (Sundberg & Partington, 2006) or VB-MAPP (Sundberg, 2009) on your child. ABLLS-R and VB-MAPP can be ordered at www.difflearn.com. These assessments will not only help the consultant with whom you work, but will also help paint a clear picture of the specific areas of strengths and weaknesses of your child.
- ☑ Obtain initial and *continual* training on the basic principles of Applied Behavior Analysis. Families must attend Workshop #1 by Dr. Vince Carbone, PhD, BCBA, (schedule can be found on his website: www.carboneclinic.com) OR attend the highlighted workshops held at ICAN of Washington (see highlighted bullets below). ICAN holds monthly trainings on specific topics related to ABA/Verbal Behavior and are posted on our website www.icanofwashington.com. Training sessions are held generally every month for typically three hours. Training span across the following topics:
 - Identifying and Reacting to Problem Behavior **(required)**
 - Teaching Manding to the Beginning, Intermediate and Advanced Learners **(required)**
 - Intensive Teaching at the Table **(required)**
 - Natural Environment Teaching **(required)**
 - Teaching Manding using Sign Language
 - Pairing With Reinforcement
 - Data Collection Procedures
- ☑ Schedule an initial consultation with ICAN of Washington, Inc. or another provider that specializes in ABA with emphasis on Verbal Behavior **and** is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst.
- ☑ Videoclip your child so you can show the BCBA a 20-30 minute video of your child in his/her natural environment prior to meeting with ICAN.
- ☑ Once you have met with ICAN and attended the initial training session(s), determine whether or not your child and family's needs are best met with our clinic option, home program/consulting option, speech and language therapy, or a combination of these services.

Early intervention is critical... Experts in the field of autism and other developmental delays agree that treatment is most effective when started at an early age. There is a professional consensus about specific aspects of treatment that should be started at an early age such as: intensity, family involvement, functional communication training, and focus on generalization in the child's natural environment. Building functional communication through mand training (requesting skills) is not only essential for the development of all other types of verbal behavior but is critical in teaching a child that communication is *valuable*. In addition, starting mand training at an early age may **replace many problem behaviors** that arise from not being able to communicate basic wants and needs. Manding is a crucial part of building social interactions and establishing both speaker and listener roles at an early age. Again...early intervention is critical!

For More Information about ICAN of Washington, Inc. Visit our website at www.icanofwashington.com or e-mail us at info@icanofwashington.com. We will be happy to answer any questions you may have about autism or other developmental delays, and our services. Please don't hesitate to contact us- we are here to help you and your child!

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