



Autism Services Program

Client Handbook

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Apex Therapy Services

Address: 2674 West Jefferson Avenue, Suite 206 Trenton, MI 48183

Website: www.apextherapyservices.com

Phone: 734-802-0219

Fax: 248-792-3249

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Welcome

Welcome to Apex Therapy Services!

The mission of Apex Therapy Services is to provide comprehensive and integrated behavioral and mental health services that promote the health and quality of life of our patients. We are characterized by our deep understanding of and sensitivity to our clients and their families and are pleased to be recognized as a behavioral health leader in Michigan.

Founded in 2023, the Apex Therapy Services Autism Program is committed to providing evidence-based interventions, compassionate care, and collaborative support to individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) across the life span. Through innovative Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services, tailored to the unique needs of each person, we are dedicated to fostering independence, growth, and meaningful connections. With a commitment to excellence, compassion, and collaboration, we empower individuals and families to overcome challenges, achieve their goals, and lead fulfilling lives.

What is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?

Applied Behavior Analysis is a scientifically validated approach to understanding behavior and how it is affected by the environment. In this context, “behavior” refers to actions and skills, and “environment” includes any influence - physical or social - that might change or be changed by one’s behavior.

Since the 1960’s, therapists have been applying behavior analysis to help individuals with autism and related developmental disorders. Early techniques often involved adults directing most of the instruction; however, some recent naturalistic approaches encourage the client to take the lead. Through the decades of research, the field of behavior analysis has developed many techniques for increasing useful behaviors and reducing those that may cause harm or interfere with learning.

On a practical level, the principles (how learning takes place) and methods of behavior analysis have helped many kinds of learners acquire many different skills. One such principle is Positive Reinforcement. When the desired behavior is followed by a reward, the behavior is more likely to be repeated. Techniques used within ABA can be used in structured situations, such as a classroom lesson or “everyday” situations such as family dinnertime or the neighborhood playground. Therapy sessions can include one-on-one interaction or group instruction.

Applied Behavior Analysis strives to bring meaningful and positive changes in behavior- from healthier lifestyles to the mastery of a new language - from toddlers through adulthood.

Services in Applied Behavior Analysis

Our team offers a comprehensive range of services to support clients and their families. All programs are designed using research-based strategies and developmentally appropriate curricula. We employ rigorous data collection and review procedures to ensure adherence to evidence-based ABA practices. Treatment goals are taught in both one-on-one and group settings, utilizing natural environment teaching (NET) and intensive teaching (ITT) methods, with an emphasis on Verbal Behavior.

Services in Applied Behavior Analysis may include*:

**Please note that this list is not exhaustive and is subject to change. Please contact your ABA supervisor for more information regarding ABA services that are currently available through the Apex Therapy Autism Services Program.*

Social Skills Training:

- One-on-one settings
- Play dates - facilitated peer play
- Social groups - small groups customized for the client, their goals, with their peers, and in their community

Play Skills: Age-appropriate skills are taught

- Toy play
- Pretend/imaginative play
- Cooperative play

Communication Training: Strategies are used to increase appropriate communication.

Strategies include:

- Mand Training (requesting)
- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)
- Assistive Technology (AAC Device)
- Vocal speech
- Conversational language
- Commenting
- Turn taking
- Staying on topic
- Decreasing problematic behavior by teaching increasing functional language skills and teaching replacement behaviors.

Functional Behavior Assessment: Functional Behavior Analysis (FBA) is an attempt to identify the maintaining variables of a particular behavior and hypothesize what function it may be serving for that person. Truly understanding why someone behaves the way he/she/they do(es) is the first and best step to developing an effective intervention.

Behavior Intervention Plan: A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) takes the observations from an FBA or FA to create a supportive and effective strategy for understanding and addressing a client's behavior. A BIP focuses on modifying the environment to prevent challenging behaviors from arising, providing positive reinforcement to encourage desired behaviors, and applying strategies that respect the individual's needs and preferences. The goal is to create a respectful and empowering plan that promotes positive outcomes and supports the client and their family.

Assessments: Commonly used assessment tools include, but are not exclusive to:

- Verbal Behavior Milestones Assessment and Placement Program (VB-MAPP)
- Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills – Revised (ABLLS-R)
- Assessment of Functional Living Skills (AFLS)
- Adaptive behavior assessment
- Biopsychosocial interview
- Informal interview (parent/guardian, client, teacher)
- Behavioral observation
- Social skills inventory
- Reinforcer inventory

Assessments are used to guide program development. They are NOT used to diagnose.

Daily Living Skills: We assist in teaching day-to-day self-help and independent living skills, such as toilet training, hygiene, dressing, eating, grooming, and household chores.

Other: We also can assist in community outings, family activities, doctor appointments, haircuts, developing schedules/routine, and improving sibling/family relations.

School Consultation:

- **Shadow Services:** One-on-one assistance in-group settings, such as private schools, daycares, camps and learning centers. Shadowing can assist with behavior, communication skills, social skills, etc. Shadow services are only optional per Agency Representative availability.

- **In School Facilitation:** Collaboration with teachers and professionals to coordinate care and accomplish common goals.
- **Training Opportunities:** Paraprofessional training, teacher workshops, etc.

Services in Applied Behavioral Analysis

IEP Review: We assist in creating IEP goals in collaboration with the client, their parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and administrators. Additionally, we can attend IEP meetings to advocate for the client's best interests. We work closely with the client and their parent(s)/guardian(s) to help them navigate the IEP process effectively.

Academic Assistance: Assist the client, their parent(s)/guardian(s) and the client's teacher(s) in identifying strengths, weaknesses, and possible skill deficits with academics and help to provide strategies and break down skills for the client to have more success with schoolwork and homework.

Program Development: This includes ongoing assessments, data compilation, task analysis, program updates, reports, review any given documents, development of treatment plans, and sometimes direct instruction training program management.

Evidence-Based ABA Practices

Apex Therapy Services utilizes Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) as a means for decision-making in order to integrate the best available evidence with client needs and circumstances, and clinical expertise. This practice allows Apex Therapy Services to provide services uniquely matched to each client and its framework provides behavior analysts with a structure for pervasive use of the best available evidence in the complex settings in which they work.

Using EBP, Apex Therapy Services can clearly and explicitly recognize evidence supporting intervention options, understands the importance of contextual factors including client values that contribute to decision making, and the key role of clinical expertise in the conceptualization, intervention, and evaluation of cases.

Transitioning and Fading

Transitioning occurs when a client masters an established goal criterion, leading to progression to the next higher-level goal, or when adjustments are needed to better support the client's current needs. If a client requires a shift to lower-level goals, we re-evaluate and establish new goal criteria that build on their strengths. Once the client masters these new goals, we revisit the original goals and support their advancement to the next higher-level criteria.

Fading involves gradually reducing the level of assistance required to complete a task or activity. When teaching a skill, the ultimate goal is for the client to perform the skill as independently as possible. The fading process, combined with shaping, utilizes and systematically withdraws various prompts to support the client's progression toward independence.

Discharge and transition planning from one or all treatment programs will involve a gradual step down in services. Discharge from a comprehensive ABA treatment program occurs over several months. Treatment plans will be reviewed and evaluated, and discharge planning will begin when the client has achieved specific treatment goals, as measured by appropriate standardized protocols.

The process of fading will begin once the child's progress meets specific predetermined goals.

Parent/Guardian Training: We offer intensive one-on-one training, known as Family Treatment Guidance, for parents/guardians of minor clients and clients who are legal wards. This service is an integral part of therapy and participation is required as part of the treatment process. Family Treatment Guidance covers the fundamental principles and techniques of ABA tailored to the client's specific needs, aiming to enhance their independence, daily living skills, and communication abilities. Additionally, it provides opportunities for the client to generalize skills across different environments. We coach parents/guardians through behavior interventions, offering guidance and support in implementing ABA strategies effectively.

Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) Guidelines

Apex Therapy Services follows the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB)'s ethical guidelines. The Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) serves as a regulatory body overseeing the practice of behavior analysis. It establishes and upholds standards and guidelines to ensure that behavior analysts and technicians adhere to best practices in their field. Certification by the BACB indicates that an individual has met rigorous standards and is proficient in the field of behavior analysis.

In accordance with the BACB code of ethics, all clients have the right to effective behavior treatment, which includes individual's rights, professional relationship, and informed consent.

An individual has a right to....

- Evidence-based and effective interventions
- Involvement and consent in the treatment planning process
- Services rendered or supervised by a competent behavior analyst working within their scope of training.
- Programs that teach socially significant and functional skills that are tailored for the individual client.
- A behavioral assessment and ongoing evaluation
- Interventions that are free of harm and aversive.

A professional relationship requires:

- Confidentiality
- Protecting the client's dignity, health, and safety
- Helping the client select outcomes and behavior change targets
- Maintaining records
- Advocating for the client
- Providing necessary and needed services
- Evidence-based practice and least restrictive alternatives
- Not a conflict of Interest

Guideline for "Informed Consent" is as follows:

Informed consent means that the potential recipient of services (i.e. the client or, for minor/legal wards, the client's parent/guardian) provides explicit permission before any assessment or treatment is provided. Informed consent requires more than obtaining permission. Permission must come following full disclosure and information is provided to the participant.

For consent to be valid:

- a. The person must demonstrate the capacity to decide
- b. The person's decision must be voluntary
- c. The person must have adequate knowledge of all salient aspects of the treatment.

More information can be found at www.BACB.com

Personal Health Information (PHI) storage

At Apex Therapy Services, we understand the importance of protecting the highly personal and sensitive information of those receiving services. Rest assured that all information is securely stored in compliance with HIPAA regulations and is only accessible to authorized Agency Representatives who are directly involved in a client's care.

Confidentiality Policy

At Apex Therapy Services, we prioritize the privacy and confidentiality of all our clients and their family members. Our commitment to protecting your personal information is foundational to our services. As a mental health agency, our confidentiality practices comply with federal and state laws, including the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) and the Michigan Mental Health Code. These laws mandate the protection of your Personal Health Information (PHI)* and outline specific circumstances under which information may be disclosed.

**Protected Health Information (PHI) includes “any information, whether oral or recorded in any form or medium” that “relate(s) to the past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition of an individual; the provision of health care to an individual; or the past, present, or future payment for the provision of health care to an individual.”*

We have established the following standards of care that all Agency Representatives of Apex Therapy Services must adhere to at all times to ensure the confidentiality of every client under our care.

Confidentiality of Client Information

All information provided by clients and their family members during treatment is kept strictly confidential. Apex Therapy Services prohibits Agency Representatives from disclosing or discussing personal details, programming information, or any other information related to client care with non-Agency Representatives. All information about clients or their families is shared on a “need to know” basis with Agency Representatives who are also on the client’s treatment team or otherwise involved in the client’s care. Furthermore, Agency Representatives are prohibited from discussing PHI in public locations, such as hallways, elevators, or community treatment settings.

Safeguarding your Information:

Agency Representatives are required to ensure that all electronic data, data sheets or sensitive documents that could reveal a diagnosis or related PHI are kept protected at all times. Digital client data storage providers will ensure that all client records are stored in an encrypted or otherwise secure storage location and backed up to ensure long term retention without the possibility of record loss. Client information must never be left unattended (e.g., session notes, data sheets, electronic data, physical data containing PHI). Agency Representatives are also prohibited from storing PHI on flash/thumb drives or removable hard drives, and all electronic devices must be encrypted, auto-lock enabled, and password-protected at all times.

Electronic Communication:

Agency Representatives are prohibited from sharing any PHI or related client information on any form of social media, even if the information has been de-personalized. Apex Therapy Services requires that all emails sent outside of our network are sent locked, zipped, encrypted and/or password protected, and with the appropriate HIPAA privacy disclaimer.

Questions and Concerns:

Additional information regarding Apex Therapy Services' commitment to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of clients and their family members can be found in our [Notice of Privacy Practice](#). If you have any questions or concerns about our confidentiality practices, please feel free to discuss them with a member of your treatment team or contact our office. We are committed to addressing any issues promptly to ensure your privacy is maintained.

Client Satisfaction/Grievance Procedure:

Apex Therapy Services is committed to providing high-quality care and ensuring client satisfaction. We value your feedback and are dedicated to addressing any concerns or grievances you may have about our services. This procedure outlines the steps for expressing satisfaction, providing feedback, and filing grievances.

Client Satisfaction:

- **Surveys:** Apex Therapy Services periodically sends client satisfaction surveys to clients and their family members to gather feedback regarding our services.
- **Feedback Forms:** Clients and their family members can provide feedback anytime by filling out a feedback form. These forms are available online and at our offices.
- **Direct Communication:** We encourage clients and their family members to directly share their thoughts with their ABA Supervisor or any other Agency Representative involved in their care.

Grievance Procedure:

All individuals receiving support or treatment from Apex Therapy Services have the right, without fear of retaliation, to file a grievance (i.e. complaint or conflict) regarding any policy, procedure, rule, situation, and/or services provided by Apex Therapy Services. and have that grievance investigated and resolved.

All individuals receiving support from Apex Therapy Services through a Community Mental Health organization., also have the right to appeal any decision that includes denial, reduction, suspension, or termination of services or supports through their PIHP/CMHSP.

Filing an Internal Grievance:

Informal Grievance:

1. Clients and their family members are encouraged to first directly address concerns with their ABA Supervisor. The ABA Supervisor will meet with the client/family to discuss concerns and will take a collaborative approach to resolving identified issues.
2. If the concern remains unresolved after speaking to the ABA Supervisor, or if the concern directly involves the ABA Supervisor, the client/family can contact the Program Director for assistance. The Program Director will meet with the client/family to discuss concerns and work collaboratively with all involved parties to seek a mutually acceptable resolution.
3. If the concern remains unresolved after speaking to the Program Director, or if the client/family is dissatisfied with the resolution, the client/family can contact the Clinic Director for assistance. The Clinic Director will meet with the client/family to discuss the concerns, review the previous actions taken to address the concerns, determine if a formal grievance is needed, and work with the client/family to determine the next appropriate action.

Formal Grievance:

- A formal grievance can be filed by submitting the Conflict Resolution Request Form, available in our offices, on our website, and in the client handbook.
- The Conflict Resolution Request Form can be submitted in person, by mail, or via email to the Apex Therapy Services Corporate Officer.
- The Apex Therapy Services Corporate Officer will initiate an investigation of the grievance upon receiving the Conflict Resolution Request Form.

- Within 72 hours of completing the investigation, the Apex Therapy Services Corporate Officer will implement the necessary actions to address any substantiated grievance. The client/family will also be informed of these actions in writing.
- If the grievance is not substantiated or the client/family is dissatisfied with the results of the investigation, the Apex Therapy Services Corporate Officer will meet with the client/family to discuss the findings and attempt to arrive at a solution. A mediation meeting may also be conducted in a further effort to resolve the situation. If an acceptable resolution cannot be reached, the Apex Therapy Services Corporate Officer will inform the client/family of their additional options for appeal.

Documentation and Review:

- All grievances and their resolutions will be documented and retained in accordance with Apex Therapy Services' record-keeping policies.
- Grievance data will be reviewed periodically to identify trends and areas for improvement.

Filing an External Grievance:

Applicable to clients receiving services via Community Mental Health (CMH) funding:

All clients and their family members have the right to file a recipient rights complaint if believe any of their rights have been violated. This can be done by calling or visiting their county's Rights Office or by completing a recipient rights form and returning it to the Rights Office.

Please visit the following website for more information regarding the Recipient Rights Office in your county: [Contact Information for Local Rights Officers by County. \(michigan.gov\)](#)

CONFLICT RESOLUTION REQUEST

All clients, guardians, providers, Agency Representatives, and others have the right to file a grievance without fear of retaliation. Your grievance may be placed in writing on this form which is available from each representative of Apex Therapy Services. This form may be given to your clinician or can be presented, mailed, faxed, or emailed to:

Ray Kamoo, Ph.D., Apex Therapy Services
30200 Telegraph Road, Suite 207
Bingham Farms, MI 48025

Phone: (248-712-1129), Fax: (248-792-3249) E-mail: (kamooray@gmail.com)

Date _____

Person making complaint:

- _____ Client
- _____ Employer
- _____ Volunteer
- _____ Guardian
- _____ Family Member
- _____ Other (*specify*) _____

Regarding:

- _____ Client
- _____ Clinician
- _____ Home
- _____ Community
- _____ Other (*specify*) _____

Complainant Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Describe Conflict/Concern:

Client and Family Interaction with Agency Representatives and Dual Relationships

The nature of our profession often involves that we work intensively with the clients and families we serve. For this reason, we require that clients and their family members maintain a friendly relationship with Agency Representatives but not a personal relationship. To this end, clients and their family members are prohibited from entering dual relationships with Agency Representatives wherein they simultaneously hold a professional/therapeutic role and a personal relationship with an Agency Representative.

Dual relationships include, but are not limited to:

- Babysitting,
- Nannying,
- Providing respite services,
- Bartering of services or goods,
- Attending social events (e.g. birthday parties and other celebrations),
- Friendships, and
- Sexual and/or romantic relationships

Dual relationships may compromise objectivity, confidentiality, and the integrity of the therapeutic relationship. Therefore, Agency Representatives are prohibited from socializing with clients and their families outside of scheduled sessions or professional interactions. This policy pertains to both past and present Agency Representatives and dual relationships are also prohibited by the BACB's code of ethics.

Apex Therapy Services strives to hire the best Agency Representatives; however, as at-will staff, Agency Representatives may leave our company for various reasons and with or without adequate notice. Due to the confidentiality we hold with our Agency Representatives and clients we cannot go into detail about why an Agency Representative left the company. This is for the protection of Apex Therapy Services and for our clients, however, we will make every attempt to ensure that staff changes are not disruptive to a client's services.

Transportation Policy:

The client and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) acknowledges that Apex Therapy Services prohibits Agency Representatives from transporting clients' or client's family members. In the event of a medical emergency, Agency Representatives should contact EMS (911) to transport a client or family member to receive medical attention. Clients facing transportation barriers to treatment may receive guidance from an Agency Representative on accessing transportation services, such as Medicaid transportation, to facilitate their attendance.

Responsible Caregiver Policy:

Apex Therapy Services requires that, at minimum, at least one adult aged 18 or older be present in the home or community setting and readily available to provide support while they are working with a client. This person is referred to hereafter as the "responsible caregiver." Services cannot take place without a responsible caregiver present in the treatment setting. Apex Therapy Services must retain a signed release of information form for all designated responsible caregivers and non-custodial adults that may be directly present during service delivery.

The responsible caregiver must:

- Not be an Apex Therapy Services Agency Representative or a member of the client's ABA team.
- Be present in the client's home or within the vicinity of treatment during the entire home or community-based ABA session.
- Be awake, readily available, and able to assist at the request of the ABA staff. This may include, but is not exclusive to, accommodating the client's biological (toileting, feeding, hydration, etc.) and/or behavioral needs.
- Refrain from taking any substances (legal or illegal) during the client's session that may negatively impact their judgment, cognition, safety, or overall ability to provide care and assistance.
- Abide by the Apex Therapy Services weapons policy

If the identified responsible caregiver cannot meet all the above specified requirements, the ABA session will be cancelled, and attempts will be made to reschedule it at a later date.

An Agency Representative is never to be alone with a client in the home or community setting.

If an Agency Representative arrives at a home or community setting and is told that the designated responsible caregiver will be leaving or the Agency Representative discovers that a responsible adult is not present, the Agency Representative is required to terminate the session and immediately contact their ABA supervisor.

Cultural Competence Policy

It is the intent of Apex Therapy Services that its Agency Representatives behave in a manner representative of their ethical and/or moral commitment to provide quality treatment services to its recipients.

It is the policy of Apex Therapy Services to maintain a written Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan that describes how the linguistic and cultural needs of our recipients are met. It is our policy to effectively provide services to recipients of all cultures, age, races, gender, sexual orientation, socio economic status, languages, ethnic backgrounds, spiritual and religious beliefs in such a way that recognizes, affirms, values, respects the worth of, and protects and preserves the dignity of every individual. Apex Therapy Services adheres to the equal employment opportunity policy and non-discrimination practices.

Apex Therapy Services policy is implemented by the following plan and practices.

I. Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan Introduction

Cultural competence is an integral part of Apex Therapy Services. Those employed by Apex Therapy Services who are in direct contact with recipients and families will demonstrate the following:

- Recognize, value, affirm and respect the worth of each individual recipient and family and protect and preserve the dignity of each;
- Utilize appropriate resources to ensure linguistic needs of the recipient and family are met;
- Assess recipient and family acculturation to aid in matching families with appropriate community-based resources and provide appropriate health and rehabilitation education;

- Utilize culture-specific information provided in training and/or Agency Representative orientation to assist in identifying and determining the cause of culture-based issues and miscommunication and to resolve them.

Apex Therapy Services ensures non-discriminatory and respectful services to recipients and families by employing both internal and external cultural competency practices. Ongoing improvement and widespread dissemination of these efforts evidence Apex Therapy Services' commitment to the provision of culturally appropriate services and care. Apex Therapy Services accommodates, facilitates, treats, and assists recipients with a wide variety of disabilities from mental and physical disabilities to those recipients with medical diagnosis and disorders.

All Agency Representatives, recipients, and families have access to the Apex Therapy Services Cultural Competency and Diversity Plan upon request.

II. Internal Cultural Competency and Diversity Practices

Apex Therapy Services seeks Agency Representatives that are committed to their community, represent a variety of cultural backgrounds, and are capable of interactions in cross-cultural situations. Discrimination is not tolerated, and Agency Representatives will conduct services in a manner that recognizes, affirms, values, respects the worth of, and protects and preserves the dignity of every individual.

Translation services will be provided to any recipient, when necessary and requested. The interpreter will assist with translating any intake, treatment plans, evaluation, or other documents shared with family. If a client needs interpretive services, Apex Therapy Services calls Michigan Association for the Deaf and makes arrangements for these services.

Apex Therapy Services will provide interpreter services to recipients and families as necessary when requested to ensure availability of effective communication regarding medical treatment, health information, or health education. Interpreters are available when technical, medical, or treatment information is to be discussed or where use of a family member or friend, as interpreter, is inappropriate. If a client is bilingual, Apex Therapy Services will utilize the assistance of a professional who will handle interpretations. Apex Therapy Services will also seek professional assistance to handle the needs of any individual with a speech and hearing impairment.

Additional information regarding Apex Therapy Services' commitment to cultural competence can be found in our Language Access Plan and Policies and Procedures Manual. All Agency Representatives of Apex Therapy Services receive annual training on these documents and are required to adhere to them at all times. A copy of these documents can be provided upon request.

Apex Therapy Services will provide comprehensive, behaviorally, and theoretically based cultural competency training and education periodically as well as on demand or as needed.

Characteristics of the training include:

- Acceptance and respect for differences
- Careful attention to dynamics of difference
- Continuous expansion of cultural knowledge and resources

Training is based upon the following learning techniques:

- Assessment and awareness of personal biases, values, and expectations
- Content on general culture-specific attributes (family structures, language use for various groups, and recipients with a wide variety of physical and linguistic disabilities).

III. External Cultural Competency Practices

Agency Representatives are notified of their responsibilities pertaining to delivering culturally competent care. In addition to internal/in house training, Agency Representatives are required to complete the DWC Cultural Competency/Diversity training model on, at minimum, a biennial basis.

Gifts

As the exchange of gifts can invite conflicts of interest and multiple relationships, it is the policy of Apex Therapy Services that Agency Representatives do not give gifts to or accept gifts from clients, stakeholders, supervisees, or trainees.

A gift refers to the following:

- Money
- Any item of value, service, loan, thing, or promise
- Discount or rebate for which something of equal or greater value is not exchanged.
- Payments for travel, entertainment, and food

The term “gift” does not include:

- An item of nominal value that is provided to an Agency Representative to satisfy a basic need, such as a glass of tap water or access to restroom facilities.
- Internet/Wi-Fi access, provided that such access is required for treatment delivery and does not place an undue financial burden on the client/family*
- Handmade items by and from the client/family, such as a drawing or painting.
- Gifts of nominal value (less than \$10) that are shared with a wide range of colleagues at Apex Therapy Services
- Any discount or rebate made in the regular course of business and offered to the general public without regard to the individual’s connection with Apex Therapy Services

- Plaques or trophies

Agency Representatives must report all instances of gift giving to the Program or Clinic Director. Instances of giving or accepting ongoing or cumulative gifts may rise to the level of a violation of this standard if the gifts become a regularly expected source of income or value to the recipient and/or place an undue financial burden on the client/family.

If an Agency Representative or volunteer receives a gift prohibited by this policy, the gift giver will be reminded of this policy, and the Agency Representative will graciously decline or return the gift under supervision. If the gift is anonymous, the recipient must deliver the gift to the Clinic Director, who will convey the gift to a charitable organization.

Health and Wellness Policies

Apex Therapy Services has instituted the following policies to promote the health and wellness of client, family members, and Agency Representatives:

- [Illness Policy](#)
- [Health Screening Questionnaire](#)
- [Chronic Medical Conditions](#)
- [Medication Policy](#)
- [Pandemic Policy](#)
- [Pets and Animals Policy](#)
- [Temperature Control Policy](#)

Illness Policy

To minimize the spread of illness, all attendees, including clients, family members, and Agency Representatives, are prohibited from attending ABA sessions if they exhibit any of the following infectious conditions or symptoms:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Stomach pain
- Rash or sores
- Head lice or nits
- Ear infection
- Upper Respiratory Infection/Cold (cough, sneezing, nasal congestion)
- Eye infection
- Sore throat
- Fever of 100.4 degrees or above
- Any other contagious condition

The client and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) acknowledge that, if any household members exhibit any of the above symptoms, they should contact Apex Therapy Services to cancel and reschedule the ABA session. If, for any reason a household member did not attend school, work, or community activities due to an illness or was sent home early due to an illness, there should be no therapy session that day. The client and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) also agree to notify Apex Therapy Services within 24 hours of the diagnosis of a serious contagious illness or parasitic infestation.

Apex Therapy Services will promptly notify the client and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) if session must be cancelled and rescheduled due to Agency Representative illness. Should an attendee present with symptoms of illness during the course of an ABA session, the remainder of the ABA session will be cancelled. The ABA team will attempt to reschedule the cancelled session(s) at a later date.

All attendees must be free of infection and other symptoms, without the aid of medication, for 24 hours before resuming program sessions. Sessions may resume when the incubation and contagious period have passed, and all attendees are well enough to resume normal activities. In some cases, a physician or health care provider's note may be required before resuming services.

Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ):

The client (or the client's responsible caregiver, if applicable) is required to complete the Apex Therapy Services Health Screening Questionnaire (HSQ) at the beginning of every ABA session. Should the HSQ suggest the presence of a potentially infectious illness, disease, or condition, the ABA session will be cancelled and rescheduled at a later date.

Please see the following link for a copy of the Apex Therapy Services HSQ:

- [HEALTH SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE \(HSQ\)](#)

Chronic Medical Conditions:

Under certain circumstances, Agency Representatives may be permitted to provide services if the client (or someone in the client's residence) frequently exhibits symptoms of a contagious illness that is directly related to an actively monitored and treated chronic medical condition.

As a condition for continued service delivery, Apex Therapy Services requires that an **Infection Control Plan** be created and consistently implemented to ensure the health, safety, and wellbeing of our Agency Representatives, clients, and families. Continued non-adherence to the Infection Control Plan may result in termination of services.

The Infection Control Plan must include the following safeguards as a condition for continued service delivery:

- Medical Clearance: Should the client have a chronic medical condition resulting in frequent symptoms of contagious illness, the client's treating health professional must provide written medical clearance stating that the client is medically able to resume services.
 - Medical clearance must also include information regarding any accommodations or restrictions that the client requires during service delivery due to their chronic medical condition. If no accommodations or restrictions are needed, this must be clearly stated on the medical clearance document.
 - Whenever possible, the treating health professional should also provide Apex Therapy Services with a list of best practice guidelines/safeguards to promote the safety, health, and wellness of all involved during service delivery.
- Universal Precautions: The Infection Control Plan must include information about the following universal precautions:

- Which types of PPE must be worn during service delivery, under which conditions PPE must be worn, and by whom.
- Schedule for cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting environmental surfaces.
- Schedule for hand washing and completing hand hygiene procedures.
- Physical measures required to reduce the spread of illness, such as:
 - *Social Distancing*: Information regarding the specific amount of distance that must be maintained between the individual with symptoms of contagious illness and those without illness.
 - *Change in service delivery location*: Temporarily or indefinitely changing the service delivery location to one that decreases the risk of spreading illness. For example, relocating services to a community location, another family member's residence, and/or the Apex Therapy Services office.
 - *Change in service delivery modality*: Temporarily or indefinitely changing the modality of service delivery from in-person/face-to-face to telehealth.

Please see the following link for a copy of the Infection Control Plan:

- [Apex Therapy Services - Infection Control Plan](#)

Medication Policy

Apex Therapy Services does not administer or keep prescription medications of any kind on premises. The client or the client's parent(s)/guardian(s)/responsible caregiver must administer any medication that needs to be taken during session.

Pandemic Policy

In the event of a pandemic within the area, Apex Therapy Services may close for an undetermined amount of time to ensure prevention of further spread of disease. We will follow any requirements issued by the Department of Public Health.

Pets and Animals Policy

Apex Therapy Services recognizes that some Agency Representatives may have allergies or discomfort around certain animals. To prevent discomfort or distraction, we ask that you keep any non-service-related animals in a secured separate room, space, or area, or outside during all home visits.

This policy includes the arrival or departure of the therapist. It refers to, but is not limited to dogs, cats, birds, snakes, reptiles, rabbits, rats, hamsters, guinea pigs, and any other domestic and/or farm animals.

Agency Representatives have the right to leave the premises due to non-adherence to this policy. In the event the client or their family members are unable to follow this policy, Apex Therapy Services will collaborate with them to identify alternative arrangements for sessions to occur outside the home.

Temperature Control Policy

When an Agency Representative provides home-based services, the client's home automatically becomes a workplace for the duration of the visit. As such, we ask that you respect the therapist's physical comfort level and ensure that the home is neither too hot, nor too cold during the duration of the visit. Between 68 degrees Fahrenheit (summer) and 74 degrees Fahrenheit (winter) is a comfortable temperature range to use as a reference point.

In the case of non-compliance, the Agency Representative will notify the ABA Supervisor or Program Director and will not return until the policy is followed. If non-compliance issues persist or the client is unable to follow this policy, alternative arrangements will be made for sessions outside the home.

Safety Policies for In-Home Services

It is the responsibility of the client and/or the client's parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide and maintain a safe and comfortable working environment for all Agency Representatives providing in-home ABA services. Likewise, Agency Representatives play an important role in maintaining the safety and well-being of the clients they work with.

Apex Therapy Services has implemented the following policies to ensure the safety of clients, families, and Agency Representatives:

- [Unsafe, Unwelcome, Aggressive, and/or Concerning behavior](#)
- [Unsanitary and/or Unsafe Conditions within the home](#)
- [Smoking Policy](#)
- [Illegal Activity Policy](#)
- [Safe Weapon Storage Policy](#)
- [Antidiscrimination/Antiharassment Policy](#)
- [Wandering and Elopement Prevention](#)
- [Individual Safety Plans](#)
- [Water Safety](#)
- [Footwear Policy](#)
- [Inclement Weather Policies and Procedures](#)

Unsafe, Unwelcome, Aggressive, and/or Concerning Behavior:

Apex Therapy Services Agency Representatives have the right to work and provide services in a safe environment that supports personal worth and dignity through mutual respect, cooperation, and understanding. As such, Apex Therapy Services will not tolerate any violent or aggressive behavior, discrimination, or harassment towards any of our workforce members.

Any adults in the home are expected to treat Agency Representatives working in their home with dignity and respect, and Apex Therapy Services will not tolerate behavior that would be considered offensive, intimidating, sexual, or unwelcome in any way. Violence and aggression, such as physical force, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse are strictly prohibited toward the Agency Representative, client, or other members or animals within the household.

If, in the opinion of the Agency Representative on duty, an individual in the client's home presents with unsafe, unwelcome and/or concerning behavior, the Agency Representative will temporarily stop the therapy session, ask the responsible caregiver to supervise the client (if applicable), and seek out direction from an administrative manager.

If, after speaking to the Agency Representative, the administrative manager feels that that the behavior of concern is unsafe, unwelcome, or otherwise not conducive to the provision of a proper ABA session, the administrative manager (or delegate) will contact the client/responsible caregiver to cancel the remainder of the ABA session.

ABA services will remain cancelled/on-hold until Apex Therapy Services administration has spoken to the client/responsible caregiver to discuss the concern and identify a mutually acceptable resolution. If unable to identify a mutually acceptable resolution, services may be terminated, relocated to the Apex Therapy Services office or another alternative location, or placed on hold until such concerns are solved to the satisfaction of both parties. In the case that this does not happen, the client/family will be provided with a list of other therapy resources so that they may continue therapy services.

Unsanitary and/or Unsafe Conditions within the Home:

All Apex Therapy Services Agency Representatives are required to abide by the Michigan Mental Health Code. As stated in Section 708 of the Michigan Mental Health Code, mental health services shall be provided in a safe, sanitary, and humane treatment environment.

If, in the opinion of the Agency Representative on duty, the client's home is currently unsanitary or unsafe, the Agency Representative will temporarily stop the therapy session, ask the responsible adult to supervise the client (if applicable), and seek out direction from an administrative manager.

If, after speaking to the Agency Representative, the administrative manager feels that the current state of the client's home environment impacts their ability to provide mental health services, the administrative manager (or delegate) will contact the client/responsible caregiver to cancel the remainder of the ABA session.

ABA services will remain cancelled/on-hold until Apex Therapy Services administration has spoken to the client/responsible caregiver to discuss the concern, identify any current conditions that are negatively impacting the treatment environment, and work with all parties to identify a mutually acceptable resolution.

If unable to identify a mutually acceptable resolution, services may be terminated, relocated to the Apex Therapy Services office or another alternative location, or placed on hold until such concerns are solved to the satisfaction of both parties. In the case that this does not happen, the family will be provided with a list of other therapy resources so that they may continue therapy services.

Smoking Policy

Smoking in a place of work poses serious health risks and fire hazards to workforce members. It is the employer's duty to ensure a safe, smoke-free environment for all Agency Representatives. As such, smoking inside the home is strictly prohibited during, and at least 15 minutes before the provision of services. The term smoking includes, but is not limited to: cigarettes, tobacco, marijuana, e-cigarettes, pipes, etc.

Agency Representatives reserve the right to immediately leave the premises and notify their ABA Supervisor or Program Director in the event of non-adherence to the smoking policy. In the event the client or their family members are unable to follow this policy, Apex Therapy Services will collaborate with them to identify alternative arrangements for sessions to occur outside the home.

Illegal Activity

When an Agency Representative provides home-based services, the client's home automatically becomes a workplace for the duration of the visit. As such, any illegal activity inside the home is strictly prohibited during the provision of services. The term illegal activity includes, but is not limited to sale, possession of, or taking of illicit controlled substances, vandalism, prostitution, theft, assault, etc.

In the case where an Agency Representative witnesses illegal activity in the client's home, the Agency Representative will immediately leave the premises and notify the ABA Supervisor or Program Director, who will then notify the appropriate authorities.

Drugs and Alcohol

All Apex Therapy Services staff are prohibited from taking any substances (legal or illegal) during work hours that would negatively impact their judgment, cognition, or overall ability to provide high quality services and maintain the safety of those around them. Similarly, we ask that all clients and individuals present within the treatment setting avoid taking any substances (legal or illegal) while receiving services at Apex Therapy Services.

Safe Weapon Storage

Apex Therapy Services is aware that some clients and/or families may own firearms or other weapons that they keep at their home. **All firearms and weapons must be kept in a secure area away from any Apex staff member or clients we serve.** This is an Apex Therapy Services requirement as well as a state-wide law (see below).

Please note: Wearing a firearm in a holster or otherwise on an adult's body IS NOT considered secure storage and will not be considered acceptable at our offices, Center or during in-home services.

Michigan's Safe Storage Law

Effective as of 2/13/24, Michigan's Safe Storage Law requires individuals to keep unattended weapons unloaded and locked with a locking device or stored in a locked box or container if it is reasonably known that a minor is likely to be present on the premises. If an individual fails to store a firearm as required and a minor obtains the firearm and any of the following occur, they are guilty of a crime under [Public Act 16 of 2023](#), as follows:

- If the minor possesses or exhibits the firearm in a public place or possesses or exhibits the firearm in the presence of another person in a careless, reckless, or threatening manner: a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment for up to 93 days or a fine of up to \$500, or both.
- If the minor discharges the firearm and injures themselves or another individual: a felony punishable by imprisonment for up to five years or a fine of up to \$5,000, or both.

- If the minor discharges the firearm and inflicts serious impairment of a body function on themselves or another individual: a felony punishable by imprisonment for up to 10 years or a fine of up to \$7,500, or both.
- If the minor discharges the firearm and inflicts death on themselves or another individual: a felony punishable by imprisonment for up to 15 years or a fine of up to \$10,000, or both.

These penalties could be imposed in addition to charges for other criminal offenses arising from an incident.

Safeguards for Weapon Storage

The following safeguards have been put in place to ensure the continued safety and security of Agency Representatives providing home-based services.

In the event that an unsecured firearm or weapon is discovered by an Apex Therapy Services home-based services Agency Representative, the Agency Representative will immediately ask the client (if legal adult)/responsible caregiver (if client is not a legal adult) to secure and store the weapon.

1. If the firearm/weapon is removed and secured:

- a. The Agency Representative continues the home-based session.
- b. The Agency Representative contacts the client's ABA Supervisor to inform them of the incident after they have finished the session and have left the client's home.
 - i. The ABA Supervisor ensures that the Agency Representative is safe, gathers information, and communicates a plan to notify the Program Director.

ii. By the close of the business day, the ABA Supervisor and Program Director debrief with the Agency Representative.

iii. The Program Director will review any state and local weapon safety and mandated reporting requirements regarding unsecured weapons and take any necessary actions to ensure the client's safety.

c. The Agency Representative submits an incident report within 24 hours of the incident.

2. *If the firearm/weapon is not removed and secured:*

a. The Agency Representative leaves the area and immediately contacts the client's ABA Supervisor.

b. The ABA Supervisor immediately contacts the client (if legal adult) or responsible caregiver (if client is not a legal adult) to discuss the incident.

i. ***If client/responsible caregiver agrees to securing weapon:*** *Continue with weapon safety protocol 1 ("If the firearm/weapon is removed and secured")*

ii. ***If client/responsible caregiver refuses to secure weapon:*** The ABA Supervisor terminates the rest of the session on behalf of the Agency Representative and debriefs with the Agency Representative

1. The Program Director or delegate contacts the client/responsible caregiver to review the weapons policy with them and answer any questions or concerns they may have.

a. ***Client/Responsible caregiver agrees to weapons policy:*** Services are permitted to resume.

b. ***Client/Responsible caregiver does not agree to weapons policy:*** The

Program Director proposes an alternative environment for service delivery.

i. **Client/Responsible caregiver agrees to alternative environment:**

Sessions are permitted to resume in the alternate setting.

ii. **Client/Responsible caregiver does not agree to an alternative**

environment: The Program Director initiates the discharge process with client/responsible caregiver. Agency makes referrals to other agencies; disclosing the reason for discharge.

Source:

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9120302/pdf/40617_2021_Article_609.pdf

Antidiscrimination/ Antiharassment Policy

Apex Therapy Services does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. Apex Therapy Services does not condone discrimination on the basis of race, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability by any of its Agency Representatives or clients.

Apex Therapy Services also does not condone harassment on the basis of race, sex, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. Agency Representatives, and/or clients that feel they are being discriminated against or harassed should report the behavior immediately as it creates an unsafe work environment.

Harassment is defined as including but not limited to unwanted propositions, touching, and/or crude jokes. It also includes making comments about a person's appearance or beliefs and generally making a person feel unsafe in their work or therapy environment.

Any person found to have violated this policy can be subject to discipline up to and including termination if an Agency Representative or being asked to leave the program if they are a client or volunteer.

Wandering and Elopement Prevention

Research indicates that almost half of children with autism are prone to elopement or wandering away from secure environments. This can potentially lead to dangerous and life-threatening situations such as drowning, traffic incidents, kidnapping, and getting trapped in a hot car. As such, the following preventative measures for wandering and elopement must be consistently implemented during ABA sessions to promote safety. Additional measures may be recommended by the client's ABA Supervisor based on the client's specific needs.

- Any doors that provide access to the outdoors (front door, back door, garage door, etc.) must be closed and locked during ABA sessions.
- If a client is deemed an elopement risk, Agency Representatives are to position themselves between the client and any door to allow for quick response in blocking and redirecting.
- Clients must be supervised at all times. Generally, Agency Representatives working 1:1 with a client should not be more than one (1) arm's length away from the client. However, this distance may vary and may be determined by the ABA Supervisor based on client needs.
- If an Agency Representative working 1:1 with a client needs to use the restroom or otherwise momentarily step away from client, they must inform the responsible caregiver before leaving the area.
- All Agency Representatives working with a client outdoors must have access to a phone and be able to contact the client's responsible caregiver in an emergency. Agency Representatives must inform the client's responsible caregiver prior to taking the client outside. If the client is deemed at risk of elopement, the responsible caregiver must be

present outdoors with the client and Agency Representative.

Any client who engages in potentially dangerous behavior, such as wandering and/or elopement, must have an Individual Safety Plan and/or Behavior Intervention Plan that outlines all the protocols, procedures, and interventions to be utilized for that particular client.

Individual Safety Plans

Ensuring the safety of all clients is paramount, but the need for heightened attention becomes crucial for clients with autism due to their unique social, communication, and behavioral challenges. Because of this, it is important to create individual safety plans with the input of Agency Representatives and caregivers who are familiar with the client's unique needs and potential challenges in emergency situations.

Once these plans are formulated and put into action, it is essential that all ABA staff and caregivers conduct regular drills and practice sessions. This proactive approach not only aids in effectively supporting the client, but also enables emergency responders to benefit from well-informed assistance, ultimately ensuring a positive and secure outcome.

Training on Safety Plans

- All Agency Representatives working with a client with a safety plan will be provided with ongoing training on the plan by the client's ABA Supervisor and will be responsible for practicing drills with them during the session.
- The client's parents/caregivers will also be provided with training on the safety plan by their ABA Supervisor and are expected to implement and practice the plan at home.
- Should a parent/caregiver decline a safety plan, this information must be documented in the client's chart or electronic record.

Community Outings:

Apex Therapy Services requires that all clients receiving community-based ABA services have a safety plan in place prior to starting services. The safety plan must include, at minimum:

- The number of Agency Representatives needed to ensure safety.
- A description of locations available to safely work on skill-building within the community.
- A list of materials/items
- A procedure to maintain the safety of all involved parties at all times.

Water Safety

Apex Therapy Services Agency Representatives will take the necessary steps to prevent accidents and injuries to any client related to swimming and wading pools, other water hazards and water-based activities.

Apex Therapy Services requires written authorization by the client or the client's parent/guardian to be obtained prior to allowing a client to participate in any water-based activities. A brief description of the client's experience with water-based activities and ability to swim may also be required prior to participation in any water-related activities.

WATER HAZARDS:

A water hazard is defined as anything that can hold at least 5 cm (1.97 in) of water/liquid and fit over an individual's nose and mouth. Water hazards may include, but are not exclusive to:

- Sinks, basins, fish tanks, fishbowls, baths
- Swimming pools, portable pools, spas
- Water courses, ponds, sandpits, clam shells
- Water troughs, containers and buckets used for play, animal drinking containers
- Pooling water

Water Hazard Prevention Policies:

Active supervision: Clients must be actively supervised at all times when there is a risk of access to any water hazard. Active supervision includes:

- Direct and constant monitoring of clients – within arm's length (within 3 to 6 feet)
- Careful and intentional positioning

- Scanning and moving around the environment
- Listening closely for sounds or the absence of noise
- Observing play and anticipating behavior
- Higher adult to client ratio. This may include requiring the client's parent/caregiver to be present during water play activities.

Eliminating hazards: Any water/liquids that are 5 cm or greater in depth must be emptied immediately after use or placed in a designated area that prevents the client from unattended access. Empty vessels must be stored in such a way that prevents them filling up with water/liquids when not in use. The environment must also be designed to ensure that the water/liquid adequately drains from the vessel and does not cause pooling or standing water.

Restricting access: Clients and Agency Representatives are prohibited from swimming or otherwise entering any body of water greater than 2 feet in depth (e.g. swimming pools, jacuzzi/hot tubs, etc.) while receiving or providing services through Apex Therapy Services. Should the client's house/residence have a swimming pool, hot tub or other large body of water, Apex Therapy Services will work with the client/client's family to ensure that the area is safe and can be adequately restricted during service delivery. In some cases, supervised water play in shallow wading pools (i.e., "kiddie pools") with a water depth of 2 feet or less may be allowed as a leisure activity or reinforcement, contingent upon continuous supervision by the client's responsible caregiver.

Water Temperature Policies:

Agency Representatives should supervise children in the bathrooms and, when appropriate, assist them in maintaining a comfortable water temperature when washing their hands.

Water temperature must be tepid/room temperature during any water play activities to ensure that it is comfortable and safe.

These universal guidelines are especially important for children with Autism, as their unique sensory needs may impact their reaction to pain, thereby potentially putting them at risk of burns from hot water if left unmonitored.

Footwear Policy

Apex Therapy Services Agency Representatives will take the necessary steps to prevent accidents and injuries to any client by requiring appropriate footwear during outdoor activities or outings. Agency Representatives will manage and monitor all activities closely to ensure compliance with all Apex Therapy Services safety policies as required.

The client or the client's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified of required footwear prior to any outdoor activity or outing. Before allowing any client to participate in a scheduled outdoor activity or outing, the client's ABA Supervisor or ABA Technician will assess a client's footwear to determine appropriateness for the specific activity

If the Agency Representative deems the client's footwear unsafe or not suitable for the scheduled activity, the client or the client's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be required to (a) provide alternate footwear for the scheduled activity, or (b) reschedule the activity.

Inclement Weather Policies and Procedures

The following statements pertain to the policies and procedures regarding appointments and or travel during inclement weather.

Inclement weather is defined as weather that has the potential to cause injury or harm when traveled in. Examples of inclement weather can take many forms and can include, but should not be limited to the following:

- Unplowed snow-covered roads, roads inadequately plowed, or icy roads
- Flash flood warnings, or flooded areas
- A dangerously low chill factor
- Excessively high temperatures, or high heat index
- Poor air quality warnings
- Severe thunderstorm warnings, tornado warnings, or sightings for a related area.

Apex Therapy Services has implemented the following severe weather policies to ensure the safety of Agency Representatives providing home-based services

Poor or unsafe road conditions (current or expected) due to severe weather (snow, rain, ice, wind, etc.)

- Weekday morning ABA sessions (8:00 AM to 12:00 PM): Agency Representatives are permitted to cancel sessions if the school district where the client resides is closed.
- Weekday Afternoon/Evening ABA sessions (12:00 PM or later) or Weekend sessions (anytime): Agency Representatives are expected to use their best judgment in determining if road conditions are safe enough to attend home-based services.

- Should an Agency Representative decide to cancel the session, they should contact their client's caregiver and ABA Supervisor no later than two hours prior to the start of the session to inform them of the cancellation.
- The client (or the client's parent/legal guardian if applicable) is similarly instructed to contact the ABA team (ABA Technician(s) and ABA Supervisor) at least two hours prior to the start of session to inform them of any cancellations.
- Agency Representatives are expected to follow the ABA session rescheduling policy in the event of any client or staff cancellations due to poor weather conditions.

Safe road conditions/attending session during inclement weather:

- Agency Representatives are expected to attend home based ABA sessions if road conditions are safe (e.g. extreme cold, minor flooding, thunderstorms) and the ABA session location has adequate utilities such as heat, water, restroom facilities, and electricity.
- The client (or the client's responsible caregiver if applicable) is required to maintain a parking spot and safe passageway for each member of the ABA team that will be attending session during inclement weather. To ensure the safety and security of our Agency Representatives and to prevent any potential parking tickets or infractions, the client (or client's responsible caregiver, if applicable) must ensure that each allotted parking space be adequately cleared of snow and debris and be located off-street (e.g. driveway, parking lot).

Apex Therapy Services Agency Representatives will make any decisions regarding the weather and safety risks from the agency's standpoint. However, the client has the right to reschedule appointments if there is a reasonable risk to safety as opposed to an attempt to merely cancel the appointment.

If an Agency Representative believes the weather poses a significant risk to health and safety, any scheduled appointments, including home visits and planned trips, will be rescheduled. Clients should understand that inclement weather and the resulting hazards can affect the areas leading to their home or the planned trip location. Safe conditions at the client's residence or the destination do not negate the potential dangers present on the travel routes to these destinations. It is the responsibility of the client or the client's parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide Apex Therapy Services with viable contact information in the event the client needs to be contacted in the event of an emergency-type situation.

The client (or the client's parent(s)/guardian(s)) acknowledge(s) that it is their responsibility to provide viable contact information, which would include a method of contacting the client in the event of an emergency-type situation.

Attendance and Commitment to Therapy

Regular attendance is a crucial component of a client's ABA treatment. As such, it is very important that a client receives their scheduled amount of ABA treatment hours every week. However, we understand that there may be times when a client's ABA services may need to be cancelled for one or more sessions. When this occurs, we will always try to reschedule the cancelled time when possible.

The Apex Therapy Autism Services Program has implemented the following Policies and Procedures to promote a high level of attendance and commitment to therapy for our clients, their family members, and Agency Representatives:

- [Communication Policy](#)
- [Parent/Guardian Participation](#)
- [Cancellations and Missed Appointments](#)
- [Late Start/Tardiness and Early Dismissal](#)
- [Excessive Lateness and Tardiness Policy](#)
- [No Call/No Show Policy](#)
- [Schedule Change Requests](#)
- [Attendance and Commitment to Therapy Policies Acknowledgement](#)

Communication Policy

Effective communication is crucial for many reasons. At Apex Therapy Services, our goal is to respond to all emails, phone calls, or texts within 24 hours during regular business hours. In some instances, we may respond with a notification indicating that we need more time to provide a complete response.

Clients and/or their parent(s)/guardian(s) should acknowledge and respond to phone calls or emails from Agency Representatives within 24 hours, or by the next business day if the communication is received over a weekend or holiday. If you are unable to respond within 24 hours, please send an email, call, or text to indicate when you will be able to reply, ensuring we know you received the communication.

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Parent/Guardian Participation*

**Applicable to parent(s)/guardian(s) of minor/legal ward clients*

Parents/Guardians play a crucial role in the success of each client's therapy journey. At Apex Therapy Services, we actively involve parents/guardians and family members in every step of the therapy process, from setting goals and objectives to implementing treatment strategies and behavior management techniques. Our treatment plans adhere to evidence-based ABA practices, ensuring effective outcomes. Our aim is to maintain consistency in programming across different settings. Our clinicians are dedicated to training Parent/Guardians in behavior management and the implementation of intensive teaching methods, empowering them to be active members of their child's therapy team.

The level, intensity, and frequency of Parent/Guardian training will be included in your child's Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP).

Parent/Guardian Commitment:

To ensure the successful implementation of the client's treatment plan/programming, Apex Therapy Services requests that parents/guardians adhere to the following commitments listed below. Please note that these commitments are a vital aspect of therapy and failure to address any issues may result in termination of services.

- Regular and active participation in training regarding ABA programming and behavior reduction protocols, as defined in their child's ITP.
- Consistent implementation of their child's treatment plan and behavior reduction protocols as instructed by the ABA Supervisor. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to promptly contact their child's ABA Supervisor when unsure how to implement a program/protocol or if they have questions or concerns about their child's services. Maintaining an attendance rate of at least 80% for all scheduled Family Treatment

Guidance meetings. Parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to work with their child's ABA Supervisor to reschedule cancelled Family Treatment Guidance meetings

The ABA therapy team will work closely with every parent/guardian to ensure that the training and guidance they provide is consistently helpful and effective. When issues arise, the ABA Supervisor is expected to work closely with the parent/guardian to determine how best to resolve the issue. When parent(s)/guardian(s) participate fully in their child's programming, they should see more progress from their child and have a better understanding of how to respond to various behaviors.

Procedure for Lack of Participation: The following is an explanation of the steps that will be taken if a Parent/Guardian is not participating in their child's programming.

First Instance/Occasion:

The **first time** a parent or guardian fails to meet a participation requirement, the ABA Supervisor will review and discuss the participation policy with them. During this conversation, the ABA Supervisor will remind the parent or guardian of their role in their child's therapy and work collaboratively to identify and address any barriers impacting their participation.

Second Instance/Occasion:

The **second time** a parent or guardian fails to meet a participation requirement, the ABA Supervisor and/or Program Director will provide a written notice reminding them of the participation policy. The notice will clearly outline the specific areas where their participation is lacking.

Third Instance/Occasion:

The **third time** a parent or guardian fails to meet a participation requirement, the ABA Supervisor and Program Director will meet with them and issue a final written notice. This

notice will clearly outline the specific areas where their participation is lacking and remind them of the participation policy. During the meeting, the ABA Supervisor and Program Director will work closely with the parent or guardian to provide any necessary training to address the issue. The notice will also inform the parent or guardian that further failure to meet participation requirements may result in the discontinuation of their child's services.

Fourth Instance/Occasion:

The **fourth time** that a parent/guardian does not meet one of the participation requirements, the child's services may be discontinued on the ground that Apex Therapy Services cannot provide effective treatment. The child and their family may also be referred to a different provider at this time.

Cancellations and Missed Appointments

Keeping your scheduled session appointments is a vital part of the treatment process. When you make an appointment at Apex Therapy Services, you ask a professional to hold a specific block of time for you. To efficiently serve you and others, Apex Therapy Services has instituted a 24-hour notification policy for cancelling an appointment.

If you need to cancel or reschedule a single appointment, please contact your ABA Technician(s) and ABA Supervisor at least 24 hours in advance. For emergency cancellations, notify your ABA Technician(s) and ABA Supervisor as early as possible. Provide alternative dates and times for rescheduling the cancelled session whenever possible.

If you need to cancel multiple appointments, please provide this information during your initial contact. In some cases, Apex Therapy Services may request a note from a health care professional when three (3) or more consecutive sessions are cancelled. Adhering to this policy helps us find alternate work assignments for Agency Representatives affected by client cancellations.

Late Start/Tardiness and Early Dismissal

Client late start:

If for any reason you are running late for a session, please notify your scheduled ABA Technician as soon as possible. The ABA Technician will wait for **up to 15 minutes**. If you are able to extend the session's end time to accommodate the late start, please inform the ABA Technician of this at the time of contact. In some cases, your ABA Technician may be able to accommodate this request.

ABA Technician late start:

ABA Technicians are required to contact the client or the client's parent/guardian via phone if they will be arriving **five (5) or more minutes late** to their scheduled session. All Agency Representatives of Apex Therapy Services are prohibited from calling while driving unless the call can be placed hands-free, and it is safe to do so.

ABA Technicians who are running **15 or more minutes late** must contact their client's ABA Supervisor with this information after informing the client or their parent/guardian of the late arrival. They are also expected to recoup this lost time whenever possible by offering to extend session time and/or schedule makeup/extra sessions.

Client early dismissal:

Please inform your scheduled ABA Technician as early as possible if you need to end a session early. In the event that a scheduled session needs to **end 15 or more minutes early**, please contact your ABA Supervisor with this information after informing your scheduled ABA Technician. Provide alternative dates and times for rescheduling the lost session time whenever possible.

ABA Technician early dismissal:

ABA Technicians are expected to attend their scheduled sessions **in full**. In the event of early dismissal, ABA Technicians are expected to recoup this lost time whenever possible by offering to extend session time and/or schedule makeup/extra sessions.

Excessive Lateness and Tardiness Policy

To maintain a safe and productive work environment, Apex Therapy Services expects Agency Representatives to be reliable and punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Dependability and diligent attendance are a requirement of employment with Apex Therapy Services and Agency Representatives are expected to adhere to the company schedule.

Agency Representatives should arrive in time to be ready for work by the time indicated on their individual schedules. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other Agency Representatives, as well as on Apex Therapy Services and its clients.

Apex Therapy Services requests that clients and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) promptly report any instances of excessive lateness, tardiness, and/or early dismissals to their ABA Supervisor. We will work with Agency Representative to identify and remediate any barriers that are impacting attendance.

No Call/No Show Policy

The client or their designated responsible caregiver is expected to answer the door and allow the ABA Technician to enter the home/treatment setting **no later than five minutes after the scheduled ABA session start time.**

The ABA Technician is expected to contact the client or their designated responsible caregiver via phone or text if no one has answered the door and it is five (5) minutes past the scheduled ABA session start time.

The ABA Technician is permitted to wait for **up to 15 minutes** after the scheduled ABA start time. After the 15 minutes has elapsed, the ABA Technician must leave the premises and deem the appointment as a “no call/no show.”

Apex Therapy Services reserves the right to modify and/or terminate services in the event of excessive no-call/no-show appointments. As such, it is crucial that you promptly inform your ABA team of any barriers to attendance.

Please contact your ABA Supervisor immediately in the event an ABA Technician does not arrive for their scheduled ABA session.

Schedule Change Requests

Extending or modifying session time (single session):

When explicitly requested by the client or the client's parent/guardian, ABA Technicians are permitted to extend or modify the time of a single session without prior approval from the client's ABA Supervisor. ABA Technicians are responsible for promptly informing the client's ABA Supervisor of any session time changes and submitting a cancellation email if the time change resulted in a reduction of session time.

Extending or modifying session time (multiple sessions):

Please inform your ABA Supervisor if you would like to extend or modify session time for two or more sessions over the course of one or more weeks. ABA Technicians are not permitted to make changes to multiple sessions without prior approval from the client's ABA Supervisor and the scheduling department.

General Schedule Change or Scheduling Concerns:

To request a general schedule change or to discuss any scheduling concerns, send an email to the Apex Therapy Services Scheduling Department. We request that clients/families give us at least **two weeks' notice** on significant changes in their plans for in-home ABA sessions scheduling, to facilitate consistency in service delivery.

Talking to ABA Technicians about scheduling matters:

ABA Technicians are permitted to discuss the following scheduling matters with their client and/or their client's parent(s)/guardian(s):

- Single session late start/early end
- Scheduling makeup or extra sessions to recoup cancelled hours

- Rescheduling cancelled sessions

Clients/families must contact the scheduling department and their ABA Supervisor to discuss the following scheduling matters:

- Multiple session late starts/early ends
- Permanent/indefinite schedule changes
- Temporary schedule changes that will be occurring over the course of more than one week (e.g. requesting schedule change over the summer or during extended breaks from school)

Attendance and Commitment to Therapy Policies Acknowledgement

I have read the attendance and commitment to therapy policies for Apex Therapy Services and understand the above.

I agree to the terms of Apex Therapy Services' Cancellation and Missed Appointment Policy.

I understand that all my treatment at Apex Therapy Services is voluntary, and that I may cease treatment at any time by informing my therapist and/or the office Agency Representatives.

I understand that my clinical records and any verbal or written communications between myself, my parent/guardian (if applicable), or any authorized representative are strictly confidential.

Further, no material or information will be disclosed to another party without my express written consent and/or that of a legally authorized representative. This excludes circumstances when there is a clear and imminent danger to myself or to others, or when disclosure is state-mandated (reported sexual abuse, physical abuse or neglect as a child or suspected current child abuse).

Client Name: _____

Client Signature (if applicable): _____

Parent/Guardian Name*: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature* _____

**if client is a minor or legal ward*

Date: _____

Agency Representative Name: _____

Agency Representative Signature: _____

Date: _____

Service Agreement and Consent Form

This document contains important information about our professional services and business policies. Your signature(s) below indicates that you have read the information in this document and agree to be bound by its terms and that you have received the Notice of Privacy Practices and Mandated Reporter forms. Consent by all parents/guardians is required.

Client Name: _____

Client Signature (if applicable): _____

Parent/Guardian 1 Name*: _____

Parent/Guardian 1 Signature* _____

**if client is a minor or legal ward*

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian 2 Name*: _____

Parent/Guardian 2 Signature* _____

**if client is a minor or legal ward*

Date: _____

Program Director Name: _____

Program Director Signature: _____

Date: _____