

Autism-Train the Trainer

(FY2020 Appropriation Act - Public Act 154 of 2019)

September 1, 2020

Sec. 464. (1) *From the funds appropriated in part 1 for autism train the trainer grant, the department shall allocate \$100,000.00 to implement a pilot project to train school employees on the principles and practices of applied behavior analysis and research-based intervention strategies. The pilot project must do both of the following:*

(a) Train paraprofessionals and teachers in a school district with a headquarters located in a city with a population between 6,900 and 7,000 according to the most recent federal decennial census in applied behavior analysis skills that match the national standard for behavior technician-level work and research-based intervention strategies.

(b) Train teacher consultants, school social workers, school psychologists, and other school personnel responsible for conducting functional behavioral assessments and the development of behavior support plans in a school district with a headquarters located in a city with a population between 6,900 and 7,000 according to the most recent federal decennial census on methods for ensuring implementation of a behavior plan with fidelity and strategies for sharing understanding of evidence-based behavioral health approaches with other school-based personnel.

(2) *Outcomes and performance measures for the pilot project funded under this section shall include, but not be limited to, the following:*

(a) A decrease in the number of center-program and self-contained-classroom referrals.

(b) A decrease in the number of suspensions, removals, and expulsions.

(c) A decrease in paraprofessional absences.

(d) An increase in teacher retention.

(e) An increase in safety.

(3) By September 1 of the current fiscal year, the department shall report to the senate and house appropriations subcommittees on the department budget, the senate and house fiscal agencies, the senate and house policy offices, and the state budget office on the information required in subsection (2).

BP Section 464(3) PA 154 of 2019

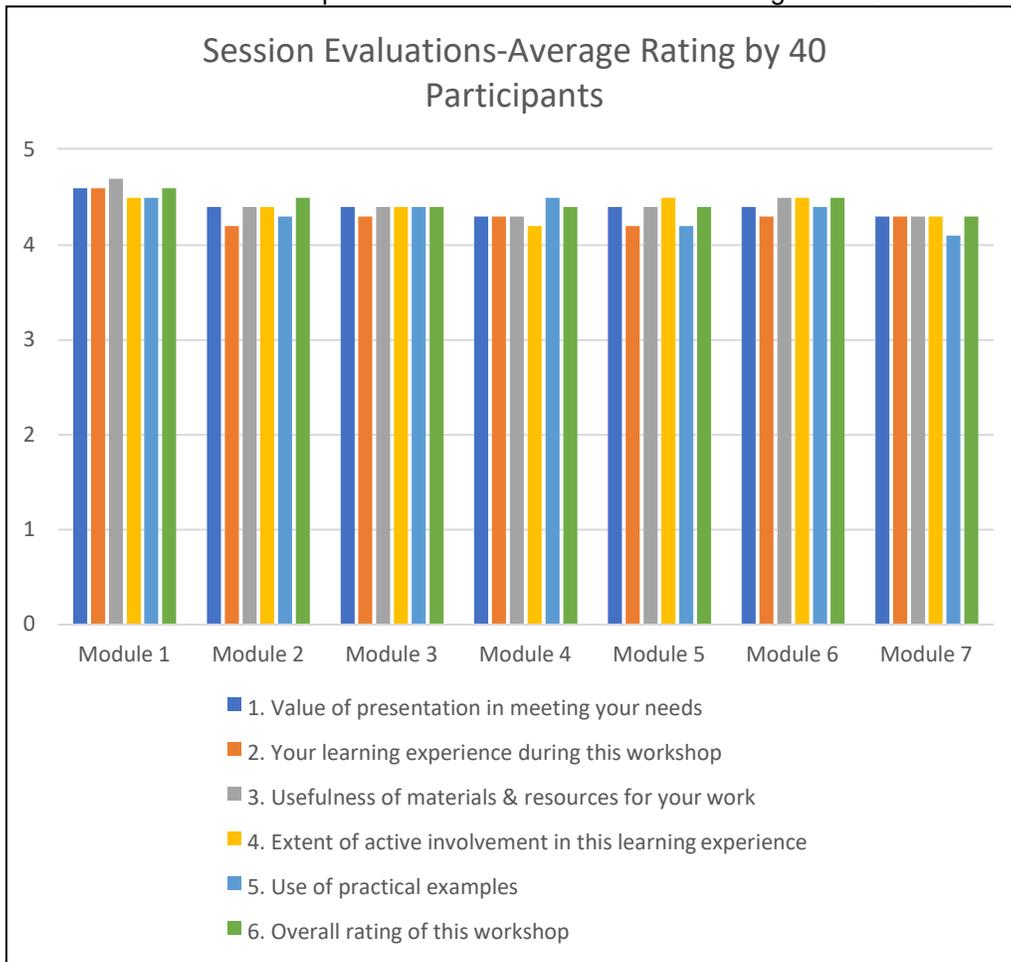
Summary:

As required under Section 464(3) of Public Act 154 of 2019, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) contracted with the Autism Centers of Michigan, An Acorn Health Company to implement the applied behavior analysis (ABA) training of school personnel and to train additional trainers. The Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 work extended the pilot completed in FY2019 with Walled Lake Community Schools to work with personnel from Manistee Intermediate School District. This Expanded Project was completed to full fidelity of the funding and the outcomes of the Project are included in this report.

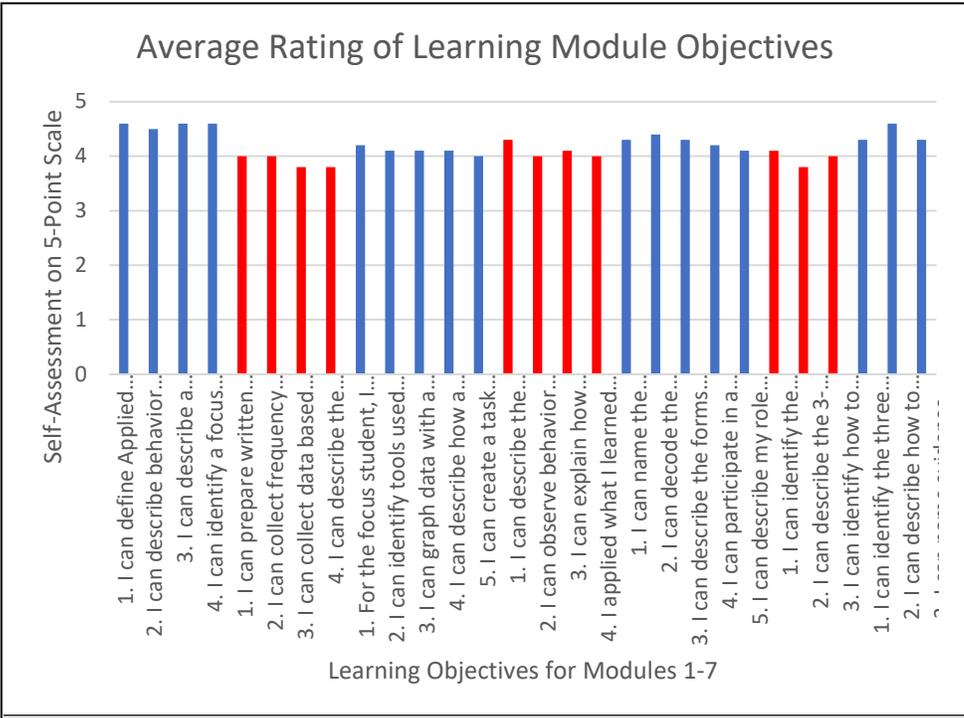
Train teachers and paraprofessionals in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) skills:

This Expanded Project provided 24 hours of in-person ABA training in eight three-hour modules and monitored the 80% or better accuracy from 10 hours of Autism Internet Modules. This instruction aligned with the Behavior Analyst Certification Board's task list for Registered Behavior Technicians as the basis for content for the teachers and paraprofessionals. The in-person training was provided by two Board Certified Behavior Analysts from October 2019 through January 2020. The training evaluation reports were very favorable from the teachers and paraprofessionals and the results are listed below. The 40 participants used a five-point scale to evaluate the session and self-assessment of learning the session's identified outcomes.

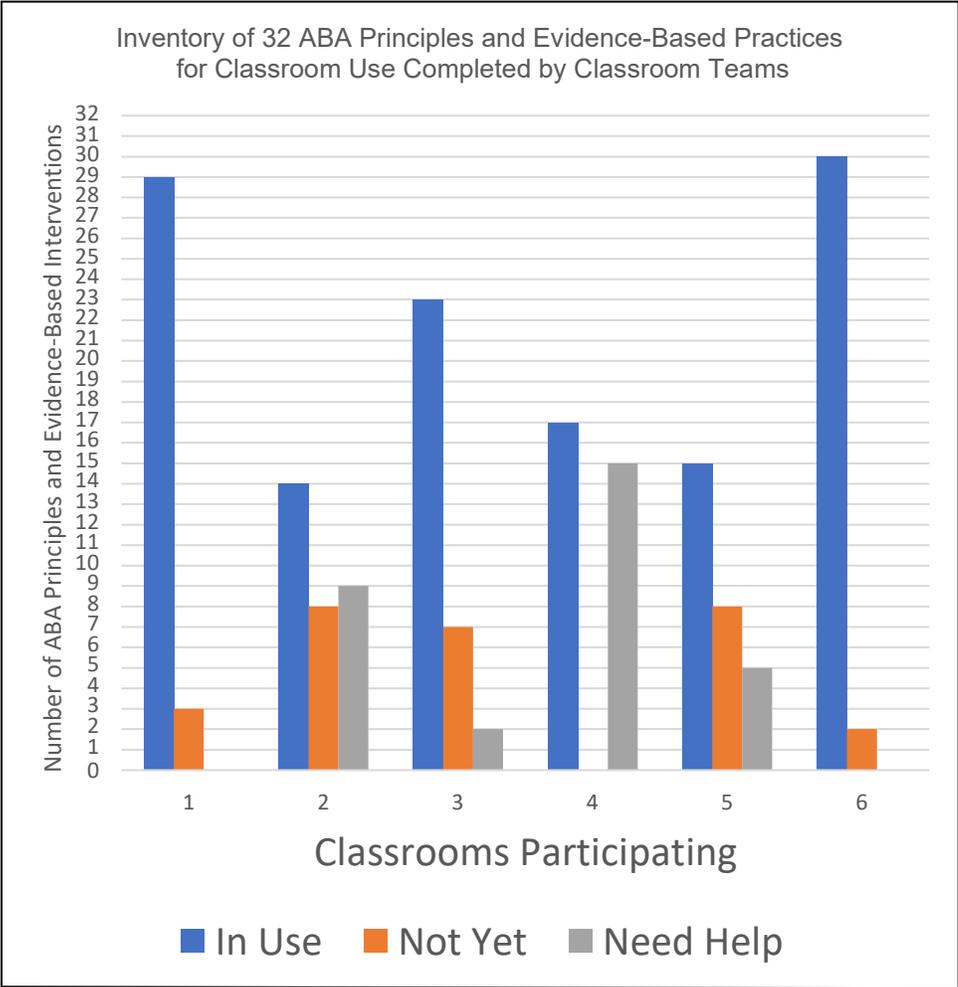
The scale: 1 = Needs Improvement 2 = Fair 3 = Average 4 = Good 5 = Excellent



The session ratings indicated strong favorable approval.

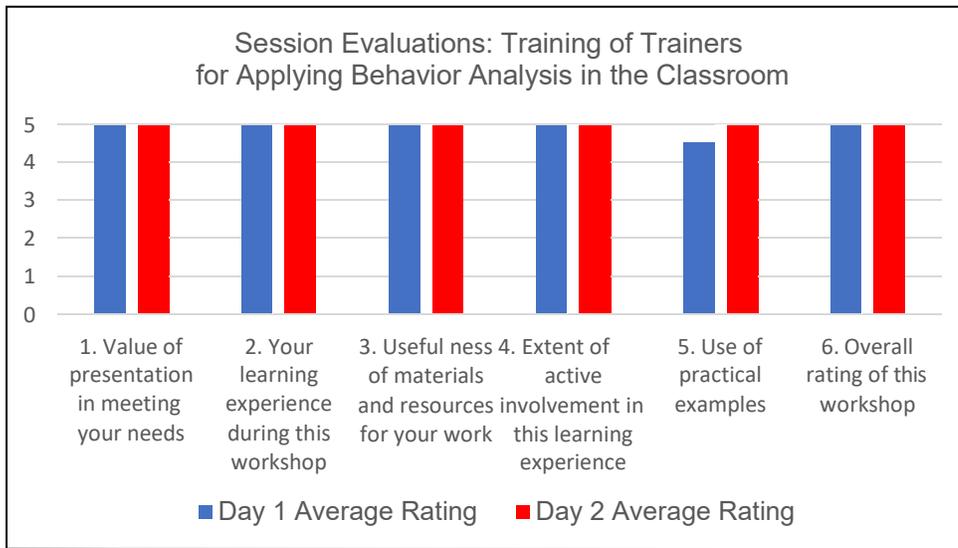


Participants self-assessed how well they learned the modules' objectives for sessions 1-7. The ratings ranged from 3.8 (average/good) to 4.6 (good/excellent) and indicated the sessions were a positive learning experience. Manistee's ISD administrators were interested most in the staff learning and later use of this material in their professional work in the classroom.



During the last module, rather than evaluate the session, the participants completed an inventory of a one-page list of practices that were introduced, discussed, demonstrated, or practiced in the course. The information was designed to assess the active, intentional use of ABA principles and evidence-based practices in the classroom. The six teachers each worked with their classroom staff to assess the 32 practices. The results then provide direction for future technical assistance. The results indicate the obvious, that ABA principles and practices are implemented in the classrooms (blue) with newer skills emerging (red) and that technical assistance would be needed in some areas (green).

Increase to a total of 4 the cadre of qualified personnel to lead the course, *Applying Behavior Analysis in the Classroom*:



The Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) that designed the course and has experience in teaching the course developed the training sessions to create a team of four BCBA's that can lead the course, *Applying Behavior Analysis in the Classroom*. On June 30th and September 15th six-hour trainings were conducted with strongly favorable results reported by the participants.

The session evaluations and self-assessments of competency on the session outcomes was rated using same 5-point scale described previously.



Both the delivery of instruction and the learning of the session outcomes was rated strongly favorable.

Create an independent internet site for housing training materials and related resources (e.g., Livebinder) that is accessible to participants and trainers:

Online options were explored with [LiveBinders](#) selected as the site that is trustworthy and easily accessible 24 hours a day/7 days a week by participants and trainers.

- Participant Binder on LiveBinder modules 1 through 8 of 8 completed with participant workbook, student questionnaire, session evaluation, *What do you know now about ABA?* (module quiz), strategy of the day resources and reflection for each module.

- Trainer Binder on LiveBinder modules 1 through 8 of 8 completed with PowerPoint, strategy of the day resources, answers to the modules' "What do you know now about ABA?" quizzes, templates for session evaluation, overview of the course (scope and sequence, flyers and information for districts) and supplemental resources.



Screen shots illustrate the two binders and details of the Trainer Materials.



Summary of Outcomes:

- The course, *Applying Behavior Analysis in the Classroom*, is favorably judged by school personnel with rating of 4.44 out of 5 indicating a good to excellent value. The learning objectives for the course were rated by participants with an overall average of 4.2 indicating a good estimation of the skills taught in the modules.
- The intentional use of ABA principles and evidence-based practices as measured during the last workshop at the end of January on a self-assessment Inventory by each of the six classroom teams (40 participants) produced the following results:
 - 100% use across the personnel in 6 classrooms for six items: Positive Reinforcement, Behavior Specific Praise, Established Routines throughout the day, Redirection/correction of student stated in terms of what the student is to do, Visual Supports, and First/then sequence.
 - 83% or five out of six classrooms intentionally use 10 items: Precision Requests, Negative Reinforcement, 3-5 Positive Stated Rules or Expectations with reference to them, Intentional prompt fading, 4 to 1 Tool, Behavior data collection sheets, Task Analysis, Hi-Probability Request Sequence, Token Economy, Social Skills Instruction and Operational Definitions.
 - Two of the 6 classrooms reported implementing over 90% of the 32 ABA principles and evidence-based practices.
- Materials needed to train the course and to participate in the course are available in a single online website, LiveBinder, with access by password from a trainer. A list of supplies to support the training (e.g., markers, wall charts, travel carts, dots, sticky notes) is provided at the website. The materials used in the 2-day Training of Trainers are posted to LiveBinder.
- The post-training scoring of the functional behavior assessments and behavior support plans from Walled Lake Consolidated School District was completed with noted improvement of the technical adequacy. Using the Technical Adequacy Evaluation Tool with a scoring rubric (Lovannone, Kincaid, & Christiansen, 2015), Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) and Behavior Support Plans (BSP) were assessed by the Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA). The FBA is scored 0, 1, or 2 on nine elements for a maximum of 18 points. The BSP is similarly scored 0, 1, or 2 on nine components yielding a maximum of 18 points. Feedback was provided to the participants by district administrators.

Documents Assessed	Pre-training	Post-training
Functional Assessment of Behavior	7.3	9.5
Behavior Support Plan	4.6	11.5

- Autism Centers of Michigan committed in FY 19 to a variety of activities for expanding and continuing the benefits of training which has been completed:
 - Design start-up checklist for interested districts to successfully plan for applying behavior analysis in the classroom training (e.g., identify outcomes, secure awareness and permissions from administration regarding scope and purpose of training, plan for sustaining and growing skills, participant agreement to commit to training, and other elements)
 - Explore implementation in other interested districts
 - Expand cadre of trainers
 - Create participant manual with accompanying trainer guide
- The mandated response to Covid-19 as directed by Executive Order Number 2020-5 resulted in an initial closure of school buildings on March 16, and subsequently the closure of school buildings through the remainder of the 2019-20 school year.
 - This unexpected closure of schools disrupted the intention to observe the six classrooms following spring break for their initiation and maintenance of ABA principles and practices. The six to 8 weeks from the last training session on January 24 through the end of spring break provided time and opportunity for staff to strengthen their professional practice. Unfortunately, school districts did not return to face to face instruction in the classroom.
 - The Inventory completed on January 24 provided direction regarding classroom personnel needs for technical assistance. The face to face technical assistance and assessment of the use of ABA principles and evidence-based strategies was not completed. Results were shared with school administrators and an initial discussion on next steps was completed in the spring. Communication centers now on completing this observation and technical assistance in the 2020/21 school year as instruction returns to face to face.
 - The move to home-based instruction nullified the need for classroom-based functional behavior assessments and behavior support plans. The pre- and post-training technical adequacy assessment will occur as newly completed functional assessments of behavior and behavior support plans are developed for school-based behavior concerns.

Moving forward: Sustaining the Skills, Increasing Capacity, and Continuing the Benefits of the Intentional Use of ABA in the Schools

- Manistee Intermediate School District
 - Expand training to teachers and paraprofessionals in constituent school districts
 - Collect functional assessments of behavior and behavior support plans in preparation for technical adequacy assessment of those documents.
 - Provide opportunities for observation of post-training skill maintenance and technical assistance in the original six classrooms participating in the FY 20 training.
- Walled Lake Consolidated School District
 - Complete Inventory of ABA principles and evidence-based practices to determine extent of sustaining the practices by the teachers that participated in the training
 - Determine if consulting with a BCBA or hiring a BCBA for support in ameliorating problem behavior was initiated
 - Learn if school personnel initiated attainment of a BCBA or RBT credential
- Autism Centers of Michigan, An Acorn Health Company
 - Provide onsite, real world training experience for the recent completers of the Training of Trainers. New trainers to be provided on site coaching and feedback as best practice of acquiring proficiency in new skills.
 - Expand the training of trainers to additional BCBAs that are currently employed by school districts.
 - Collaborate with known interested districts to develop goals for the training and schedule the training.
 - Consider expansion to other districts by reaching out to statewide organizations and distributing prepared information for recruitment.

Permanent Products

- Monthly status and progress reports for goals and objectives for FY 20
- Quarterly status and progress reports
- Scope and Sequence of the course
- Introduction to *Applying Behavior Analysis in the Classroom*
- Template for SCECHs application to Michigan Department of Education
- Interest Survey Questions for School Administrators
- Inventory of ABA principles and evidence-based practices

- *Applying Behavior Analysis in the Classroom* course materials
 - Glossary created for this course
 - 8 PowerPoints (one per module)
 - 8 Participant Workbooks (one per module)
 - 8 Focus Student questionnaires
 - 8 Responsible Use of ABA scenarios
 - 8 Session Reflections
 - 8 “What do you know now about ABA” quizzes and answer sheets
 - 8 Session evaluations
 - Purpose and objectives for each module
 - Training Sequence for each module for trainers to follow.

- *Training of Trainers: Applying Behavior Analysis in the Classroom* 2-day training materials
 - PowerPoint for Day 1
 - Purpose, Outcomes and Agenda for wall charts for Days 1 & 2
 - Reflections for Day 1
 - “What do you know now about Applying Behavior Analysis in the Classroom” quiz for Day 1
 - Session evaluation form for Days 1 & 2
 - List of materials to create a Trainer’s Kit
 - Training Sequence for each module that aligns time to the topic, PowerPoint slides, activity and materials needed for training and accompanying learning activities
 - Handout that lists the 8 modules, topic for each module and the strategy for the day