Autism Insurance Resource Center

at INDEX

[www.disabilityinfo.org](http://www.disabilityinfo.org/) 774-455-4056 info@disabilityinfo.org

# Information about MassHealth ABA Coverage

# March, 2016

**Introduction**Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is one of the frequently prescribed therapies for people with autism. Private insurance began covering ABA therapy in 2011, under a Massachusetts law known as [ARICA](https://www.disabilityinfo.org/ARICA/aricafaqs.aspx). Following passage of the Autism Omnibus Bill in 2014, MassHealth began covering ABA in 2015.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**Who is eligible?**ABA is available to children diagnosed with autism under 21 enrolled in MassHealth Standard and CommonHealth; and to children under age 19 enrolled in MassHealth Family Assistance.

**How does someone access coverage?**The child’s clinician (usually a developmental pediatrician, neurologist, psychologist), recommends ABA. The family then locates an ABA provider through their MassHealth Managed Care Entity (MCE). Depending on your MCE, ABA may be covered through another plan- see below:

| **Managed Care Entity (MCE)** | **ABA covered through:** |
| --- | --- |
| [Mass Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP)](https://www.masspartnership.com/) | [Mass Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP)](https://www.masspartnership.com/) |
| Health New England (HNE) | [Mass Behavioral Health Partnership (MBHP)](https://www.masspartnership.com/) |
| BMCHP | [Beacon Health Options](http://www.beaconhealthstrategies.com/pages/MHABAResources.aspx) |
| Fallon Community Health Plan | [Beacon Health Options](http://www.beaconhealthstrategies.com/pages/MHABAResources.aspx) |
| Neighborhood Health Plan (NHP) | [Beacon Health Options](http://www.beaconhealthstrategies.com/pages/MHABAResources.aspx) |
| [Tufts Health Public Plans](https://www.network-health.org/) | [Tufts Health Public Plans](https://www.network-health.org/) |

The provider requests authorization for ABA from MassHealth, performs an initial evaluation, and develops a treatment plan.

**How long will this process take?**
The length of time to access services is dependent on how long it takes to locate a provider with availability, how long it take them to complete the initial evaluation and receive authorization for the treatment plan. Families should ask specific providers they are thinking of using for an estimate of how long it might take to start services.

**Are there limitations on coverage?**Coverage is based on the plan’s medical necessity criteria. There are no annual or lifetime dollar or unit of service limitations on coverage.

**Are Social Skills Groups covered?**

Yes, subject to medical necessity criteria.

**My child receives ABA through Early Intervention (EI) – are they eligible?**Children receiving In-Home Behavioral Services or services similar to ABA in Early Intervention (EI) would be eligible for this coverage if they meet medical necessity criteria and need a higher intensity of service than what is being provided in EI.

**My child receives ABA through Early Intervention (EI) – what happens when they turn 3?**

If your child is receiving ABA in EI, MassHealth will cover ABA after they turn 3 if they meet medical necessity criteria. We recommend you start working with your team *as early as possible* to make sure access to ABA continues after your child turns 3.

**I have private insurance, but it doesn’t cover ABA. Can I get ABA through MassHealth?**Yes, as long as your child is also enrolled in MassHealth (CommonHealth or Standard). Information about [CommonHealth](http://disabilityinfo.org/ARICA/pdfs/CommonHealth-Tips-Accessible.pdf) and how to enroll can be accessed by contacting the Center.

**I have private insurance and CommonHealth. Will MassHealth cover my co-pays for ABA?**MassHealth may cover the co-pays for ABA, but the claims must be submitted by the provider. MassHealth will cover co-payments that are not being paid by the primary insurer, including if that provider is not in network with MBHP. However, providers who are not in network with MBHP will need to obtain a single case agreement or out-of-network agreement in order for co-payments to be paid. We recommend checking with your provider, and contacting us if you need additional assistance.

**I purchased a plan from the Health Connector that covers my child’s ABA therapy. Do I need to cancel this plan?** No. You are not required to cancel your Connector plan. However, it is your option to cancel your Connector plan and access ABA through MassHealth.

**How are education services under my child’s IEP affected?**This coverage should not affect your child’s IEP services.

**Can I also apply for the Children’s Autism Medicaid Waiver?**

Families covered by MassHealth with children under age 9, can also apply for the Massachusetts Children’s Autism Medicaid Waiver through DDS. Children receiving services through the Autism Medicaid Waiver may also receive ABA through MassHealth, as long as they are not receiving duplicative services through the waiver.

**I am an ABA therapist and want to provide services through MassHealth. What should I do?**

Providers should contact the Managed Care Entities who are administering the ABA benefit through MassHealth: [MBHP](https://www.masspartnership.com/provider/GettingStarted.aspx), [Beacon Health Options](http://www.beaconhealthstrategies.com/pages/MHABAResources.aspx), and [Tufts Health Public Plans](https://www.network-health.org/) For more information or assistance, please contact our Center.

For further information, contact an information specialist at 774-455-4056 or e-mail us at info@disabilityinfo.org

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