

# Play to Learn



## Therapies

### **Play to Learn Therapies Family Handbook**

This document is designed to inform Play to Learn Therapies (PTLT) Prospective Patients/Clients, Current Clients or Client's Family members about our background and ensure that you understand our professional relationship.

#### **ABOUT US**

We are a team of clinicians dedicated to the treatment of children ages 3 months to 6 years with autism spectrum disorders and other developmental delays. Our goal is to help each child we work with reach his or her unique potential and develop the social, language and play skills that will foster increased independence and improved quality of life.

With each child's individual needs at the forefront, we develop a customized curriculum based on the principles of applied behavior analysis (ABA), and, specifically, the Early Start Denver Model (ESDM). Our treatment plans are rooted in the most recent research on social and language development. Working closely with parents and caregivers, we develop specific goals for each child and deliver intensive (up to 30 hours per week), evidence-based therapy in the child's home or childcare setting.

The team at Play to Learn Therapies is led by Libby Gorsuch, M.Ed., a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and longtime early childhood educator. Libby's incredible Leadership Team includes several other BCBA's who have all been (or are in process of becoming) fully certified as ESDM therapy providers. Like Libby, each provider at Play to Learn

Therapies is passionate about listening to and working with families to design and implement a unique curriculum with the goal of helping each child reach his or her full developmental potential.

## **TREATMENT PLANNING / DISCHARGE PLANNING**

Several common assessments are used to determine which skills and programs will be implemented in therapy sessions and in what order based on the BCBA's recommendation. Play to Learn Therapies uses the ESDM Checklist, ASQ-SE, The Child Behavior Checklist, and/or Socially Savvy to help us create baseline skills to develop a treatment plan and measure progress. Every 6 months, we update the assessment and treatment plan and a copy will be provided to you along with an updated treatment plan.

We will also use these assessments to help us determine when it is time to discontinue your child's treatment or to transition them to another treatment provider. When your child scores in the age-appropriate range on the assessments we will discuss graduating them from treatment at Play to Learn Therapies. As your child moves closer towards the age-appropriate range, the supervising BCBA may determine that a reduction in the number of therapy hours is appropriate. If your child is not making progress on the skills measured by the assessments we will discuss other treatment options with you.

If the services your child needs are outside of our scope of practice we will recommend that you contact your insurance company to get a referral for an appropriate provider.

In addition, parent/caregiver and teacher coaching is completed so that treatment gains may be maintained after therapy is terminated.

## **PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIP, LIMITATIONS AND RISKS**

Behavior Analysis is a unique method of treatment based on the idea that most important human behavior is learned over time and that it is currently maintained by consequences in the environment. Our job as behavior

analysts and ABA therapists/technicians is to work through behaviors you would like to add or change.

As Behavior Analysts and therapists we do not make judgments about behavior. We try to understand behavior as an adaptive response (a way of coping) and suggest ways of adjusting and modifying behavior, reduce pain and suffering, and increase personal happiness and effectiveness.

Please know that it is impossible to guarantee any specific results regarding your goals. However, we will work together to achieve the best possible results. If we believe our services have become non-productive, we will discuss terminating services and/or providing referral information as needed.

## **PROVIDER CREDENTIALS / EXPERIENCE / EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS**

**Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) Supervisor** – BCBA's are master's level providers with at least 3 years experience working with children with autism and other related disorders. They provide (on average) monthly supervision to each provider. This equates to roughly 10-20% of the total direct service hours. The hours vary depending on the hours allotted or required by insurance companies or purchased through private pay.

**Behavior Technician (BT)** – Our BT's are required to be a registered behavior technician (RBT) or working towards RBT certification and have a bachelor's degree in a related field. They work directly with your child during scheduled therapy sessions implementing the ABA treatment plan outlined by the BCBA Supervisor.

## **FAMILY'S ROLE IN THERAPY**

The involvement of the family is critical in the treatment process. No one knows your child better than you (the parent(s)/guardian(s)). You ultimately care the most and are most affected by your child's challenges and strengths. With your input, we can help you discover what is maintaining your child's problem behaviors, discover more appropriate replacement behaviors, and help us teach your child new functional skills and behaviors. We can further

help you acquire new behaviors to improve your skill level. You will be consulted at each step of the process. We will ask you about your goals, and we will explain our assessment and the results of our assessments in plain language. We will describe our plan for intervention or treatment and ask for your approval of the plan.

Because you spend a great deal of time with your child, our goal is to teach you to use that time to generalize the teaching goals into everyday living situations. Watch and learn from your therapy providers and access as much parent coaching as you can. Your involvement will optimize your child's therapy. However, you are not expected to be a therapist to your child. Our therapists can provide the "intensive" teaching, which will allow you to have some respite and will make your time with your child more enjoyable and productive. Outings to the park, shopping, visiting family and friends, dressing, bath time, and dinner are just a few of the daily routines that serve as opportunities for parent teaching using the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA).

As parents, you play a very important role in helping your child succeed. Regular attendance at therapy sessions is essential to making progress with ABA therapy.

We welcome the participation of your child's siblings during therapy sessions! Please work with your child's clinicians to determine an appropriate environment and duration for siblings to participate.

## **PARENT / CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

We can only work with clients who fully inform us of any and all concerns. We will need your full cooperation as we try to understand the various behaviors that are problematic for you. We will be asking a lot of questions and making a few suggestions and need your total honesty with us at all times. We will be providing you with data as part of our ongoing evaluation of treatment and expect that you will attend to the data and give your true appraisal of conditions.

## **FEEDBACK AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

Play to Learn Therapies is committed to data-driven continuous improvement as an organization. Accordingly, in addition to encouraging you to be open, honest and forthcoming in the moment with regard to our service to your child and family, we will solicit semi-annual surveys that are meant to be more holistic and longitudinal. Please take a few moments to help us improve our services.

## **THERAPY SCHEDULING AND PROVIDER PLACEMENT POLICY**

Parents are required to provide Play to Learn Therapies with their child's schedule during the intake process so that we can outline an appropriate therapy schedule given availability of providers - both BCBA supervisors and their assistants (Behavior Techs). We take into account the BCBA's clinical recommendation and the available resources in the area to determine days, times, and location of therapy.

One or more Behavior Technicians (BT) will be assigned to your child based on the provider's strengths and your child's specific needs. However, scheduling staff and therapy sessions is one of our most difficult challenges in providing these kinds of services. Ultimately, the BCBA will make the final decision of matching providers to children based on both clinical and logistic conditions. Each Behavior Tech works differently with children even though they implement the same programs and intervention. Please allow the BCBA to assist the BT in developing skills and abilities to benefit your child. We ask that you be patient with us and communicate regularly to ensure we find the right fit for your family. If sufficient effort has been made to help staff and child develop a therapeutic relationship, then a parent can request their BCBA for a change of BT.

If you need to cancel or reschedule your appointment or therapy session we expect that you text or call as soon as you are aware of the change. If we do not receive 24-hour notification of your cancellation or you fail to show at an appointment, then you may be charged for the appointment without make-up. Please see our Cancellation Policy as part of your Intake Forms for more detail.

A BCBA provides supervision to your BT and will periodically attend sessions with your child in order to do so. Please contact the BCBA Supervisor if there are any concerns about scheduling the required and necessary supervision. According to the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB), Every Behavior Technician must be supervised by a BCBA Supervisor on a regular basis with each child with whom they work.

To provide professional development and training to our staff and to support your child's generalization of skills, we will occasionally ask your permission to have other BTs shadow your child's sessions. These shadows will attend your child's scheduled therapy session(s) to receive additional training and/or to support your child's primary BT. You may decline shadows from coming to your child's therapy sessions

Each employee is required to keep track of their own hours by recording in electronic timesheets start times, finish times, and locations for each session. They will typically gather Parent/Caregiver or Teacher dated signatures before submission to Play to Learn Therapies for billing to insurance or other designated payer(s).

Please notify the Play to Learn Therapies administrative team (via [info@playtolearntherapies.com](mailto:info@playtolearntherapies.com)) and/or your BCBA as soon as possible if you recognize any discrepancies in the timesheets.

Play to Learn Therapies providers are also required to keep data and session notes on your child's progress. These documents are also available to you upon login to the Patient Portal ([login.centralreach.com](http://login.centralreach.com)) of our Practice Management System.

## **DATA DOCUMENTATION AND TECHNOLOGY DEVICE USE**

Fully documenting data and session notes can be difficult to do during their sessions with the child though it is required to complete data / notes during each session. Please help your assigned BT's accomplish this task allowing them time (e.g., the last 15 minutes) during the session to complete the data collection and notes. Generally speaking, BTs are expected to be on their

phone/laptop during the last 15 min of session to complete notes. They may utilize their devices occasionally throughout the session to access supplemental materials/reinforcing activities such as songs/videos, but should otherwise not be using their devices, so as to maintain a professional, uninterrupted therapy session. Note: Due to the nature of their job requirements, BCBA's will need to access their devices more frequently during sessions they attend. In any case, we will endeavor to not allow technology devices to ever be a barrier to human interaction.

## **HOME-BASED THERAPY REQUIREMENTS**

During home based sessions, your home is our team member's workplace. Play to Learn Therapies is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and to promoting the health and wellbeing of its employees. As such, we require the following:

- **Smoke-Free Environment:** smoking, including e-cigarettes, vapor, marijuana, etc. is prohibited in all our service environments while services are being rendered.
- **Weapons-Free Environment:** All weapons must be secured in a safe place in the home and no weapons are permitted in Play to Learn provided locations.
- **Pets:** We request that all pets are contained in a separate area while our employees are in your home unless arrangements have been made with your assigned clinicians.
- **Provide an area that is well-lighted and void of too many visual and audio distractions.**
- **Provide an area air-conditioned and/or heated for the comfort of your child.**
- **Provide an area that is in compliance with local laws for occupancy including functioning smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors.**
- **Provide a table and chairs for your child to learn.**
- **Provide a clean, illness, and disease-free environment.**
- **Provide assistance and information where necessary to avoid injuries from aggression due to the behavioral excesses your child may have.**

## **SESSION MATERIALS**

If your child receives home therapy, Play to Learn Therapies may purchase materials to help the sessions run smoothly and so that providers have all they need to work with your child. These supplies are the property of Play to Learn Therapies and you will be required to return them to the therapist, or reimbursement to Play to Learn Therapies for any items that were lost will be due immediately.

## **FOOD / SNACKS**

Play to Learn Therapies does not provide food or drinks due to liability issues. Many children are on special diets and require specific foods. However, therapists may support your child during snack or meal times during therapy sessions with guardian approval and supervision.

## **MEDICATIONS**

Play to Learn Therapies does not provide medications or monitor any medical procedures due to liability issues. The guidelines set forth in this policy do not prohibit any employee from providing emergency assistance to a child.

## **TOILETING AND ADDITIONAL CLOTHING**

When needed, toileting plans will be developed by the child's treatment team and caregivers specific to their current skill level, treatment location, and treatment goals. When treatment is in the home, parents/guardians will be responsible for toileting including diaper changes. When treatment is in a space provided by Play To Learn Therapies, caregivers must bring pull-ups and/or diapers (as appropriate) from home. Any pull-ups, diapers, or wipes sent in will be kept in a labeled bin and only utilized for the intended participant.

All children should have at least one spare change of season-appropriate clothing available. If a spare change of clothing is needed and not available, Play to Learn Therapies staff may provide your child with a set of spare clothing, when possible. Play to Learn Therapies' clothing should be laundered and returned to the staff.



## **INJURIES AND INCIDENTS**

Play to Learn Therapies holds the health and safety of your children and our team members as a top priority. All staff are trained in CPR and basic first aid within the first several months of employment. At times, it may be necessary to provide minor first aid, to contact your participant's physician, or to seek emergency medical attention to ensure the safety and/or health of your child. PTLT team members will notify caregivers as soon as practical (eg, at pick up) of any injuries or minor first aid that may have been provided during that day's session and may require a guardian signature on an Incident Report.

If an emergency medical situation arises, emergency medical attention will be sought immediately. PTLT's staff will contact a parent/guardian immediately after emergency medical responders are called. If a parent/guardian is not reached, the listed emergency contact will be called.

Play to Learn Therapies is unable to predict all situations that may arise that may require additional documentation or parent notification. If any notable situation occurs outside of the injury or medical emergency, documentation will be completed by the team member that witnessed or was involved in the incident. Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as practical of any incident that occurred unless it is deemed by the BCBA or Clinical Director that immediate notification is appropriate.

Please note that all Play to Learn Therapies team members are Mandated Reporters by the State of Colorado and will follow all Mandated Reporter laws if abuse and/or neglect is suspected or observed.

## **PARENT COACHING**

Play to Learn Therapies provides parent coaching in several formats. BCBAs will provide coaching and training of parents with their child, implementing the behavior intervention plan or developmental treatment goals with the child. This is done by the BCBA explaining the intervention steps or learning programs as well as the principle of behavior change which support the intervention. Research articles, books, and other supporting documents can be provided upon request for each program or

intervention method. The master's level provider will model the intervention en vivo with the child, demonstrating the correct way to manage a behavior or teach a new skill. Lastly, the parent will implement the program or intervention just as the provider did in an en-vivo situation. The BCBA will provide coaching and feedback. Repetition and review of principles will be provided as needed or upon request.

Under our code of ethical conduct, we are not allowed to work with you in any other capacity except as your behavior analyst. If we are working in your home with your child or some other location, it is not appropriate for you to leave the premises at any time or ask us to take your child to some other location that is not directly related to our services. For clarity, we can and do conduct sessions in community settings with parent approval and parent-provided transportation.

## **HOLIDAYS**

Play to Learn Therapies observes the following holidays by closing entirely. If a holiday falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the office will typically be closed the day before or after. Other holidays (eg, Labor Day) may or may not be worked by your service provider and substitute service providers may fill-in. Though we cannot guarantee substitute BTs will be available, we will do our best to ensure that BTs are scheduled to sub as available to minimize the disruption of services. Please ensure coordination and communication about your preferences for services on those days with your BT.

- Independence Day (4th of July)
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Day

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Our BTs will cancel approximately one session each month in order to attend company-wide meetings and trainings. These training sessions are necessary for staff professional development and for providing our clients with the highest quality of services. We will do our best to arrange substitute BTs for your child's session but cannot guarantee one will be available.

## **TERMINATION OF SERVICES**

You have the right to terminate our services at any time; provided, however, that in such event, the balance of our fee (reduced appropriately for services yet to be performed) shall become immediately due and payable by you or your insurance. Upon termination, failure to immediately pay for services already rendered by Play to Learn Therapies constitutes breach.

We will also have the right to terminate our services with you at any time. We further reserve the right in our discretion to terminate our services and resign our engagement in the event that any of our statements for fees and expenses remain unpaid (in whole or in part) after the due date for such statement and 10 days after we have notified you that we intend to resign if such statement is not fully paid. You expressly agree and consent to our right to terminate and resign as set forth in this paragraph.

## **TRANSITION OF SERVICE POLICY**

A 30-day notice of termination is recommended for Play to Learn Therapies to provide a transition plan individually designed for each child's needs and the needs in their environment with regards to ABA therapy being implemented. To achieve smooth transition for the child to no longer receive ABA therapy by a provider or to transition therapy implementation to the parent, a collaboration between your Play to Learn Therapies BCBA and the new provider or parent is required. Parents must understand that when services are terminated without a proper 30-day notice, the transition of ABA therapy to another service provider or to the parent may have a regressive outcome for the child. New or desirable behaviors may decrease in frequency and reduced problem behaviors may increase or may not be maintained. Without following a transition protocol, overall results of therapy are not guaranteed for the child to generalize new skills and decrease problem behaviors to other providers and family members.

Again, for a proper transition we need a written request for transition 30 days before your chosen termination date to provide enough time to gather all assessments, data, and information used with the child. Play to Learn Therapies will provide one meeting with a new service provider or parent

to discuss transition and provide transitional paperwork requests. Play to Learn Therapies is not obligated to provide program sheets to the new service provider. We will, however, provide current graphs or data as well as the most recent 6-month report or treatment update plan. Please make these requests with your BCBA.

During the final collaboration meeting, a Transition Report will be provided by the BCBA outlining the results of assessments used to determine the child's progress since the implementation of ABA therapy, barriers to learning, strengths, maladaptive behaviors and their functions, child's responses to outlined programs/protocols, and all other variables that affect the therapy process for better or worse.

## **COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND OTHER SPECIALISTS**

In order to make sure that your child is receiving the best possible treatment, we will collaborate with other specialists on their treatment team. We will also recommend that you take advantage of resources in the community that provide supports for families with children with special needs. These resources include:

- Parent Education and Assistance for Kids (PEAK) offers a support group. They can be reached by calling 303-531-9400 or 1-800-284-0251. Their website is [www.peakparent.org](http://www.peakparent.org).
- Autism Society of Colorado (720-214-0794 or [www.autismcolorado.org](http://www.autismcolorado.org)) about local resources in Colorado.
- PEP (Parents Encouraging Parents) offers a range of parent services to parents through the Colorado Department of Education (303-866-6846; [www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp](http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/PEP.asp)).
- Parent to Parent is an organization that seeks to match parents of children with a disability with other experienced parents who can provide emotional support and assist them in finding information and resources (1-877-472-7201; [www.p2p-co.org](http://www.p2p-co.org)).

There are several online support groups for parents of children with autism, including <https://www.facebook.com/AutismMomsSupportGroup>

## **SUBMITTING COMPLAINTS**

Play to Learn Therapies understands that not all service providers can provide the vast needs of every child and surrounding environmental circumstances. Though we know our extensively trained and experienced providers strive to do their very best to provide the services outlined in this document and meet the child's and parent needs for therapy, there can be miscommunications, scheduling issues, misunderstandings, and other problems due to the close contact and nature of daily therapy in the home. It is our goal to ensure that all complaints are addressed and rectified in a timely manner. Whenever possible, you should first attempt to resolve a complaint directly with the team member involved. If the team member involved does not rectify the complaint to your satisfaction, you may consider escalating to the BCBA of record for your child's therapy. Regardless, you may file a formal complaint at any time within 45 days of the occurrence. You will not be discriminated against in any way for reporting a complaint. We ask that parents or caregivers contact Play to Learn Therapies by emailing their complaints or concerns to our Clinical Director through our email account [libby@playtolearntherapies.com](mailto:libby@playtolearntherapies.com) with cc to [info@playtolearntherapies.com](mailto:info@playtolearntherapies.com). Please provide and document all necessary details about the problem. We can then contact you to speak to you about the issues confidentially and strive to work out or resolve these issues without it affecting the child's therapy in any way. We ask that parents do their part to communicate the problems they see early on so that they can be resolved before more serious issues arise.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Clients and their therapists have a confidential and privileged relationship. We do not disclose anything that is observed, discussed, or related to clients. In addition, we limit the information that is recorded in your file to protect privacy. Please see our [Notice of Privacy Practices](#), for more detailed information. We need you to be aware that confidentiality has limitations as stipulated by law including the following:

- Play to Learn Therapies has your written consent to release information

- Play to Learn Therapies is verbally directed by you to tell someone else situations
- Play to Learn Therapies determines that you or the child is a danger to yourself or others
- Play to Learn Therapies has reasonable grounds to suspect abuse or neglect of a child, disabled adult, or an elder adult
- Play to Learn Therapies is ordered by a judge to disclose information.

## **INSURANCE BILLING POLICIES**

Parents will be billed for Co-Pays, Co-Insurance, Deductibles, and all other outstanding balances and expected to pay 15 days after invoice date provided by our billing department. An invoice will be sent by secure mail only after claims adjudication and payment is received by the insurance company.

**Late Payments:** It is our policy to charge a \$25 processing fee plus interest at the rate of eighteen percent (18%) per annum, compounded annually (to the extent permitted by law), on any sums not paid within fifteen (15) days of the initial billing date, with a minimum late payment penalty, including the finance charge, of \$5.00 per month. Of course, if the invoice is paid on a timely basis, no interest or late payment will be charged. If any bills remain unpaid for more than ten (10) days, Play to Learn Therapies shall have no further obligation to perform services under this agreement.

**Fee Disputes and Right to Arbitration:** If any legal action or proceeding is brought by any party to this agreement against the other party to enforce the provisions of this agreement, the prevailing party is entitled to recover reasonable attorney's fees and cost of suit in addition to any other relief to which the prevailing party may be entitled. In addition, you should know that you have the right to have any dispute concerning fees submitted to mandatory binding arbitration. Such arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with rules of the State Bar of Colorado, before an arbitrator or arbitrators selected in accordance with those rules. The decision of the arbitrator(s) shall be final and binding on the parties. The arbitrator(s) shall have the discretion to order the cost of arbitration, including his fees, other cost, and reasonable attorneys' fees, shall be borne by the losing party.

## **NON-DISCRIMINATION**

Play to Learn Therapies will treat all participants and their families with equality in a welcoming manner that is free from discrimination based on age, race, color, creed, ethnicity, religion, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran or military status, or any other basis prohibited by federal, state, or local law.

## **DISCLAIMER**

You agree that your use of our service(s) is solely at your own risk. You agree that all of such services are provided on an “as is” basis and “as available” basis except as otherwise noted in this Agreement. Play to Learn Therapies expressly disclaims all warranty of merchantability, fitness for particular purpose; and non-infringement.

In no event will Play to Learn Therapies be liable to the client or any third party for any damages, including personal injury, medical expenses, lost of wages, lost of profits, or other incidental or consequential or special damages arising out of the operation, performance, instruction, therapy, training, consultation, supervision, service, participation, application, coordination, and any other factor relating to the ABA treatment / therapy / consultation sessions provided by Play to Learn Therapies.