

## Developing communication through ABA

### Evie's Story

## How we began

- Hired an ABA trained tutor nearly 2 years ago (NB: NOT a PEACH supervisor) when Evie was 3.
- Started with lots of play to find things that motivated Evie. These became rewards or reinforcers.
- Early activities included lots of identical and non-identical matching and receptive labelling (identifying pictures).
- Evie could already make choices and answer yes/no questions.

- We made lots of pictures on a variety of topics - animals, household objects, verbs, parts of the body, colours etc
- All pictures had text with them to show that words carry meaning.
- All pictures laminated for protection
- Resources included Boardmaker (for symbols) and Flash (for photo images)

## Progress

- It took 3 months to refine our technique and start to see progress.
- We would hold her dominant hand still, ask a question and place two picture options in front of her. When she had looked at both options, we let her hand go and she would slap/swipe at a card
- Each answer was recorded.
- After a few questions, Evie would get the reward that she had previously chosen.
- Collecting data over a period of time allowed us to see the bigger picture and determine progress despite Evie's variability of performance.

## Rewards

- Evie's rewards are made up of food, toys and a variety of activities, including music, audio books, stories, dressing up, TV, computer games etc.
- Each reward is represented by a symbol or photo
- These are stored separately in a PECS folder and this forms the basis of her communication system so far.

## PECS folder

- The pictures in this folder are not just used in her tutoring sessions, but also after school and in weekends.
- Pictures can either be placed on the cover of the folder or on her tray for her to make choices from.
- NB, Evie makes choices by touching a picture, not by picking it up and giving it, as is usual with PECS.

## What Evie can do now

- Identify no.s 1 - 10 and order them. Count up to 5 objects.
- Identify colours, shapes, everyday objects, lots of animals, vehicles, clothing, body parts, most letters/phonics
- Identically match just about anything
- Non-identically match lots of things
- Sequence a series of 3 pictures (first, next, last)
- Sort items into categories (really important for future communication)
- Answer lots of abstract questions and lots more!

## Current Goals of our Home Tutoring Programme

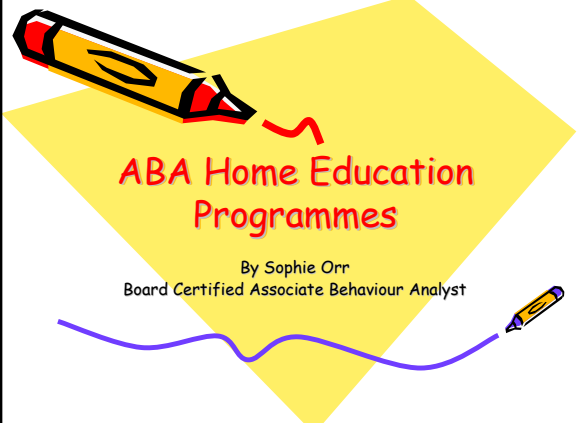
- Evie will learn to read and spell
- Evie will learn to initiate communication

## Are Millie & Evie exceptional?

- I don't think so!
- A recent pilot study in Brazil looked at cognitive performance in 7 girls with RS and monitored responses through eye tracking technology.
- 6 of the 7 girls got significantly more right answers than wrong. (But only 5 seconds was given to answer each question, so imagine what the results might have been if more time was given)

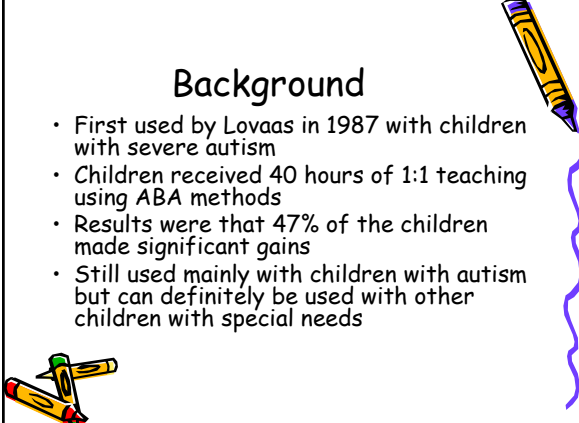
## Conclusion

- Hiring someone to work with Evie has made such a difference to all of us.
- Part of the cost now covered through Direct Payments
- This presentation is aimed at giving hope to all parents of Rett children. If you've ever thought your child understood more than he/she could express, you're probably right.
- Feel free to contact me with any questions: [helenmurray1@btinternet.com](mailto:helenmurray1@btinternet.com)



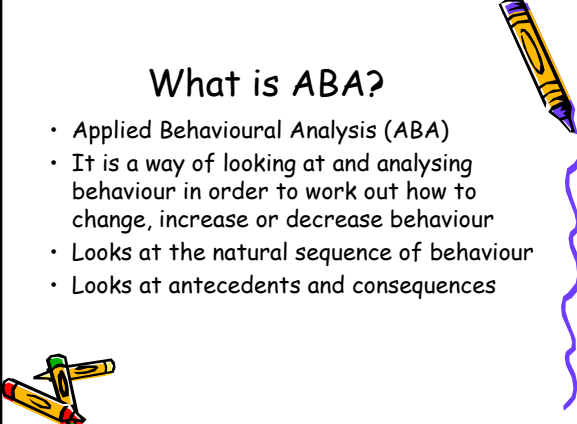
## ABA Home Education Programmes

By Sophie Orr  
Board Certified Associate Behaviour Analyst



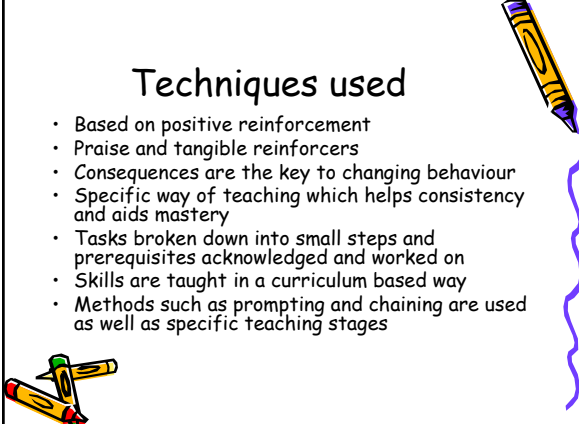
## Background

- First used by Lovaas in 1987 with children with severe autism
- Children received 40 hours of 1:1 teaching using ABA methods
- Results were that 47% of the children made significant gains
- Still used mainly with children with autism but can definitely be used with other children with special needs



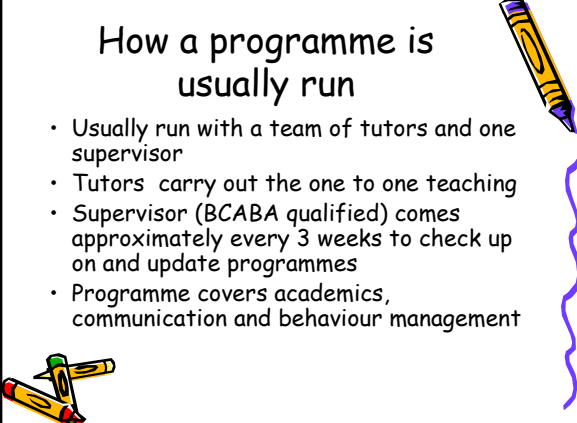
## What is ABA?

- Applied Behavioural Analysis (ABA)
- It is a way of looking at and analysing behaviour in order to work out how to change, increase or decrease behaviour
- Looks at the natural sequence of behaviour
- Looks at antecedents and consequences



## Techniques used

- Based on positive reinforcement
- Praise and tangible reinforcers
- Consequences are the key to changing behaviour
- Specific way of teaching which helps consistency and aids mastery
- Tasks broken down into small steps and prerequisites acknowledged and worked on
- Skills are taught in a curriculum based way
- Methods such as prompting and chaining are used as well as specific teaching stages



## How a programme is usually run

- Usually run with a team of tutors and one supervisor
- Tutors carry out the one to one teaching
- Supervisor (BCABA qualified) comes approximately every 3 weeks to check up on and update programmes
- Programme covers academics, communication and behaviour management



## Evie's programme vs. a standard programme

- Not as many hours
- Evie only does 2-4 hours a week
- Not as strict, but same basic teaching methods
- We don't have regular team meetings

## How to get started

- Usually ABA is run through a service provider (e.g. PEACH) or through an independent supervisor (BCABA)
- Depending on the hours you want to do it may not be necessary to take on a supervisor.
- An experienced Lead Tutor may be able to carry out a programme
- Tutors could be students, local people, parents or ABA trained tutors
- Its not difficult to train tutors if you have someone experienced to do this



## Negatives of ABA

- None in my opinion!
- LEA's don't like these programmes as they feel they are too structured and are very expensive
- Cost for parents
- Logistics of fitting it to everything else that goes on in life!!



## Positives of ABA

- Principles can be used across everything - behaviour and skills
- A good way to teach your child the academics they may not be getting at school
- Communication is a priority
- Progress can be monitored through data
- Can work with all ages and abilities



## My contact details

- If you want further information or advice please feel free to contact me at [sophieorr@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:sophieorr@hotmail.co.uk)

