

PRACTICE UPDATE



Recently, in certain states, companies have adopted an applied behavior analysis (ABA) service delivery model in which they hire parents to serve as Registered Behavior Technicians® (RBTs®) for their own children. The Nevada Association for Behavior Analysis (NABA) and the Nevada Board of Applied Behavior Analysis (“Nevada ABA Board”) are alarmed by this trend. The information below is meant to help both providers and the recipients of ABA services (children and their parents) understand the laws regulating ABA practice in Nevada so they can make informed decisions about delivering and receiving care.

Parent involvement in ABA services is crucial for the success of a child's intervention. As active partners and collaborators, parents provide valuable insights into their child's strengths, challenges, and interests. They can help design and implement tailored interventions that meet their child's needs and goals. By working closely with ABA providers, parents ensure their child receives high-quality, effective treatment that leads to meaningful progress and improved outcomes.

Quality ABA services are delivered by qualified, licensed, and certified professionals who follow and uphold the legal and ethical requirements for delivering the service. In Nevada, Applied Behavior ABA services are regulated by [state law](#). The law requires that providers hold two credentials: one from the Behavior Analyst Certification Board® (BACB®) and one from the [Nevada ABA Board \(NRS 641D.610.\)](#). The table below describes those credentials.

NV State Credential	Required BACB® Credential	Practice Regulations
Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA)	Board Certified Behavior Analyst® (BCBA®)	<p>Must comply with NRS 641D.</p> <p>Must comply with the Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts® (BACB, 2020).</p>
Licensed Assistant Behavior Analyst (LABA)	Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst® (BCaBA®)	<p>Must comply with NRS 641D.</p> <p>May only practice under the supervision of an LBA.</p> <p>Must comply with the Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts® (BACB, 2020).</p>
Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)	Registered Behavior Technician® (RBT)	<p>Must comply with NRS 641D.</p> <p>May only practice under the supervision of an LBA or LABA.</p> <p>Must comply with the RBT Code of Ethics® (BACB, 2020).</p>

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In the healthcare industry, there are standards of practice that practitioners must adhere to. One such standard is that practitioners avoid holding multiple roles in a client or patient's life. For instance, a client's psychologist should not simultaneously be a member of the client's family, a friend, or a business partner. Maintaining boundaries between relationships helps to ensure that healthcare practitioners maintain objectivity in providing care to their patients and are not influenced by their personal relationships. This standard of care is present in the ABA profession. It is stated in the [Applied Behavior Analysis Practice Guidelines for the Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorders](#) (pg. 9; CASP, 2024), the [Ethics Code for Behavior Analysts](#)® (Code 1.11; BACB, 2020), and the [RBT Code of Ethics](#)® (Code 1.10; BACB, 2020). In Nevada, it is also state law ([NRS 641D.600](#)). These regulations help ensure that providers deliver safe, ethical, and effective services to their clients.

The BACB® issued a [newsletter in July 2023](#) to clarify the ethical implications of parents serving as RBTs® for their own children (BACB, 2023). In the newsletter, they state that if a parent assumes the role of RBT®, it is considered a breach of ethics for both the parent and their supervising BCBA®. The primary concern is the BCBA's® accountability for supervising the RBT's® service delivery and ensuring the client receives efficient and ethical treatment. The BCBA® must provide direction, and feedback, and make decisions about care that could be negatively influenced when the RBT® is also the parent of the client being served. The client's best interest is at risk and the BCBA's responsibility to provide high-quality care may be compromised.

The adoption of the “RBT-parent” model undermines the efforts of parents of autistic children who have worked to establish laws, regulations, and policies that ensure ABA services are designed and overseen by professionals with established education and training requirements. Both NABA and the Nevada ABA Board aim to raise awareness of the risks of the model and why it is important that independent, licensed and registered professionals deliver ABA services for children.

Additional Resources

Information about licensure and registration for behavior analysts in Nevada is available at <https://www.nvababoard.org/>.

Information about NABA's Practice Committee may be found at <https://www.nevadaaba.org/committees>.

Additional resources, including a list of providers, may be found at <https://www.nevadaaba.org/resources>.

References

Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2023). BACB Newsletter. https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/BACB_July2023_Newsletter-230913-a.pdf

Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2021). RBT ethics code (2.0). <https://www.bacb.com/wp-content/rbt-ethics-code>

Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2020). Ethics code for behavior analysts. <https://bacb.com/wp-content/ethics-code-for-behavior-analysts/>

Council of Autism Service Providers. (2024). ABA Practice Guidelines (version 3.0). <https://www.casproviders.org/asd-guidelines>

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