

To: Senator Bates  
Re: **Grandfathering In Current Behavior Analysts in our State**  
From: Barbara Avila, M.S.  
Small business owner since 2007 – Synergy Autism Center  
Behavior Consultant; Supervisor; Autism Specialist; Parent Trainer/Consultant

Date: 4/4/15

Our state's primary goal for requiring insurance companies to cover ABA services is to **increase access to high quality services by well-trained professionals** for families with autism.

The Behavior Analysis Regulatory Board (BARB) requirements, **currently exclude high quality professionals** providing services already in our communities who have graduate level training and have been using ABA principles for several years, yet do not hold the BCBA required certificate. Not only are these professionals highly qualified, but they also have significant more experience than any newly certified professional holding or pursuing the current BCBA certification.

Without changes to the current statute, our Oregon communities will suffer in these ways:

1. Access to the current, experienced, high quality ABA providers will cease for families utilizing their insurance companies for services (with severely challenging behaviors)
2. Local businesses providing ABA services will no longer have the income currently made through contracts with state and county services as well as CCOs, and may have to close.
3. The demand for services will greatly out number the current number of professionals holding BCBA's.
4. Due to the demand, above, the cost for services will be over-inflated, causing ABA services to be unduly expensive for Oregon insurance companies, including the Oregon Health Plan.

#### Proposed Wording for Certification to be obtained through Grandfathering

The state of Oregon and the Board Analysis Regulating Committee allows select professionals the opportunity to obtain certification by means of a grandfathering option. A grandfathering proviso is a special allowance that permits select applicants to apply before new limits take full effect, while junior start-up applicants must meet new standards. Successful candidates will receive an official accredited certification and all rights to regular certification. This makes certification of experienced practitioners an ideal manner by which professionals can gain recognition for past work and previous qualifications while securing high quality services to families in our Oregon communities.

#### Proposed Criteria Requirements for Behavior Analysts through Grandfathering Process:

Provide an updated resume which must include a minimum of a master's degree in approved degree categories and 3 years of work directly with clients and families with autism in at least 2 different settings (e.g., schools, clinics, rehabilitation centers, social service agencies, mental health facilities, and/or client homes).

Provide a minimum of 3 letters of endorsement by supervisors and/or clients speaking to your professional role, character, and responsibilities – to include creation, implementation, maintenance, and/or training regarding Functional Behavior Assessments, Behavior Support Plans, designed to improve the quality of life for individuals with a autism.

List of approaches to Applied Behavior Analysis for which the provider is qualified, which may include but are not limited to UCLA / Lovaas, Early Start Denver Model, Pivotal Response Training, Project ImPACT, or other methods.



## Business Profile: Synergy Autism Center

[www.synergyautismcenter.com](http://www.synergyautismcenter.com)  
7739 SW Capitol Hwy, Suite 220  
Portland, OR 97219

***Synergy Autism Center would not qualify as a provider of ABA services under current criteria***

***Synergy has become one of the primary centers for serving children, teens, and young adults with autism who exhibit severely challenging and sometimes life-threatening behaviors***

Synergy Autism Center currently:

- Supports approximately 50 families
- Employs 7 independent contractors
- Reduces the likelihood of children requiring placement in residential facilities and
- Reduces the costs of services of significant supports later in life for individuals with challenging behaviors
- Provides behavior services to children and families who have been turned away from numerous support agencies due to their behaviors being too severe

Clients served by Synergy Autism Center:

- Families with toddlers, children, teens, and young adults with autism
- Those with mildly to extremely self injurious and aggressive behaviors
- Those with serious and debilitating safety issues (e.g., wandering, bolting, injuring self or others)

Owner and Director, Barbara Avila, M.S. Holds:

- Over 27 years in the field of autism from In Home ABA provider, group home support worker, teacher, consultant, trainer, and family autism consultation.
- Psychology degree specializing in autism and child psychopathology (specifically autism)
- Masters in Developmental Disabilities specializing in early development, ABA principles, and autism

Synergy Autism Center provides intensive behavior supports to the following agencies:

- Multnomah, Clackamas, and Washington counties Developmental Disabilities Services (K Plan)
- Children's Intensive Intervention Services (CIIS) programs
- Portland Public Schools

Training and supervision also provided by Synergy Autism Center:

- Structured TEACCH principles
- Pivotal Response Training,
- Social Stories,
- Family training and consultation
- Developmental and research based neural-integration techniques including DIR/FloorTime and Relationship Development Intervention®