

ABA 2013 CENSUS RESULTS

Making sense of autism families' needs

In November 2013 ABIA facilitated research to understand the current situation of behavioural intervention for children with autism, and to identify families' future needs. Key findings are provided below:

1. Five of the six most recent large scale meta-analyses show that behaviour intervention is effective in improving the adaptive functioning, cognitive ability, language ability, communication and social skills of children with ASD.
2. Early Intensive Behaviour Intervention programs (what we generally call ABA) which comprehensively address many developmental needs of children with ASD are effective.
3. It is estimated that within Victoria 39 service providers currently offer behavioural intervention programs to some 585 children.
4. The male to female ratio of children involved in ABA in Victoria is 6:1, typically consistent with international data for children with ASD.
5. 90% of Victorian families using ABA live in metropolitan areas.
6. The majority of the children using ABA are meeting commencement and duration best-practice standards. Commencement best-practice is considered, 'as early as two and before four years of age'. Duration best-practice is considered, 'a minimum of two years'.
7. The high cost of ABA is a barrier to accessibility; 45% of ABA families spend over \$30,000 per annum.
8. One-on-one ABA programs remain the most common (55%) form of ABA, although centre-based and school-based are increasing.
9. Comprehensive ABA programs are the most patronised ABA programs (91% compared to 9% doing specific ABA programs).
10. Average intervention hours recommended (16.5) and adopted (16.5) are lower than internationally identified best-practice recommendations.
11. Awareness of behaviour intervention within the community remains low (e.g. schools, paediatricians) and a negative perception about behavioural intervention remains amongst professionals (e.g. paediatricians, psychologists, and the education sector more broadly).
12. The majority of families doing ABA perceived positive outcomes of the child's behavioural intervention program.
13. 71% of ABA parents reported a decrease in their daily stress since starting an ABA program and 91% of parents reported their children's quality of life as higher following ABA as compared to before ABA.

email admin@abia.net.au to obtain a full copy of the ABA Census report