



## Parent Handbook



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# Mission Statement

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The mission of HOPE Autism and Behavioral Health Services is to improve the lives of children with autism and their families by providing evidenced-based behavior analysis services focused on communication and independent living skills and by empowering parents through training in the principles of behavior analysis.

## Program Overview – Toddlers and Preschoolers

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Our goal at HOPE Autism and Behavioral Health Services is to set up comprehensive home-based programs that are implemented by therapists and families throughout the week and are supervised and updated by Board Certified Behavior Analysts. **We require that families commit to providing a minimum of 8 hours of 1:1 ABA services per week for their child.** Research suggests that 10 hours per week is the minimum amount of services necessary for children to make meaningful progress on ABA goals and your consultant will likely recommend a greater number of hours of therapy per week. **At least 2 and no more than 4 of your in home 1:1 hours need to be provided by a HOPE consultant each week.** The remaining hours may be provided by HOPE therapists or by private tutors trained by your HOPE consultant. In some cases (financial hardship, refusal of additional hours by 3<sup>rd</sup> party including TEIS,) you as a parent may provide some of the required hours, but you will need to document your hours just as a therapist coming into your home would do (time sheet, data sheet, etc).

Teaching goals are individualized based on the needs of your child and family. All programs place a strong emphasis on teaching communication and independent living skills. We believe that all children have areas of strength and areas of weakness. While we address the areas of weakness we will also continue to build on your child's strengths!

We believe that parents are a critical component to any child's success and place a strong emphasis on parent involvement and training. Each week your consultant will discuss your child's development with you and will provide you with strategies to promote learning outside of the therapy environment, manage problem behavior, and

increase your child's communication. Parents are expected to participate in therapy as necessary and may be asked to take data on behaviors outside of therapy sessions.

## Program Overview – Older Children

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Older children (5+) may require fewer hours of services or services to address specific behavior problems as opposed to teaching a variety of skills. Your HOPE consultant will work with you to determine your child's needs and the appropriate level of services. **The 8 hour therapy minimum does not apply to families with older children unless your consultant recommends a full home program.**

## Services Offered

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The purpose of HOPE Autism and Behavioral Health Services is to offer home-based intensive intervention services and behavior modification programs. We employ consultants who are Board Certified Behavior Analysts as well as therapists who are not certified in order to meet the needs of our families. Please do not hesitate to call or ask your consultant if you would like further clarification of any service or if you would like to discuss which services are appropriate for your family.

- Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS)
- Behavior Consulting
- Family Training
- Direct Therapy
- Group Therapy
- Team Meetings
- Therapist Training
- School Observations
- IEP/IFSP meeting assistance and/or attendance

# Staff Roles

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## **Consultants:**

All consultants are Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) or are BCBA-eligible (meaning they have completed all required coursework and will be sitting for the certification exam within a year from their hire date).

Consultants write and update educational programming as necessary. They create behavior intervention plans. They are responsible for training family and team members on all programming and behavior intervention plans and for evaluating the effectiveness of plans. Consultants are considered “team leaders” and are responsible for overseeing your child’s therapy. Your consultant is the person you should contact with any questions or concerns about your child or his/her programming.

Your consultant must be scheduled to see you and your child for a minimum of 2 hours per week (and a maximum of 6). This allows the consultant to assess progress, update programs and notebooks, make any necessary changes to intervention techniques, discuss your questions and concerns, and train you on any new procedures. Some of your consultant’s scheduled appointment time will be spent discussing questions and concerns with you, training you on behavior change procedures, and graphing data. This should not be seen as a waste of your child’s therapy time, but as valuable family training. **Remember, YOU are the person with the greatest opportunity to change your child’s behavior.** Because of the importance of this family training component, we request that you remain in your home during scheduled appointments with your consultant. Please be sure to express any concerns to your consultant during your scheduled appointment time and do not wait until the appointment is over. Consultants often have appointments scheduled back-to-back and need to leave your home at their scheduled time. **In the case that you do run over your scheduled appointment time, you will be billed for the actual amount of time the consultant is in your home and not the scheduled amount of time.**

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## **Therapists:**

Therapists are typically not certified behavior analysts, but are persons with much training and experience with ABA. Many of our therapists are students in special education, behavior analysis, or related fields.

Therapists implement educational programming and behavior intervention plans written by your consultant. They are responsible for running programs and taking data on behavior as planned by your consultant. Your therapist will not make program or behavior plan changes, but may discuss problems with your consultant.

You are not required to remain at home while during scheduled sessions with your therapist. However, we ask that you be considerate of your therapist and return on-time. Therapists often have appointments scheduled back-to-back and need to leave your home at their scheduled time. **In the case that you do run over your scheduled appointment time, you will be billed for the actual amount of time the therapist is in your home and not the scheduled amount of time.**

## **Phone Calls and E-mails**

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Consultants and therapists try to be accessible to families in need but are extremely busy and spend much of the work day with clients. If you need to discuss your child's behavior or programming with your consultant and it cannot wait until your next scheduled appointment, call your consultant/therapist during business hours to make a phone appointment. **Please note that you will be billed for phone conversations exceeding 15 minutes whether or not they are scheduled phone appointments.** Please respect your consultant's/therapist's need for downtime and try to keep after hours phone calls to a minimum.

E-mail is another good way to get in touch with your consultant/therapist and to let him/her know you have questions or concerns. When e-mailing your consultant/therapist with questions, please be as specific as possible, so we may get back to you with appropriate answers.

## Paperwork

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Consultants spend a great deal of time planning your child's program and creating data sheets, updating notebooks, and writing programs for your child. Each time your consultant updates your child's notebook with new programs, you will be charged a \$70 program update fee. This allows consultants to be compensated for the time spent planning for your child's program. It is best to talk to your consultant about the frequency of updating your child's program. Frequency varies from child to child depending on complexity of programs and rate of progress, but most children will need program updates 1-2 times per month.

There may be times when you ask your consultant to provide additional paperwork for you (including observation or meeting documentation, proposed IEP goals for the school system, etc) or when your consultant needs to prepare materials specific to your child's needs (picture schedules, program materials, etc). This is a billable service and will be billed at the regular hourly rate. Your consultant will provide you with an estimate of the amount of time it will take and will notify you immediately if he/she realizes the estimate given was inaccurate. We do want consultants to be fairly compensated for their time and hard work, but do not want you to have any "surprise charges." Your consultant will always get your permission before completing billable paperwork.

## Cancellations

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We understand that emergencies and illnesses arise which may cause an appointment or session to be cancelled. We have reserved your consult/therapy time for you and therefore request 24-hour notice for all non-emergency cancellations.

If you need to cancel your appointment with less than 24-hour notice for reasons other than sudden illness, you will be billed a no-show fee equal to one hour of your consultant or therapists' time. If you cancel an appointment with less than 1-hour notice for any reason you will be billed a no-show fee.

We ask that you cancel your child's appointment if he/she is sick. Consultants and therapists will not work with children who:

- have had a fever of 100° or more in the previous 24-hour period
- have vomited in the previous 24-hour period
- have signs of skin or eye infections (including ringworm, chicken pox, poison ivy, pink eye, etc.)
- have (or are suspected to have) strep throat, flu, cold, etc.

Your cooperation with this policy is appreciated as it prevents the spread of illness to your consultant/therapist and other children. Consultants/therapists will also cancel appointments when they are sick!

**If you do not call to cancel your appointment at least one hour before the scheduled appointment time, it is considered a “No Show” and you will be assessed the “No Show” fee.**

In the case of inclement weather, your consultant or therapist will call you to discuss whether or not he/she will be providing services that day. Any time schools in your county are closed, the consultant/therapist is not expected to provide services, but may do so at his/her discretion.

## No-Show Policy

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If you have not cancelled your appointment and are not home when your therapist/consultant arrives, he/she will attempt to contact you and will wait at your home for 15 minutes. If you are not home within the 15 minute time period, the consultant/therapist will leave and you will forfeit your appointment for the day. You will also be assessed a “No Show” fee in order to compensate the consultant/therapist for his/her drive and wait time.

## Confidentiality

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We take confidentiality very seriously and all HOPE consultants and therapists strive to maintain confidentiality of all clients. We will not discuss your child's case with



anyone not employed by HOPE without your written permission. We understand that the autism community is very small and close knit and it is likely that you know other families receiving HOPE services. Please do not ask your consultant/therapists questions about other children who may be receiving services. We are not able to answer questions regarding their progress, programs, etc. We appreciate your cooperation with this policy.

## Billing

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HOPE Autism and Behavioral Health Services will bill for services on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> of each month. Invoices will be sent to you via e-mail unless you request to receive your invoice via mail. Prompt payment is expected and appreciated. You may mail your payment to the address on your invoice. Please do not give your payment to your consultant/therapists. If you have any questions about your invoice or billing please contact Kari Apple at 615-299-6332 or [Kari@HopeTN.com](mailto:Kari@HopeTN.com).

## Insurance and Third Party Payment

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HOPE Autism and Behavioral Health Services is happy to work with any insurance company that is willing to cover ABA services. Because of the often lengthy turnaround for insurance payment, you may be required to pay your invoice in full and will then be reimbursed for any payments made by your insurance company.

## Contracts

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HOPE Autism and Behavioral Health Services does not create contracts for services. You are able to discontinue services at any time without penalty. We know your child's intervention needs may vary through the years and want you to be able to meet your child's needs as best as possible whether or not that involves our services.



## List of Fees

- **Intake Fee** .....\$500

Includes initial consultation with family, program creation, review of program with parents, and initial team training
  
- **Assessment of Basic Language and Learning Skills (ABLLS)** .....\$500

Includes complete assessment and scoring of the ABLLS, updated graphs, and updated 6-month or annual goals. The fee does not include a copy of the assessment manual, but you can purchase the manual online if you would like a copy.
  
- **Hourly Fees**

  - **Consultant /BCBA**.....\$70/hour

    - Consultant hours may include direct therapy, therapist training, meeting attendance, material preparation, and paperwork
  - **Therapist** .....\$35/hour

    - Therapist hours may include direct therapy and meeting attendance

(Many families choose to have individuals not associated with HOPE provide direct therapy hours. HOPE is happy to train babysitters, friends, extended family, etc. to implement HOPE programs)
  
- **Program Update Fee**.....\$70

Charged by the consultant when he/she updates programs, data sheets, and graphs
  
- **No-Show Fee** .....\$35-70

Applies to any missed appointment not cancelled at least one hour prior to scheduled start time.
  
- **Mileage Fee** .....\$0.51/mile

Applies to any appointment location more than 15 miles from the HOPE Learning Center. You will only be charged the \$0.51/mile on the additional mileage.