

Association OVA Autisme
Association Objectif Vaincre l'Autisme®

Active since 2004, granted “charitable status” in 2009 in the cantons of Vaud and Geneva

Getting Started with ABA Services at OVA Centre, Gland CH

What you need to know



«What really matters is not to live like others but to be amongst them »

D Tammet from « Born on a Blue Day»

***Proposal of better future for our children
as a result of adapted and effective services:
Applied Behaviour Analysis***

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Our story

OVA started in 2004 through the initiative of a group of local parents whose children were diagnosed with autism. They were faced with a significant lack of trained professionals as well as a lack of effective therapy, so they searched abroad for scientifically based interventions.

In Canada, these parents discovered ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis). Thrilled with the potential of this therapy, they decided to create a partnership with Canadian Behaviour Analysts to establish a training of local professionals in Switzerland. Thanks to these newly trained ABA professionals, home-based interventions developed rapidly along with a growing demand for our services.

In 2007, the association created a training and intervention centre in Gland, Switzerland. It does not benefit from any subsidies, only private donations and parents' financial contributions allow the centre to function. Today, the centre welcomes 12 children followed by 12 instructor therapists and 3 BCBA supervisors as well as an administrative department.



Our Identity

Our Goal

- Diversify services and interventions in Switzerland for children with autism by providing a scientifically validated therapy : intensive behavioural intervention based on numerous validated research studies in Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)

Mission

- Give children/adolescents with autism a better future thanks to an adapted and scientifically validated intervention: ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis)
- Organize continuous training for professionals in ABA so that they can provide continual effective services to children and adolescents with autism and PDD
- Support families with children with autism by providing information and effective intervention strategies as well as assist in finding financial support
- Organize intervention services for children by professionals trained and who meet criteria established by the association. OVA has built a team whose work consists of structured individual sessions adapted for each child's learning needs
- Advocate for the recognition and development of early intensive intervention

Fundamentals

- The centre's functioning and the professional practice of our staff is governed by OVA's Ethical Chart and the Code of Ethics of the Behaviour Analyst Certification Board (www.bacb.com).
- Our ethical principles are based on accountability, rigor and with external audit conducted every year to match the expectations of our sponsors and partners. OVA allocates funds received according to the sponsor's wishes. Our values are based on integrity, solidarity and professionalism.

Autism in a few words...

According to the **DSM-IV-TR***, Autism falls under the category of Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD), which are characterized by “severe pervasive impairment in several areas of development (reciprocal social interaction skills, communication skills) or the presence of stereotypical behaviours, interests, and/or activities” (In DSM-IV.TR, p81):

- **Social interactions :**
 - Difficulties with nonverbal social behaviour (face expressions, visual contact etc.)
 - Difficulties in development of relations with peers
 - Lack of spontaneity
 - No emotional sharing with others or social reciprocity
- **Communication :**
 - Delay or absence in development of language or communication
 - Absence of communication and conversation with others
 - Stereotypical or repetitive language
 - No social imitation play or pretend play
- **Restrictive, repetitive and self-stimulatory behaviours :**
 - Limited interests
 - Rituals
 - Self-stimulatory and repetitive movements

Prevalence of Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD)

Swiss-based statistics do not exist concerning the prevalence of autism and PDD. Autisme Europe estimates in 2011, 1 in 100 children is diagnosed with PDD or autism.

**American Psychiatric Association. (2000). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR). Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing.*

Choice of Services

How to choose an intervention or approach

A variety of interventions, treatments and approaches are proposed services for individuals diagnosed with autism. How to choose a therapy which meets the needs of my child?

A delicate choice

Once faced with the diagnosis of autism, parents can become confused and vulnerable and ready to believe in a « miracle treatment ». The spectrum of autism is vast. Each individual presents a varying degree of symptoms that impact their development. Knowing your child better than anyone, examine attentively the possibilities that are offered to you and then determine which approach will have the greatest impact on the quality of life for your child. Also, examine the various possibilities of services and contact other parental associations.



Effectiveness of therapy

The « Haute Autorité de la Santé » (HAS) published a *Recommandation de Bonne Pratique – Autisme et Autres Troubles Envahissants du Développement : Interventions Thérapeutiques Coordonnées chez l'Enfant et l'Adolescent (2012)*. The following recommendations are based on the document established by the consensus of the HAS team:

- Create a link between the child/adolescent and their parents
 - o Respect the child's and family's individuality
 - o Co-elaborate the intervention project with the parents
- Evaluate regularly the child/adolescent's development and their state of health
- Propose a personalised intervention plan [...]
 - o Early intervention, coordinated and based on educative, behavioural and developmental approaches
 - o Based on functional short and long term objectives
 - o Attentive to promote the generalisation and transfer of acquired skills to novel situations
 - o Implemented by a trained team who is regularly supervised by qualified and experienced professionals
 - o Organised using a ratio of one adult to one child, with a weekly occurrence of a minimum of 25h/week
 - o Organised with a structured environment [...] adapted to the peculiarities of the child
- Supervision of medical prescriptions
- Coordinate and train various actors/participants
- Develop clinical research work

It is highly recommended that parents look to approaches whose practices are derived from procedures and scientifically proven concepts.

**Recommandation de Bonne Pratique – Autisme et Autres Troubles Envahissants du Développement : Interventions Thérapeutiques Coordonnées chez l'Enfant et l'Adolescent (2012)*

What is ABA?

The acronym **ABA** signifies “**Applied Behaviour Analysis**”. ABA is a science whose procedures derived from behavioural principles are systematically applied to improve socially significant behaviours and who experimentally demonstrate how these procedures are responsible for improving behaviour. (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2008).

The works of B.F. Skinner, one of the most well-known behaviourists of the 20th century, are the origin of ABA.

Applied Behaviour Analysis targets:

- **Increase socially significant adaptive behaviours**
- **Develop emerging skills**
- **Decrease socially significant inappropriate behaviours** (notably disruptive behaviours that hinder the child’s learning (independence, autonomy, etc...)).

By:

- Dividing complex tasks into several small and easy steps that allow for personalized and intensive teaching.
- Identifying individualized and appropriate rewards (reinforcers) **in order to create an enjoyable teaching environment and motivate the child to learn.**
- **Providing sufficient help** so that the child is successful when accomplishing a difficult task without error.
- **Providing repetition and frequent teaching opportunities** in order to facilitate the acquisition of skills.
- Insuring effective learning by systematic recording and measurements of progress / difficulties via data collection.
- **Ensuring parental involvement to generalize** skills outside of the intensive learning environment so that they have a positive impact for both the child and the family.
-

The supervision of the practice of ABA is regulated by two levels of behaviour analysts:

- BCBA supervisors (Board Certified Behaviour Analysts), master’s level with a total required theoretical and practical experience in ABA of 1500 hours of which 5% of the total hours are supervised as well as the completion of a certification exam.
- BCaBA supervisors (Board Certified Assistant Behaviour Analysts), bachelor’s level with a practical and theoretical experience in ABA of 750 hours of which 5% of the total hours are supervised as well as the completion of a certification exam.

Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2008). *Applied Behaviour Analysis* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Efficacy of Intensive Behavioural Intervention

There are currently 650 studies validating the efficacy of applied behaviour analysis in treating children with autism.

In a recent meta-analysis * d'Eldevik et al. (2009), the authors demonstrate that individuals who benefited from an intensive behavioural intervention make significantly higher progress in IQ and adaptive behaviours when compared to other individuals who had no therapy or received eclectic treatments/therapies.

These results confirm results from other studies and corroborate that applied behaviour analysis is a treatment of choice of individuals with autism.

Eldevik, S., Hastings, R. P., Hughes, J. C., Jahr, E., Eikeseth, S. and Cross, S. (2009). Meta-analysis of early intensive behavioural intervention for children with autism. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 38(3), 439-450.

- **Prospect of a better life:** Enable an individual to be more autonomous, have an enhanced quality of life, be integrated in the community and in suitable placement and therefore avoid spending their life in a psychiatric hospital which is not a suitable place for an individual with autism.
- **Reintegration to regular school for some children:** Scientific research shows that some children who followed intensive **ABA** programs before 5 years old were reintegrated into a regular classroom. Consequently, the centre is a springboard for socialisation, before a possible integration in a normal classroom and social environment.



Eldevik, S., Hastings, R. P., Hughes, J. C., Jahr, E., Eikeseth, S. and Cross, S. (2009). Meta analysis of early intensive behavioral intervention for children with autism. *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology*, 38(3), 439-450.

Interventions proposed by OVA

- **At the OVA Centre in Gland**

Welcomes children diagnosed with PDD who are between the ages of and 8 years at the beginning of their services either full time (35h/per week) or half-time (17.5h / per week).

A team of instructor therapists work each day with the child, supervised by a Board Certified Analyst BCBA. The BCBA ensures **a continuous, personalised and intensive program** for each child based on applied behaviour analysis.

The centre offers specialised educational materials adapted to each child (tools and materials that parents may not have access to because of the cost or its specificities.)

- **At Home**

One or two instructor therapists work with child at home, supervised by a BCBA who ensures **a continuous, personalised and intensive program** based on behaviour analysis.

This service is for families who are on the waitlist for a placement at OVA's centre or have no other solution for services for their child/adolescent.

The home intervention will not be able to target all skill domains of the child/adolescent. Only objectives established in accordance of the family will define the home therapy.

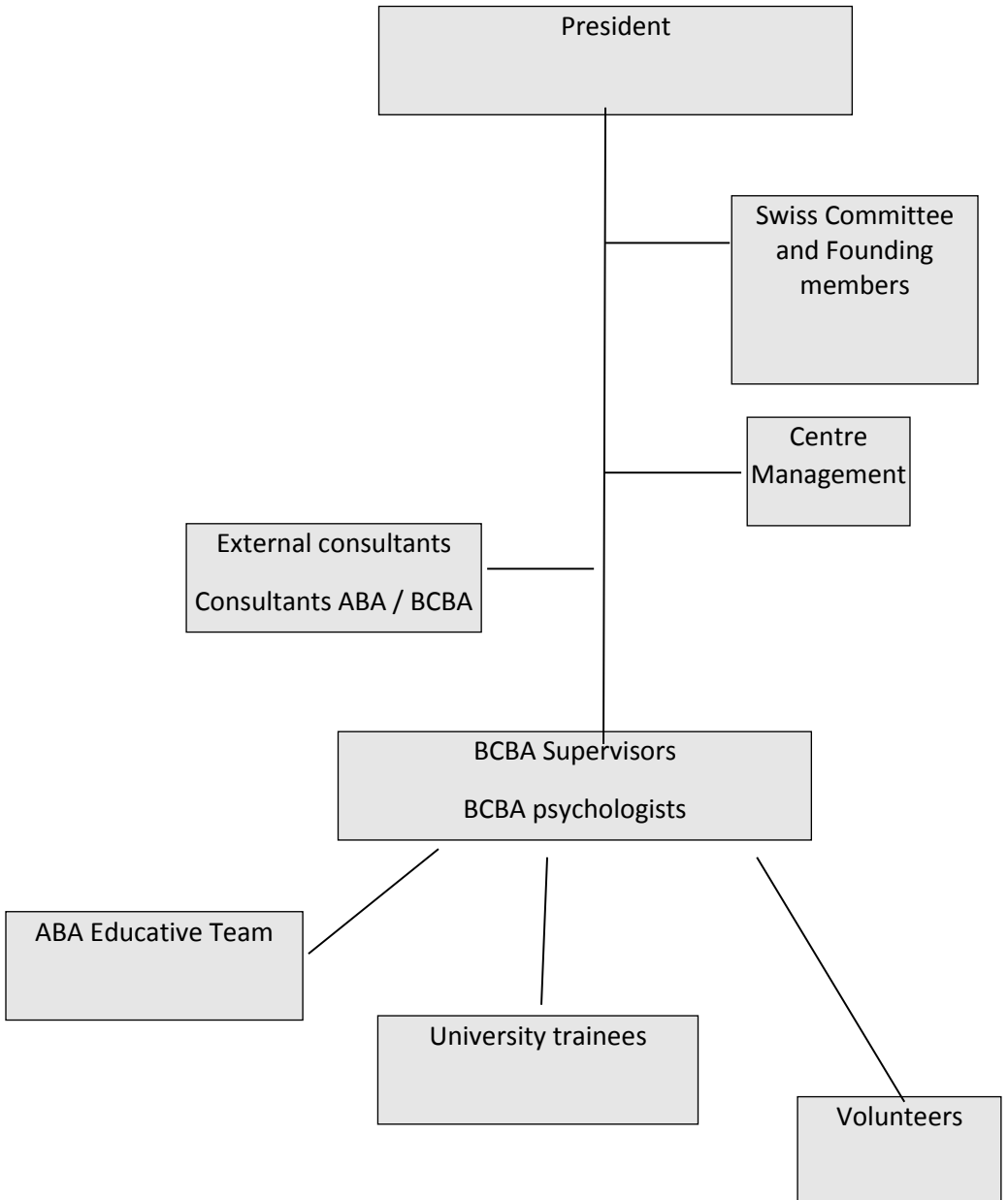
- **Parental support**

The aim of these sessions is to inform and train parents in the application of protocols and procedures based on the principles of behaviour analysis (ABA) without the constant supervision of a BCBA supervisor.

This service is for families that have no access to ABA interventions, neither at a centre nor home, but would like to get trained so they can apply these principles daily with their child.

The objectives established with the family are targeted during parental support. Parents are key actors/participants

Our organisation



The functioning of the centre!

OVA's centre in Gland serves the Cantons of Geneva and Vaud.

We accept children with PDD who are between the ages of 2 to 8 years at the beginning of their services

Full time or half time (within availability)

9h00 - 16h00 / Monday to Friday

- Individualised intervention after a primary comprehensive evaluation and the development of an individual treatment plan (ITP or IEP)
- Intensive teaching
- Intervention development on the principles of behaviour analysis and scientifically validated studies
- The student/instructor ratio is very high (1 or 2 students: 1 instructor according to the teaching of targeted skills)
- Ongoing staff training

Tariffs:

- Available on request via e-mail : info@ovassociation.com

Centre Closures

- Official Vaud cantonal holidays
- Approximately 25 days per year including 2 consecutive weeks in the summer

Parental Involvement

- Essential participation by one or both parents by attending at least one seminar/workshop based on behaviour analysis (it is recommended to attend most of the workshops organized by OVA).
- Attendance to monthly parent meeting with your Lead BCBA
- For the coherence of intervention: Continuation of teaching in home environment
- The family has an **essential role to play** in the follow through and the of **generalization** of skills.

Parent testimony

Only in French

*Madame Tille – Février 2014 «*Sacha est né le 23 avril 2009, premier enfant de la famille. Quand il a eu un peu plus de 2 ans, nous avons commencé à nous poser des questions sur son développement.*

Sa petite sœur est née quand Sacha avait un peu plus de 2 ans et demi avec un important problème de santé. Tout cela provoqua chez lui des accès de colère et des grosses crises très fréquentes que nous n'arrivions pas calmer. Nous le sentions très mal et angoissé. Tout ça nous a alertés. Quelques semaines plus tard, après des tests passés au CHUV, le diagnostic tomba juste un mois avant ses 3 ans : troubles du spectre autistique.

On nous proposa de mettre en place deux séances hebdomadaires de Psychomotricité et de logopédie pour Sacha. La logopédiste interrompit rapidement le suivi car Sacha ne parlait pas. Il ne lui resta plus qu'une heure de psychomotricité qui ne calma pas ses angoisses ; ce suivi n'était pas suffisant.

Nous avons alors entendu parler de l'ABA, au travers de lectures sur un site d'une association. Nous avons alors poursuivi nos recherches et avons alors compris l'importance de mettre en place une thérapie le plus rapidement possible étant donné que, plus la prise en charge est précoce, plus les résultats sont bons. Quelques semaines plus tard, nous avons appris l'existence du centre OVA de Gland et avons pris contact immédiatement avec sa directrice ; il y avait une place en septembre. Sacha n'avait pas trois ans et demi, il fallait foncer !!!

Nous avons commencé l'aventure plein de doutes : cette méthode allait-elle convenir à Sacha ? Allait-il supporter les 17h30 de thérapies par semaines (pour un mi-temps) lui qui à 3 ans et 5 mois n'allait qu'une matinée au jardin d'enfant ?

Sacha est parti à la « petite école » (comme nous appelons le centre pour lui) avec sourire et motivation et ça, dès la fin de la première semaine. Trois semaines après le début de son suivi au centre OVA, Sacha a commencé à faire des demandes verbales et 3 mois après, il était propre. De plus, les crises se sont peu à peu estompées et Sacha s'est apaisé. Notre fils s'est ouvert et a énormément progressé aussi bien dans sa relation aux autres que dans ses apprentissages. Il est heureux et évolue à son rythme mais en nous épatant par ses progrès réguliers. Le centre lui a donné la possibilité d'apprendre, de se faire comprendre tout ça en le motivant.

Grace à l'aide du centre OVA, nous s'avons maintenant comment agir et aider Sacha à la maison. Nous avons également suivi plusieurs formations en ABA pour les parents pour en apprendre davantage sur cette méthode ; tout ça a changé notre quotidien.

A l'heure actuelle, Sacha a commencé sa deuxième année (toujours à mi-temps) au centre OVA et est parallèlement intégré, 2 matinées par semaine, en 1p à l'école ordinaire. Il continue aussi son suivi en psychomotricité et a pu recommencer un suivi en logopédie au vu de ses progrès langagiers.

Sacha qui est arrivé au centre sans parler, ne jouant à aucun jeu, ne regardant que ses parents, joue maintenant avec sa sœur, a développé ses compétences d'autonomie, se fait comprendre verbalement et arrive à faire des demandes aux autres en les regardant...la liste serait encore longue mais le chemin parcouru depuis ces 2 ans et demi est spectaculaire.

Même si ce n'est pas tous les jours facile, nous avons maintenant les clés nécessaires pour l'aider. »

Frequently asked questions

When to start?

- The earlier the better
- Research shows that an early intervention can help make significant gains in communication, socialization, pre-academic skills and adaptive skills.
- In Switzerland, a formal diagnosis of autism spectrum, autism spectrum disorders is often provided much later (3 to 5 years old).
- **Treatment can be started without a confirmed diagnosis**

Why OVA?

- Ongoing supervision from Board Certified Behaviour Analysts
- Ongoing training of our centre-based and external teams as well as the supervisory clinical team of our centre.
- Intensive and individualized services thanks to frequent evaluations and the development of individualized treatment plans
- Family involvement in the targeted objectives process.

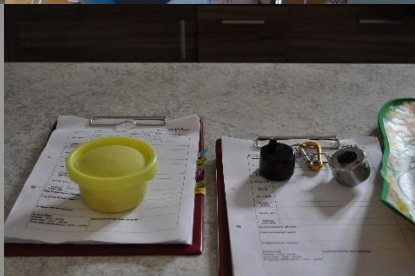
When I read “behaviour”, does it mean that the intervention will solely concentrate on my child’s challenging behaviour?

- NOT AT ALL! Behaviour means “anything that an organism does – or more precisely, all that can be observed by another organism [...] in interaction with the external world”
- Managing challenging behaviours is part of the intervention encompassed in the comprehensive curriculum which targets the teaching of emerging behaviours (skills) in the child’s language development with the objective to teach the individual to communicate so they can become independent while able to retain their individuality. This is a result of an individual treatment plan.

I want to enroll my child at OVA: what do I need to do?

- Contact the OVA Centre : info@ovassociation.com and please do provide the following details :
 - Contact details
 - Age and diagnosis of the child (if available) together with a short description of the challenges you are currently facing.

- The centre's management will put you in contact with a clinical supervisor to set up an initial meeting.
- The meeting will be invoiced **CHF 200.-/H** and reimbursed in the case where the child joins the centre. The meeting will allows us to :
 - Meet the child
 - Discuss parents' expectations.
 - Explain the centre's functioning and the services available
 - Visit the centre
 - Add your child's name to our waitlist



How to support us!

- Volunteer your time

- Organise charity, sports or cultural events that raise funds on behalf of OVA
- Fundraise on behalf of OVA by researching and contacting companies, foundations, etc.
- Use your personal or professional networks to advance our ideas and respond to our needs.

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Personal Notes

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For further information:

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