

Division of Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS)

October 24, 2025

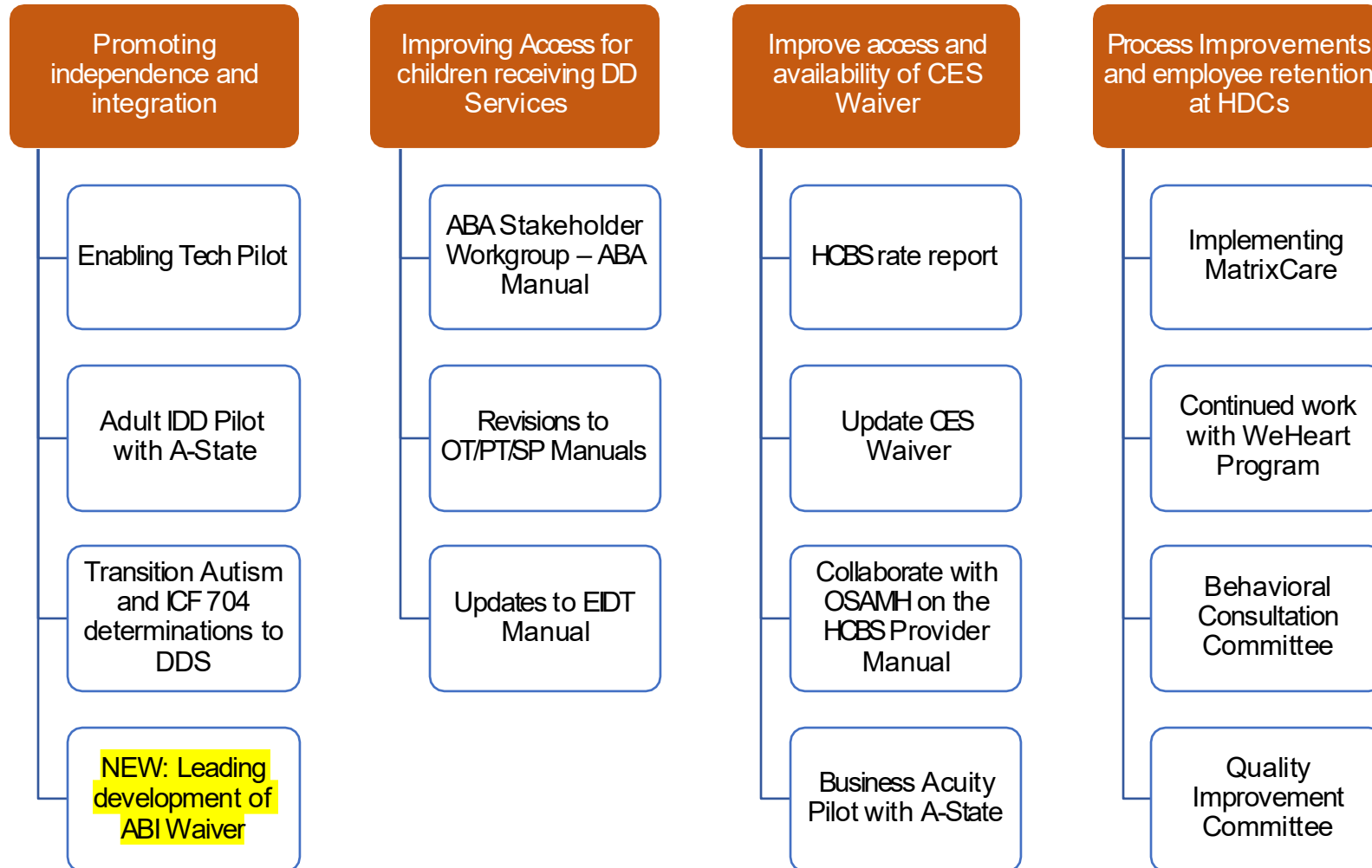


Division of Developmental Disabilities Services Strategic Plan 2025-2026



[DDS-Strategic-Initiatives-Plan-2025-2026.pdf](#)

Division of Developmental Disabilities Services Strategic Plan 2025-2026



IDD Services

CES Waiver

- 1915c Waiver. Beneficiary enrolled into a PASSE. Covers HCBS services to help individuals live and work in the community.
- 8233 slots allowed per year (500 slots reserved for DCFS); No age limit. Currently around ~1900 individuals on the Waitlist.
- Includes services: Supportive Living, Supported Employment, Consultation, Specialized Medical Equipment, Respite, Environmental Modifications, and Adaptive Equipment

Autism Waiver

- 1915c Waiver. Provides intensive HCBS services for children 18 months up to 8 years old but must be enrolled before 5th birthday to receive maximum 3 years of services.
- Must have an Autism Spectrum Diagnosis (ASD) diagnosis
- 180 slots

Children Special Services

- Care Coordination for children from birth to 21 with a qualifying long-term physical or developmental conditions, to support access to services, respite, and special medical equipment.
- RN Care Coordinators located statewide

Early Intervention & Adult Day Treatment

- Clinic based care that supports children and adults' with qualifying developmental disabilities with day habilitative services, including PT/OT/SP and Nursing

IDD -Services

*Services not managed directly by DDS

Applied Behavioral Analysis

- Behavioral treatment for youth with ASD that uses operant conditioning (i.e. Positive reinforcement) to change behavior and incentivizes new skill acquisition
- Must have an ASD diagnosis

PT/OT/Speech Therapy

- Habilitative therapies like speech, occupational therapy (OT), and physical therapy (PT) are services that address skill and functioning deficits in activities of daily living or that have not yet developed. This is different from rehabilitative therapy, which aims to restore skills that were lost or impaired due to illness, injury, or disability.

Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF/DD)

- Residential care that provides 24/7 care, support, and "active treatment" to people with qualifying intellectual and developmental disabilities.

Personal Care*

- Assistance with activities of daily living (ADLs) such as eating, bathing, dressing, personal hygiene, toileting and ambulating for individuals with qualifying diagnosis.

Counseling & Crisis Services*

- Services to assess and treat mental health and/or substance abuse conditions



Applying for IDD Services



- [Referral Intake](#) – Online Form or Call **501-683-5687**

Single point of
access to get
connected to
services!

- Beneficiaries or their parent/guardian can apply for the Community and Employment Supports 1915(c) Waiver or the Autism Waiver by contacting DDS Referral Intake
- Beneficiaries can apply for Medicaid coverage through <https://access.arkansas.gov>
- SSI is a federal program- beneficiaries may apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) at <https://ssa.gov/benefits/ssi>

[About the Division of Developmental Disabilities Services - Arkansas Department of Human Services](#)

Applied Behavioral Analysis (ABA)



Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Autism spectrum disorder was "condensed" into a single, umbrella diagnosis in 2013, with the publication of the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). This change combined several previously separate diagnoses into the single category of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), including:

- Autistic Disorder
- Asperger's Disorder
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)

The motivation for this revision was to improve consistency and accuracy in diagnosis. Research had found that different clinics and professionals were not applying the separate diagnostic labels in a uniform way. By moving to a single spectrum diagnosis, the goal was to provide a common framework and ensure more people who need support can receive appropriate services.

A.C.A 20-77-124 – ASD Diagnosis

“Autism spectrum disorder” means a condition that is diagnosed by at least two (2) qualified professionals of different types from the list in subdivision (a)(4)(B) of this section who each conclude that a child fully meets the diagnostic criteria under the most recent edition of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders;

(B) **“Qualified professional”** only includes a licensed physician, licensed psychologist, or licensed speech-language pathologist.

What Is Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)?

ABA is a discipline that focuses on analyzing, designing, implementing, and evaluating social and other environmental modifications to produce meaningful changes in human behavior.²

ABA is based on the understanding that behavior is determined by previous experiences and current environments in combination with genetic and physiological variables. The interaction between a person and their environment is critical to behavior and learning. Therefore, one focus of ABA is on changing the environment in ways that will lead to practical and progressive changes in behavior.

ABA providers identify behaviors that negatively impact functioning, address these behaviors by setting achievable goals for new behavior, change the environment to allow the patient to practice these new behaviors, and successively reinforce each instance of progress until the person can consistently display them across environments.

ABA interventions are not limited to addressing challenging behaviors; they also apply to skill acquisition and skill maintenance. Whenever possible, interventions are tailored to the individual's specific needs and designed in collaboration with that individual, their caregivers, and their care team. They focus on a range of essential learning, social, language, and independence skills. Depending on the person's needs, treatment can span several months to several years, or even across the lifespan.

Council of Autism Service Providers [CASP]. (2024). Applied behavior analysis practice guidelines for the treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder: Guidance for healthcare funders, regulatory bodies, service providers, and consumers [Clinical practice guidelines]. <https://www.casproviders.org/asd-guidelines>

ABA At a Glance



Who can provide ABA Therapy?

Many provider types can practice ABA (e.g., psychologists, special-ed teachers) if they are certified by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) and have obtained a Medicaid certification for BCBA, BCaBA or RBT.

Primary Providers	Description
Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)	Primary provider. Designs tx plans. Has a masters degree.
Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA)	Works under supervision of BCBA. Typically has a bachelors degree.
Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)	Entry-level. Under supervision. HS degree + training



Applied Behavioral Analysis Manual

- New Provider Manual went live on 1/1/25.
- Stakeholder workgroup started 8/21/25



Who benefits from these services?

Individuals from 18 months up to 21 years old with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and behavior(s) or functional skill deficits that are disrupting or interfering with the child's ability to learn, communicate, or and/or socialize with developmentally same-age peers.



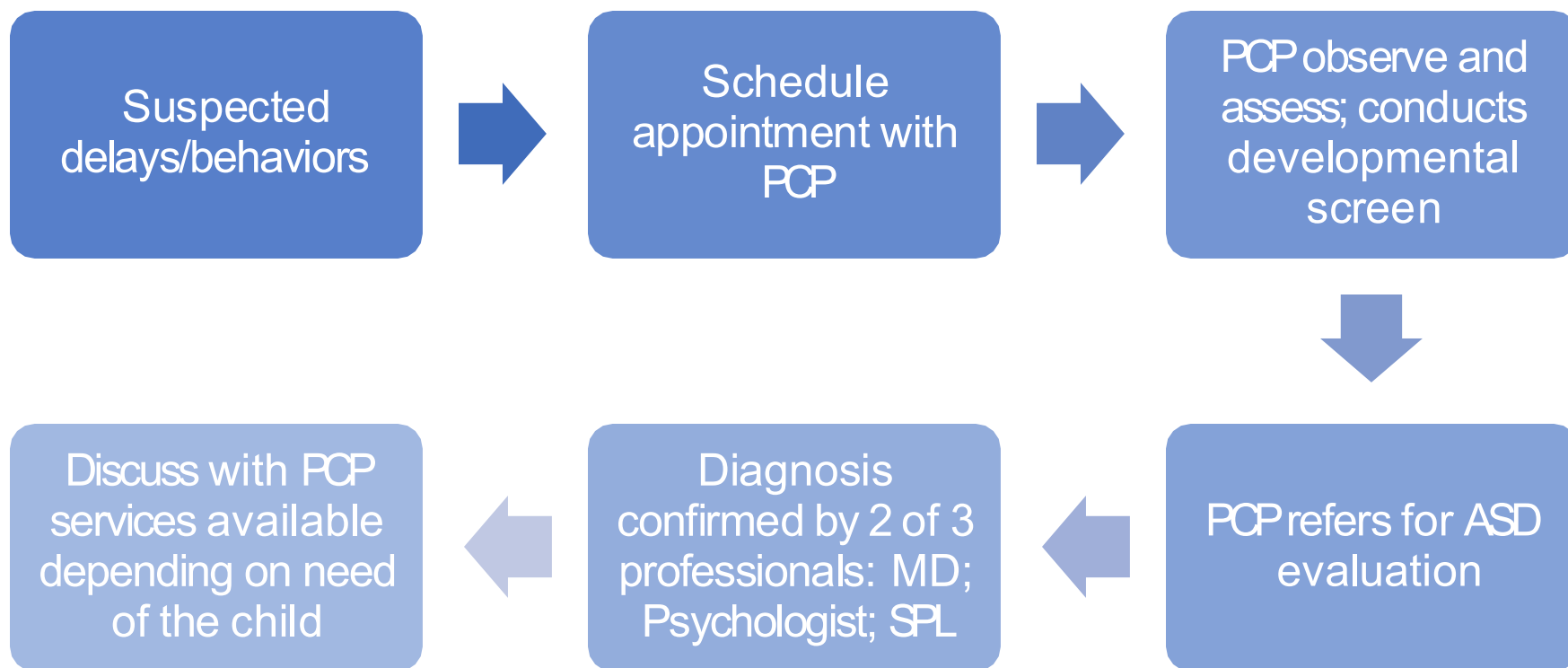
ABA Codes and Description of Services

Code	Description of Services
97151	Behavior identification assessment, administered by a physician or other qualified healthcare professional, each 15 minutes of the physician's or other qualified health care professional's time face-to-face with patient and/pr guardian(s)/caregiver(s) administering assessments and discussing findings and recommendations, and non-face-to-face analyzing past data, scoring/interpreting the assessment, and preparing the report/treatment plan
97153	Adaptive behavior treatment by protocol, administered by technician under the direction of a physician or other qualified health care professional, face-to-face with one patient, each 15 minutes
97155	Adaptive behavior treatment with protocol modification administered by physician or other qualified health care professional, which may include simultaneous direction of technician, face-to-face with one patient, each 15 minutes *
97156	Family adaptive behavior treatment guidance, administered by physician or other qualified health care professional (with or without the patient present), face-to-face with guardian(s)/caregiver(s), each 15 minutes. *

* Telehealth services allowed for 97155 and 97156 only – no modifier required. Use telehealth place of service on claim

** Group services 97154 and 97158 are not reimbursable

Member Journey



Interventions

Profound delays and medical needs



- PASSE
- CES Waiver
- Autism Waiver
- ADDT
- Personal Care
- Private Duty Nursing
- Skilled Nursing Facility
- Intermediate Care Facility (ICF/IDD)

Early Interventions



- First Connections (birth to 36 months)
- Early childhood special education (IDEA Part B)
- Head Start
- Early Head Start
- Arkansas Better Chance
- EIDT

Targeted service options for specific delays and behaviors



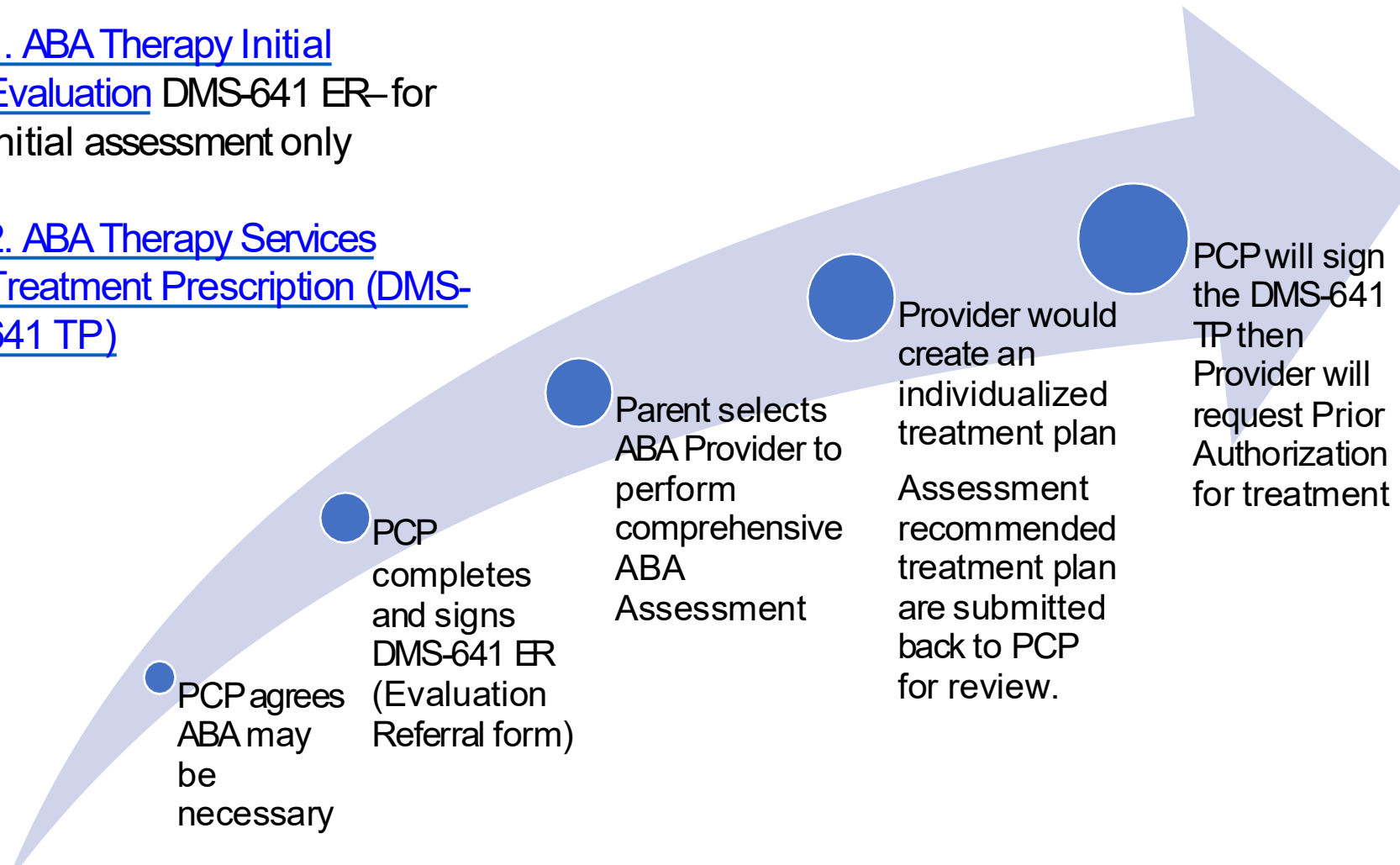
- Occupational therapy services
- Physical therapy services
- Speech Therapy services
- Behavioral health services
- Applied Behavioral Analysis
- Special Education services in school

*Not all services available to individuals 21 and older.



ABA Evaluation Referral Process – Medicaid FFS

- 1. ABA Therapy Initial Evaluation DMS-641 ER—for Initial assessment only
- 2. ABA Therapy Services Treatment Prescription (DMS-641 TP)



ABA Referral Process – PASSE



[Home | Arkansas Total Care](#)



[CareSource PASSE | Arkansas – CareSource PASSE | CareSource](#)



[Homepage - Empower Healthcare Solutions](#)



[Arkansas Medicaid | Summit Community Care](#)

ABA – DDS Stakeholder Work-group

8/21/25 : Themes

Concerned
about school
age

Access to
services – still
long waitlists

Physician
education

Transitioning
to natural
environments

Ensuring
quality and
outcomes



Questions?

Division of Developmental Disabilities

Department of Human Services

Director: Jennifer Brezee

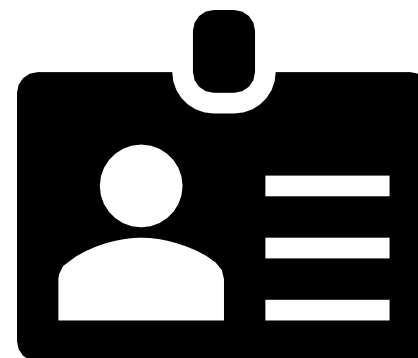
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