



# **FAMILY RESOURCE GUIDE**

# Understanding the Difference: Compassionate ABA vs. Traditional ABA

*How Wall Therapeutic Solutions is using Compassionate ABA to Improve ABA Therapy*

## What is ABA?

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a scientific approach to understanding behavior and how it is affected by the environment. It is widely used to support individuals with autism and other developmental differences.

### Traditional ABA

**Focus:** Behavior change through reinforcement and data-driven interventions.

#### Characteristics:

- Emphasis on compliance and reduction of “problem behaviors.”
- Goals are often selected by professionals with limited input from the individual.
- Reinforcement used to shape desired behaviors, sometimes without considering emotional impact.
- Less emphasis on the individual’s autonomy or preferences.

#### Critiques:

- Can feel rigid or controlling.
- May overlook the emotional experience of the individual.
- Historically lacked emphasis on assent and dignity.

### Compassionate ABA





**Focus:** Enhancing quality of life through respectful, person-centered practices.

#### Characteristics:

- Prioritizes **assent**, ensuring the individual agrees to participate.
- Upholds **dignity**, **respect**, and **autonomy** in every interaction.
- Goals are collaboratively developed with the individual and their support network.
- Reinforcement is used ethically and sensitively, with attention to emotional well-being.
- Emphasizes **trauma-informed care**, **neurodiversity-affirming practices**, and **relationship-building**.

### Wall Therapeutic Solutions: Our Commitment

At **Wall Therapeutic Solutions**, we are proud to practice **Compassionate ABA**. Our approach is rooted in:





-  **Assent:** We believe every individual has the right to say “yes” or “no.”
-  **Dignity:** We honor each person’s humanity and unique identity.
-  **Respect:** We listen, learn, and adapt to each individual’s needs.
-  **Autonomy:** We support self-determination and meaningful choice-making. We strive to create environments where individuals feel safe, empowered, and valued

# Medicaid CCC+ Waiver Guide for Kids in Virginia

*For Children with Disabilities*







## Quick Facts

-  No waiting list for CCC+ Waiver
-  You can apply even if your child is in a hospital or facility
-  You have the right to request a screening and receive a written denial if refused
-  Eligibility is based on your child's income, not the parents'



## Steps to Apply

### Step 1: Request a Screening



-  Call Cover Virginia: 1-833-5CALLVA (1-833-522-5582)
-  Visit your local DSS office
-  Online: [CommonHelp.virginia.gov](https://CommonHelp.virginia.gov)
-  Screenings can happen at home, in the community, or in the hospital

### Your child may qualify if they:

- Are at risk of nursing facility placement
- Have a physical disability, chronic illness, or severe medical needs
- Need ongoing skilled nursing care




### Step 2: Apply for Medicaid

You do not need to apply before the screening.

-  Local DSS or Health Department
-  [CommonHelp.virginia.gov](https://CommonHelp.virginia.gov)

### Step 3: Choose Services

Work with the screening team to select services like:

-  Personal Care
-  Respite
-  Assistive Technology

## Helpful Resources



Kids' Waivers Resource:  
<https://kidswaivers.org>



The Arc of Virginia –  
Advocacy & Support:  
<https://www.thearcofva.org>






DMAS CCC+ Waiver Info:  
<https://dmas.virginia.gov>

# How to Receive Special Education Services for Your Child in Virginia

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## What Is Special Education?

Special education means free, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. Services can be provided:

-  In a classroom
-  At home
-  In hospitals or other settings

## Steps in the Special Education Process

### Identification & Referral

- ✉ Submit a written referral to your child's school if you suspect a disability.
- 🔍 Schools also conduct Child Find screenings to identify students who may need services.

### Evaluation

- 🔧 The school conducts assessments to determine your child's needs.
- 👉 Written consent is required from you before evaluations begin.

### Eligibility Determination

- 👥 A team (including you!) reviews evaluation results.
- 📄 Your child must meet criteria under IDEA or Section 504.

### Develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- 📄 If eligible, an IEP is created outlining:
  - 🎯 Goals
  - 🗣 Services (e.g., speech therapy, occupational therapy)
  - 🔧 Accommodations





### Services & Reevaluation

- 🚀 Services begin as outlined in the IEP.
- 🔄 Reevaluation occurs at least every three years or sooner if needed.




### Quick Facts

- ⌚ Schools must follow timelines for each step
- 💰 Services are free for eligible students
- 📄 You can request an evaluation at any time




## **Your Rights as a Parent**

-  Participate in all meetings
-  Receive prior written notice before changes
-  Consent required for evaluations and services
-  Access to records

## **Options for resolving disagreements:**

-  Mediation
-  Complaint process
-  Due process hearing

## **Helpful Resources**

-  Virginia Department of Education Special Education: <https://doe.virginia.gov>
-  Virginia Family Guide to Special Education (Download PDF): <https://fcpsva.org>
-  Parent Ombudsman for Special Education: Helps resolve concerns

## IEP vs. Section 504 Plan

### ✓ Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- **Law:** Governed by **IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)**
- **Purpose:** Provides **special education services** and related supports for students who qualify under one of 13 disability categories.
- **Eligibility:** Student must need **specialized instruction** due to a disability that affects educational performance.
- **Services:** Can include:
  - Specialized instruction
  - Speech, OT, PT
  - Accommodations and modifications
- **Document:** Detailed plan with measurable goals, progress monitoring, and annual review.
- **Team:** Includes parents, teachers, special educators, and sometimes therapists.

### ✓ Section 504 Plan

- **Law:** Governed by **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act**
- **Purpose:** Provides **equal access** to education through accommodations for students with a disability that substantially limits a major life activity.
- **Eligibility:** Broader than IDEA—covers physical or mental impairments that affect daily functioning (e.g., ADHD, diabetes).
- **Services:** Typically **accommodations only**, such as:
  - Extended time on tests
  - Preferential seating
  - Behavior supports
- **Document:** Less detailed than an IEP; focuses on accommodations.
- **Team:** Usually includes parents and school staff

### 🔑 Key Difference

Feature	IEP	504 Plan
Governing Law	IDEA	Section 504
Services	Special education + related	Accommodations only
Eligibility	Specific disability categories	Any disability affecting life activity
Goals	Yes, measurable goals	No formal goals