



BEHAVIOR TREATMENT &
TRAINING CENTER (BTTC)
Outreach and Day Treatment, Programs
Texana Center
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SUPPORT OF SB1577

My name is Christie Enzinna, I am a licensed psychological associate and board certified behavior analyst who has been working in the field of developmental disabilities in the Houston area since 1979.

I work for Texana Center in Rosenberg. We are an MHMR Center devoted to providing expertise in applied behavior analysis to children and adults with developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorder. Texana Center employs 17 Board Certified Behavior Analysts and over the years has built a reputation for being able to maintain their clients in the community by offering effective applied behavior analysis services to address behavior challenges and deficits. We do that by employing the correct professional to implement ABA programs, and that is the Board Certified Behavior Analyst, or BCBA.

I work at the Texana Behavior Treatment and Training Center (BTTC) where I provide consultation to schools and manage the BTTC Outreach and Day Treatment Programs.

The Behavior Treatment and Training Center Outreach program was started around 1990 to provide the short-term behavioral expertise that some families need in order to maintain their child in their family home. We have four full time Board Certified Behavior Analysts seeing on the average 12 children a day.

Parents come to the outreach program because of a range of challenges their developmentally disabled child presents to the family, including physical aggression, self-injurious behaviors, inability to talk, lack of self-care skills, lack of progress on their IEP objectives. Often the parent is getting notes sent home from school about their child's disruptive behaviors, or many are getting calls from the school to come get their child before the end of the school day. Many of our families can't participate in community activities because of their child's behavior. The parents come to us desperate.

The behavior analyst typically sees the family twice a week for 1.5 hour appointments for 3-5 months. The parent participates in all of the treatment sessions. If we need to we go into the home or into the community with the parent to demonstrate how to maintain appropriate behavior from their child. It is a great program and the parents are always telling us how much they appreciate someone actually showing them what to do instead of just telling them general principles.

For years we have been providing this service and for years the children have been missing school for their appointments.

SB1577 is critically needed at this time as we suddenly have school districts threatening parents with the truancy laws if they continue to take their child out of school to attend our outreach appointments.

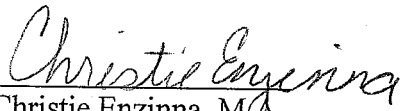
The first case was the mother of a 6 year old who the school threatened with a \$500 fine if she continued to sign her son out early for his outreach appointments. I called the school and it turns out the \$500 fine probably isn't accurate because I think that is only if he misses full days, but we have a copy of the letter the district sent her stating that the absences will be unexcused. This mother was especially upset because she claims she had been asking the district for help with her son's behavior for the previous 2 years and they hadn't helped her.

The other case I wanted to highlight involves a parent who has been waiting for an afternoon part-time position at our day treatment program for her son, because the school had told her several months ago that if her child only attended school ½ day it would have to be in the morning since he must be present at 10:00 for them to get paid. When we finally had an afternoon opening the school told her she could not pull her son out of school to attend the intensive ABA treatment.

Her pediatrician wrote an order for ABA as the treatment of choice for children with autism but the school refused to accept it and told the mother that if she pulled him out for the afternoons they would report her for truancy and if she pulled him out of school completely they would make him repeat kindergarten when he returned (which would be his 3rd year in kindergarten because this 7 year old boy is already in his 2nd year of kindergarten since he hasn't yet been able to master the skills).

Children with autism need access to as much professional level ABA treatment as possible. Thanks to HB1919 which passed last legislative session insurance companies are recognizing ABA treatment as medically necessary for children with autism. If schools are allowed to prevent the parents from getting ABA treatment for their children then we can expect to have many more children require institutionalization as they grow into adolescents and young adults whose behavior cannot be managed within the home.

Thank you for your attention and interest in helping children with autism spectrum disorder.



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