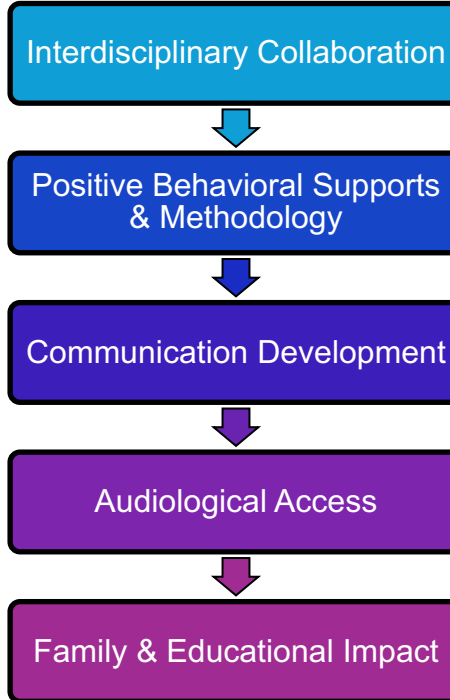


Integrating Behavioral & Hearing Intervention: ABA Strategies and Provider Collaboration for Children with Hearing Loss

Katie Buda, MAT, LSLS Cert. AVEd & Sarah E. Orlans, PhD, BCBA-D, NYS LBA

Background

The Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) framework promotes early identification of hearing loss and enrollment in services (Joint Committee on Infant Hearing [JCIH], 2019). While early intervention often improves outcomes (Ching et al., 2017), participation in therapy alone does not guarantee meaningful functional progress. Children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) with co-occurring developmental or behavioral needs may experience barriers that affect testing reliability, amplification tolerance, attention, and communication growth (Szarkowski et al., 2014).



Applied Behavior Analysis & Collaboration

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a scientific, data-driven approach that improves socially significant behaviors through structured teaching, reinforcement, and measurable outcomes (Baer et al., 1968; Cooper et al., 2020). When implemented collaboratively, ABA strategies can strengthen participation, regulation, and skill generalization across settings.

Effective collaboration includes:

- Shared goals and programming
- Ongoing team communication
 - Clear role definition
- Consistent cross-setting strategies

Methods & Results

We used a descriptive, non-experimental survey design to examine retrospective provider and caregiver perceptions following collaborative service delivery. Nineteen respondents, including educators, ABA providers, audiologists, speech-language pathologists, and parents, described their experiences working with DHH children with complex needs, such as autism and multiple diagnoses.

Across disciplines, respondents reported improved coordination and child engagement when behavioral strategies were intentionally integrated into hearing services. Behavioral supports increased regulation, sustained attention, and participation in both therapy and audiological testing.



Reported outcomes included:

- Increased amplification tolerance and wear time
 - More reliable behavioral audiometry
 - Greater participation in therapy
- Reduced frustration and improved readiness to learn
 - Expanded expressive vocabulary, both spoken language and ASL
- Stronger interdisciplinary team collaboration, shared goals, etc.

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Presenter Information

Katie Buda, MAT, LSLS Cert. AVEd

Center for Hearing and Communication

kbuda@chchearing.org

Katie Buda is a certified Teacher of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing and a Listening and Spoken Language Specialist- Certified Auditory-Verbal Educator, with professional proficiency in American Sign Language. She provides services in both clinical and educational settings through the Center for Hearing and Communication in New York City, supporting children who are deaf and hard of hearing in addressing developmental and academic needs related to hearing loss. Katie collaborates closely with interdisciplinary professionals and families to ensure accessibility and promote each child's growth. She earned both her B.S. and M.A.T. in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education from The College of New Jersey.

Sarah E. Orlans, PhD, BCBA-D, NYS LBA

Tribeca Preparatory School

sarah@tribecapreparatory.com

Dr. Sarah Orlans is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst-Doctoral®, NYS Licensed Behavior Analyst, and holds NYS teaching certifications in both general and special education. She has 25 years of experience in behavior, education, and developmental disabilities, working with neurotypical learners and students with autism, learning and communication disorders, visual and hearing impairments, intellectual disabilities, multiple disabilities, and emotional disabilities. Dr. Orlans currently serves as the Director of ABA Services at a nonpublic, private special education school. She holds a BA from Washington University in St. Louis; dual master's degrees in Applied Behavior Analysis and Instructional Practices from Teachers College; and an MPhil and PhD in Applied Behavior Analysis from Columbia University. Her background also includes experience as a BCBA, ABA service delivery, behavior research, case management for children with autism, special education teaching, behavioral and academic curriculum support, and multidisciplinary collaboration with educators, related services providers and caregivers.

Organizational Affiliations

Center for Hearing and Communication (CHC)

Since 1910, CHC has supported children and families navigating the complex realities of hearing loss. CHC's interdisciplinary team includes audiologists, Teachers of the Deaf, speech-language pathologists, licensed therapists, and technology specialists who work together to provide integrated, family-centered support across the lifespan.

Tribeca Preparatory School

Tribeca Preparatory is a specialized pre-K through 8th grade school in NYC serving students who benefit from individualized instruction & ABA-informed support. Tribeca Prep provides a nurturing, structured environment where students build academic skills, strengthen social development, & grow in confidence. Through personalized, evidence-based instruction & adaptive tools, Tribeca Prep creates cohesive, tailored programs that help each child build on their strengths, reach measurable goals, & develop independence & belonging.



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