

New to the Autism Care Demonstration Information Parent Toolkit



TriWest Healthcare Alliance is proud to serve you and your family in the TRICARE West Region.

We understand that receiving a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder can bring unique challenges. We created this toolkit to support you and your family. The “New to the Autism Care Demonstration Information Parent Toolkit” is a guide to help you understand the services of the Autism Care Demonstration.





Autism Care Demonstration Checklist

Before You Enroll

- If you're interested in enrolling in the ACD, you and your dependent can get up to 180 days of support. This support will help you meet eligibility requirements.

Requirements for ACD Enrollment

- A definitive diagnosis of autism.
- A validated assessment tool.
- Complete the DSM-5 Checklist for Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Active duty family members must register in Extended Care Health Option (ECHO). In order to register in ECHO, active duty service members must enroll in the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP).
- A referral for ABA services.
- Assignment of an Autism Services Navigator.

Before You Receive ABA Services

Complete outcome measures:

- Pervasive Developmental Disorder Behavior Inventory, Current Edition
 - Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales - 3
 - Social Responsiveness Scale - 2
 - Parenting Stress Index - 4 or Stress Index for Parents of Adolescents
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- Complete a Comprehensive Care Plan with the Autism Services Navigator.
 - Receive authorization for ABA services.

Every six months while getting ABA Services:

- Review and update the Comprehensive Care Plan with the Autism Services Navigator.
- Request to continue getting ABA services.

Measure outcomes using:

- Pervasive Developmental Disorder Behavior Inventory (Current Edition)
- Parenting Stress Index - 4 or Stress Index for Parents of Adolescents
- Get authorization to keep receiving ABA services.

Every year while getting ABA Services:

Measure outcomes using the scales below.

- Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales – 3.
- Social Responsiveness Scale – 2.

Every two years while getting ABA Services:

- Obtain a new referral for ABA services from a TRICARE-authorized provider.
- Obtain an updated DSM-5 Checklist for Autism Spectrum Disorder by a TRICARE-authorized provider.

Autism Care Demonstration Step-by-Step

Step 1 – Meet Eligibility

Before enrolling in the ACD, your dependent must have a definitive diagnosis of autism. The authorized ASD diagnosing provider will send a referral to TriWest for ABA services. If your dependent's sponsor is active duty, the sponsor must enroll in EFMP, and your dependent must register in ECHO. Please see page 7 to learn more.

The TriWest team is here to help you understand and meet the eligibility requirements for the ACD. You may get this support for up to 180 days. Please call the ACD Customer Service line at 833-818-2525 for information. Or if your dependent's enrollment request is not approved, you will automatically be offered help for up to 180 days.

Step 2 – Enroll in the ACD and Assignment of Autism Services Navigator

Once your dependent meets the eligibility requirements, they will be enrolled in the ACD. TriWest will assign an Autism Services Navigator to help you through the next steps.

Step 3 – Authorization for Initial Applied Behavior Analysis Assessment

After enrolling in the ACD, TriWest will issue an authorization for an initial ABA assessment. They will assign a high-quality ABA provider to start the assessment within 28 calendar days of the referral.

If the PCM or ASD diagnosing provider is unable to finish the outcome measures, your ABA provider will ask you to do so during the assessment. If your ABA provider is unable to

finish the outcome measures, TriWest will help you find a provider who can.

Step 4 – Schedule and Complete Appointment with an ABA provider for Initial ABA Assessment

Next, you will need to set up an appointment for the initial ABA assessment. Find the contact information for your assigned ABA provider on the authorization you received. Your ABA provider will assess your dependent's needs and develop a treatment plan. Note: An initial ABA assessment may take place over several sessions.

Step 5 – ABA Provider Submits Documentation to TriWest to Request ABA Services

After you finish your initial assessment, your ABA provider will submit the items listed below.

- Treatment plan
- Outcome measures you completed
- Any other information needed to request ABA services

Step 6 – TriWest Conducts Clinical Necessity Reviews of ABA Treatment Plans

TriWest will review the clinical necessity for ABA services within five business days after receiving your request. If we need more information, we will inform your ABA provider in writing.

Step 7 – Receive Authorization

After the clinical necessity reviews, TriWest will send a written notice to you and your ABA provider. If approved, the notice will authorize care for six months.

Step 8 – Complete Routine Outcome Measures

You will complete outcome measures every six months or yearly depending on the measure. If your ABA provider can't complete the outcome measures, then TriWest will help you find a provider who can.

Step 9 – ABA Provider Submits Timely Request for Reauthorization

To continue ABA services, your ABA provider will send in a request for reauthorization every six months. It will include an updated treatment plan and respective outcome measures. TriWest will complete a clinical necessity review within five business days of receipt. TriWest will send you and your ABA provider a written notice after the clinical necessity review is done.

Step 10 – Provider Submits New Referral

Every two years, a TRICARE-authorized ASD diagnosing provider must send a new referral and the DSM-5 Checklist for Autism Spectrum Disorder to TriWest.



Autism Care Demonstration

TRICARE's Autism Care Demonstration covers Applied Behavior Analysis services for TRICARE-eligible beneficiaries diagnosed with autism.

Your dependent must meet eligibility requirements to get ABA services in the ACD. These requirements are listed below.

- Enroll in an eligible TRICARE plan.
- Receive a definitive diagnosis of autism by a TRICARE-authorized ASD diagnosing provider.
- Complete a Validated Assessment Tool by a TRICARE-authorized ASD diagnosing provider.
- Complete a DSM-5 Checklist by a TRICARE-authorized ASD diagnosing provider.
- Register in the ECHO.*
- Enroll in the EFMP as required by their Service branch or applicable waiver.*

**Active duty service members and families only.*

Autism Care Demonstration Specialists

If you ask for help, an ACD specialists can assist you for up to 180 calendar days so that you meet eligibility requirements for the ACD. For more information, call the ACD Customer Service Line at 833-818-2525.

Cost Information

Deductibles, copayments, and cost-shares depend on the TRICARE plan type.

- Costs are based on specialty outpatient services under office visit rates.
- One copayment covers all ABA services on the same day.
- All ACD ABA services require pre-authorization.
- ABA services deductibles and copayments are separate from the ECHO cost-sharing.

Autism Care Demonstration Diagnostic Criteria

Diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder

Before your dependent can enroll in the ACD, they must have a definitive diagnosis of autism. The TRICARE Basic benefit covers this for you.

Your dependent's PCM or a TRICARE-authorized ASD diagnosing provider can make a diagnosis for you.

Your dependent's PCM may refer them to a specialty provider for additional evaluation or diagnosis.

Was your dependent first diagnosed with autism at age 8 or older and you are now seeking ABA services? A specialized ASD diagnosing provider must now complete the evaluation for you.

Has your dependent ever had ABA services? Was their autism diagnosis more than two years ago? If so, they will need a new evaluation that meets the requirements below.

Only a clinical psychologist can diagnose and refer adult beneficiaries who have aged out of a provider's pediatric scope of practice.

Definitive Diagnosis Requirements

TRICARE providers who diagnose for autism must submit the items below.

1. **ABA Referral:** A document indicating an autism diagnosis, including the date of initial diagnosis (month, day, and year).
2. **Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition, Text Revision (DSM-5-TR) Checklist for Autism Spectrum Disorder:** This checklist will show you how much support your

dependent needs. Only an approved provider can complete this form for you when you're enrolling in the ACD. They must complete the form every two years. ABA providers can't complete this form for you.

3. Results of a Validated Assessment

Tool: The ASD diagnosing provider must complete an approved Validated Assessment Tool. Additional documentation may be required by your provider.

Active Duty Families — Enroll in EFMP and Register in ECHO

To finish your enrollment in ACD after diagnosis, your sponsor must enroll in EFMP, and your dependent must register in ECHO.

EFMP enrollment for active duty service members: ADSMs must enroll in EFMP for their Service branch or obtain an applicable

waiver. To learn more about EFMP, visit MilitaryOne Source's EFMP and Me at <https://efmpandme.militaryonesource.mil/about-efmp-program>. To find the EFMP representative for your Service branch, visit <https://installations.militaryonesource.mil>.

ECHO registration for ADFM: ADFMs need to register in ECHO to take part in the ACD. ECHO is a supplemental program to the TRICARE Basic program. It provides eligible ADFMs an added financial resource for various services and supplies.

Provisional status may be granted for up to 90 calendar days while you finish the steps to get ECHO and ACD services. If you don't provide proof of EFMP enrollment within 90 calendar days, TriWest will disenroll you from ECHO and ACD on the 91st calendar day. You can learn more by going to the ECHO TRICARE website, <https://tricare.mil/Plans/SpecialPrograms/ECHO>.





Autism Services Navigators

What is an Autism Services Navigator?

Your Autism Services Navigator is your main contact for the ACD. All beneficiaries in the ACD will receive an Autism Services Navigator once they meet enrollment criteria.

Autism Services Navigators work with families in many areas, including:

- **Helping organize and support care.**
- **Exploring personalized services, and local resources.**
- **Creating a comprehensive care plan.**
- **Helping with transitioning of documents during a PCS or other move.**
- **Assisting with EFMP enrollment and ECHO registration.**

Autism Services Navigators act as health advocates — they do not review treatment plans for clinical necessity or decide TRICARE coverage for ACD benefits.

How is an Autism Services Navigator assigned?

Families will be called to discuss Autism Services Navigator services.

The Autism Services Navigator will reach out to you to talk about the details listed below.

- The role an Autism Services Navigator has with your family.
- What you can expect for care coordination, including Medical Team Conferences.
- Developing the Comprehensive Care Plan with you.
- ABA services.
- Other medical services (like speech, physical, or occupational therapy).
- ECHO services.
- Comprehensive Care Plan goals that fit your dependent's needs.

If you decline the Autism Services Navigator for any reason, you are no longer eligible for the ACD.

How does the Autism Services Navigator promote continuity of care if you move?

The Autism Services Navigator helps your family minimize gaps in your dependent's ABA services during a move.

For at least one month before and one month after moving to a different TRICARE (East and West) region, you will have two Autism Services Navigators. One will be for the old TRICARE region and the other for the new region. They will collaborate to facilitate a smooth transition. The Autism Services Navigator in the outgoing TRICARE region will send all ACD-related documents to the Autism Services Navigator in the gaining TRICARE region. The Autism Services Navigator in the new TRICARE region will work with you to make sure all the information is complete and that your dependent continues to meet ACD program requirements.

For families coming from or moving to overseas locations, TriWest will work with the overseas contractor to provide support for you.

Comprehensive Care Plans

You and your Autism Services Navigator will create a detailed plan, called a Comprehensive Care Plan, that meets your dependent's and family's needs.

What is a Comprehensive Care Plan?

The Comprehensive Care Plan identifies all care and services for your dependent. The Autism Services Navigator will inform your dependent's PCM when the plan is complete. They will also share the plan with your dependent's providers.

Who must complete a Comprehensive Care Plan?

You and your Autism Services Navigator will work together to complete the Comprehensive Care Plan.

Are a Comprehensive Care Plan and a treatment plan the same thing?

No. Comprehensive Care Plans are different from treatment plans. Treatment plans are created by the ABA provider.

When is a Comprehensive Care Plan due?

Within 90 calendar days of the Autism Services Navigator assignment, you will work with them to complete the initial Comprehensive Care Plan. Updates and reviews of the plan are then due every six months.

What happens if a Comprehensive Care Plan is not complete in time?

If your dependent has an active ABA authorization, ABA services will stop until the Comprehensive Care Plan is complete. If there's no active ABA authorization, your dependent can't receive ABA services until the plan is done. You and your Autism Services Navigator must update the plan every six months to continue ABA services.

Initial ABA Assessment Authorization

Once your dependent meets ACD enrollment criteria, TriWest will issue an authorization for an initial ABA assessment.

Provider Assignment

TriWest will assign the first available ABA provider who confirms they can provide an assessment within 28 calendar days of your authorization. They must also be able to start ABA services within 28 calendar days

of treatment authorization. In addition, the treatment must be within mileage and drive-time requirements. TriWest will ensure that the authorization assignment meets access to care standards.

Access to Care Standards

You do not have to use the ABA provider assigned by TriWest. You can choose any TRICARE-authorized ABA provider, but TriWest cannot guarantee you'll get access within 28 calendar days. TriWest can't guarantee access to care standards if you request a specific provider.

Outcome Measures

You must complete outcome measures before starting or continuing ABA services. If your ASD diagnosing provider or ABA provider can't complete the outcome measures, TriWest will help you find a provider who can.

Overview

ABA providers use the findings from outcome measures to support decision making for the treatment plan.

TRICARE requires the outcome measures below.

- Pervasive Developmental Disorder Behavior Inventory: Complete prior to ABA services and then again every six months.
- Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales, Third Edition (Vineland-3): Complete prior to ABA services and then again every year after.
- Social Responsiveness Scale (SRS-2): Complete prior to ABA services and then again every year after, depending on your dependent's age.

Additional outcome measures (not for ABA treatment planning) include those listed below.

- Parenting Stress Index, Fourth Edition Short Form (PSI-4-SF): You complete prior to starting ABA services and then again every six months, depending on your dependent's age.
- Stress Index for Parents of Adolescents: Complete prior to starting ABA services and then again every six months, depending on your dependent's age.

TriWest only gets the summary scores and does not see the questions or answer details.

If your dependent is new to the ACD, TriWest will accept outcome measures up to one year before starting ABA services.

You must complete outcome measures within 90 days of the due date for ongoing ABA services.

You must complete outcome measures, and TriWest needs to receive the score(s) before approval for ABA services.

ABA providers will submit the results of outcome measures to TriWest along with the treatment plan.

Initial Treatment Authorizations for ABA Services

Overview

After initial ABA assessment, your ABA provider will submit the treatment plan with a recommendation for ABA services. You must complete outcome measures before an initial treatment authorization will be issued for you. If your dependent has other health insurance, the referring provider must submit a request

for ABA services on your behalf to both TriWest and the other health insurance plan.

Clinical Necessity Reviews

Your ABA provider will submit the treatment plan to request ABA services. TriWest will complete reviews within five business days of receipt.

If more documents are needed, TriWest will notify your ABA provider in writing. If TriWest doesn't receive the information within 10 calendar days, we will cancel the request. Your ABA provider must resubmit the missing information. TriWest will inform you and your ABA provider in writing when ABA services are approved.

Subsequent Authorizations

Reassessment and Treatment Plan Update

To keep providing care, ABA providers must complete a reassessment and submit a new treatment plan every six months.

Outcomes Measures

You will complete outcome measures every six months or annually. Your Autism Services Navigator will assist you with this.

Parent/Caregiver Engagement

It is critical that you are involved in your dependent's treatment. Your ABA provider will document the parent training goals in the treatment plan. To make sure that ongoing ABA services continue, parent engagement is required.

Clinical Necessity Reviews

TriWest reviews treatment plan updates every six months. TriWest will complete reviews within five business days of receipt. TriWest

will notify your ABA provider, in writing, if more documents are needed. If TriWest doesn't receive the information within 10 calendar days, we will cancel the request. Your ABA provider must resubmit the missing information. TriWest will inform you and your ABA provider of the determination, in writing.

Discharge Planning

You and your ABA provider will work together to create a discharge plan. The discharge planning begins at the onset of ABA services. Discharge occurs when one or more of the situations listed below occurs.

- You are no longer eligible for TRICARE.
- Your dependent met the ABA goals and no longer needs ABA services.
- After several treatment authorizations, your dependent has shown no progress toward the goals, despite changes to the treatment plan.
- The improvements in ABA services do not last over time and carry over to other settings in the community.
- During clinical necessity review, ABA services are no longer appropriate for your dependent.
- Your dependent can't continue with ABA services due to medical issues, family problems, or other reasons that prevent their participation.
- A change in diagnosis takes place for your dependent and ABA services are no longer appropriate.

Two-Year Referral Cycle

An initial ABA referral is valid for two years. If your dependent requires ongoing ABA services, a new referral and DSM-5 Checklist is required to seek a new referral before the current referral expires. TriWest will accept a new referral and DSM-5 Checklist within

six months of the expiration of the existing referral.

Parent/Caregiver Training

Parents/caregivers will learn how to apply ABA techniques to support their children in everyday life.

Parents/caregivers will attend training with their ABA provider. The training will help you:

- Learn new skills.
- Talk about goals.
- Practice behavior strategies.
- Feel more confident in managing challenging behaviors.
- Implement ABA strategies outside of ABA.

Your dependent does not have to be there for these training sessions, but it's a good idea for them to attend. After the first six months, you can do the training virtually.

Requirements

The first parent/caregiver training session must be held within the first 30 calendar days after you've started ABA services. You must complete at least six sessions every six months. If you miss this requirement for two authorizations in a row, ABA services are at risk of being discontinued.

Receiving ABA Services in Different Settings

Home

Your residence may be an appropriate setting for ABA services. For dependents who participate in homeschooling, ABA services must be outside of homeschooling hours.

Autism Clinics/Centers

Your dependent may receive ABA services in an autism outpatient clinic or center.

Daycare (Non-Preschool)

It may be appropriate to receive ABA services at a daycare that is not preschool, if these services address the core symptoms of autism. ABA services can't provide support or aid during activities like lunch, group play, or arts and crafts.

School Settings

For your dependent to receive ABA services at school or preschool, you need to receive approval first. If services are clinically necessary for a public or private school, your dependent must have an up-to-date Individualized Education Program. ABA providers can't provide the same services that are already in the Individualized Education Program. In accordance with Individuals with Disabilities Act or other applicable laws, schools are required to provide services in the Individualized Education Program.

The ACD excludes academic or educational goals in any setting, including schools.

Other Settings

If your ABA provider recommends ABA services in any other setting, prior approval is required.

Questions

TriWest has a team ready to help you. Please call the ACD Customer Service Line at 833-818-2525 to get more information.

Notes:

Additional Resources

- [TRICARE West Findhelp.com](#)
- [TRICARE Autism Care Demonstration](#)
- [Health.mil Autism Care Demonstration](#)
- [Military OneSource Exceptional Family Member Program](#)
- [Department of Air Force \(includes United States Space Force\) Exceptional Family Member Program](#)
- [Department of Army Exceptional Family Member Program](#)
- [Department of Navy Exceptional Family Member Program](#)
- [Marine Corps Community Services Exceptional Family Member Program](#)
- [United States Coast Guard Special Needs Program](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act Individualized Education Program](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education \(504 Plans\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)

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