

The Four Domains of Behavior Analysis — At a Glance

Behavior analysis isn't just about what happens in the therapy room. It's a field grounded in philosophy, supported by science, applied in real life, and guided by professional standards.

This one-page reference outlines the four domains that define behavior analysis and how they work together to support ethical, effective, and evidence-based practice.

Domain	Purpose	Focus	Methods	Common Roles	Examples
Behaviorism	Serves as the philosophical foundation of the field	Understanding behavior as a product of environmental influence	Conceptual analysis, theory development	Theorists, educators	Radical behaviorism, mentalism debates
EAB (Experimental Analysis of Behavior)	Builds the scientific base of behavior through basic research	Identifying behavioral principles in controlled settings	Laboratory experiments, single-subject designs	Behavioral scientists, researchers	Schedules of reinforcement, stimulus control studies
ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis)	Applies principles to real-world, socially significant behavior	Behavior change that improves quality of life	Assessment, intervention, data collection	Behavior analysts, therapists	Teaching communication, reducing challenging behavior
Professional Practice	Ensures ethical and effective implementation of ABA	Service delivery, supervision, and collaboration	Supervision, decision-making, client advocacy	BCBAs, clinical directors	Parent training, treatment planning, informed consent

How These Domains Work Together

A Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) supervises a behavior technician as they implement a program designed to help a student build independent toileting skills.

The program was created using principles of behaviorism, such as reinforcement and stimulus control.

These principles were originally discovered and validated through experimental research (EAB).

The application of those principles to a real-life behavior is what makes it ABA.

The BCBA's role in overseeing the plan, ensuring ethical implementation, and collaborating with the family falls under Professional Practice. Each domain plays a unique role. Together, they define what it means to practice behavior analysis with integrity, effectiveness, and purpose.