AbaTools

BONUS GUIDE

Data Collection & Tracking System

A READY-TO-USE ABA MEASUREMENT SYSTEM

FOUNDATIONS

Why Data Drives Every Decision

In ABA, data is not paperwork, it is the evidence base. Every teaching change you make across the toolkit's VB-MAPP programs should be defended by numbers, not impressions.

Objective Progress

Numbers show real gains in mands, tacts and listener skills, free of bias.

Data-Based Decisions

Trends tell you when to advance, hold, or modify a target program.

Accountability & Funding

Clean graphs justify medical necessity and satisfy funder audits.

Early Problem Detection

Flat or falling data flags a stalled program before weeks are lost.

IF IT ISN'T MEASURED, IT ISN'T MANAGED.

MEASUREMENT

Core Measurement Types

Five dimensions capture almost any target in the toolkit. Select the one that matches the behavior you are teaching or reducing.

THE FIVE YOU WILL USE MOST

Frequency

Count or rate of a response, e.g. mands per hour.

Duration

How long a behavior lasts, start to stop.

Latency

Time from the SD to the first response.

Percent

Correct responses out of trials presented.

Trials

Trials to reach the mastery criterion.

KEY IDEA

Match the measure to the behavior. The dimension you pick must reflect what actually needs to change, whether that is how often, how long, or how accurate.

MEASUREMENT

Choose the Right Measure

WHEN
Decide before the first session, not after.

BEHAVIOR TYPE
Discrete, continuous, or free-operant?

GOAL
What dimension defines success here?

BEHAVIOR TO MEASURE MAP

1	**Discrete skill acquisition** Tacts, listener IDs, intraverbals scored right or wrong.	**USE** Percent correct
2	**Rate of manding** Spontaneous requests emitted across free-operant time.	**USE** Frequency / rate
3	**Tantrum length** Episode duration you are working to shorten.	**USE** Duration
4	**Compliance speed** Delay between an instruction and the child starting.	**USE** Latency
5	**Skill efficiency** How quickly a new target reaches mastery.	**USE** Trials-to-criterion

PROCEDURES

Discrete-Trial Data (DTT)

DTT gives you clean, trial-by-trial numbers for acquisition targets. Score consistently so the graph reflects learning, not recording drift.

1. **Take a cold probe first**
   Score the first, unprompted trial of each target before teaching.
2. **Score every trial as + or -**
   Mark independent correct as plus, incorrect or no response as minus.
3. **Code the prompt level**
   Note FP, PP, gestural, or independent so you can fade systematically.
4. **Calculate session percent**
   Independent correct divided by total trials, times one hundred.
5. **Note the conditions**
   Record therapist, setting, and any illness or schedule change.

OUTCOME

A rising percent-independent line across sessions is your clearest signal that the SD now controls the response without prompts.

ACQUISITION

Tracking Skill Acquisition

Acquisition is more than hitting a number once. Track mastery, then confirm the skill holds over time and transfers beyond the table.

MASTERY

Set the bar before you teach the target.

MAINTENANCE

Probe mastered targets on a thinning schedule.

GENERALIZATION

Check new people, settings, and materials.

MASTERY CRITERION EXAMPLE

80% or higher independent responding across 3 consecutive sessions, demonstrated with at least 2 different therapists, before the target is moved to maintenance.

GOOD TO KNOW

A skill mastered but never generalized is not functional. Build generalization probes into the plan from the start, not as an afterthought.

BEHAVIOR REDUCTION

ABC Data for Challenging Behavior

Before you reduce a behavior, understand what drives it. ABC recording captures the context around each episode so patterns emerge.

Antecedent

What happened right before, such as a demand, a denial, or a transition.

Behavior

The observable response in operational terms, no labels or guesses.

Consequence

What followed, such as escape, attention, or access to an item.

WHY IT MATTERS

Patterns across ABC entries reveal the likely function: escape, attention, tangible, or automatic. Function, not topography, drives the intervention.

TOOLS

Build Your Data Sheet

A good sheet makes correct recording almost automatic. Include every field below so any team member can run and score the program.

1. **Header block**
   Child, date, therapist, program, and session number.
2. **Target and SD**
   The specific target and the exact instruction to deliver.
3. **Operational response definition**
   Observable, measurable wording of what counts as correct.
4. **Prompt and score codes**
   A legend: I, G, PP, FP, plus and minus, defined on the sheet.
5. **Trial cells**
   Enough cells for the block, with room for a running total.
6. **Notes field**
   Space for setting events, refusals, and reinforcer changes.

TIP

Print the code legend directly on every sheet. It removes guesswork and keeps scoring consistent across your whole team.

ANALYSIS

Graph & Read Your Data

Plot every target and read the graph, not the raw sheet. Visual analysis rests on a few properties you can judge at a glance.

LEVEL

The average height of the data in a phase.

TREND

Direction and slope of the path over time.

VARIABILITY

How much points bounce around the trend.

ALSO CHECK OVERLAP

Compare overlap of data points between phases. Less overlap between baseline and intervention means a stronger, more convincing treatment effect.

GOOD TO KNOW

Always graph before your session note. A trend you can see is worth more than a percentage you have to reconstruct from memory.

DECISIONS

Decision Rules

Turn the trend into an action. Apply the same rules every time so program changes are predictable and defensible.

1

Advance the target

Mastery met, so move it to maintenance and add the next target.

SIGNAL
80% independent, 3 sessions, 2 therapists

2

Maintain the target

Data is rising steadily, so keep the procedure unchanged.

SIGNAL
Clear upward trend

3

Modify the program

Change one variable: prompt, reinforcer, or teaching procedure.

SIGNAL
3 flat or declining points

CHANGE ONE THING

When you modify, alter a single variable at a time. Change the procedure and the target together and the data can no longer tell you what worked.

PITFALLS

Common Data Mistakes

Most bad decisions trace back to bad data, not bad teaching. Keep your recording honest with these habits.

DO

- ✓ Define each behavior operationally before you record.
- ✓ Take data during the session, in real time.
- ✓ Graph every target at least once a week.
- ✓ Change one variable at a time when you adjust.

AVOID

- ✗ Relying on memory and reconstructing data later.
- ✗ Changing the procedure and target in one move.
- ✗ Only summarizing at month end for the report.
- ✗ Scoring prompted responses as independent correct.

BOTTOM LINE

Real-time, operationally defined data graphed weekly gives you decisions you can trust and defend at any review.

GET STARTED

Quick-Start Checklist

Launch the system this week. Work through these steps in order and you will be collecting decision-ready data by your next session.

- [ ] **Write operational definitions**
  Define each target and behavior in observable, measurable terms.
- [ ] **Pick a measure per target**
  Match frequency, duration, latency, or percent to each goal.
- [ ] **Build and print data sheets**
  Include headers, SDs, code legend, trial cells, and notes.
- [ ] **Set your mastery criteria**
  Decide the threshold before teaching, e.g. 80% over 3 sessions.
- [ ] **Set up a graph per target**
  Prepare one chart so data goes straight to the graph.
- [ ] **Schedule a weekly review**
  Book a fixed time to apply your decision rules to the trends.

MEASURE, GRAPH, DECIDE, REPEAT.