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## Making coverage for autism spectrum disorder *finally make sense*

### Now a covered benefit

If your employee has a child with autism spectrum disorder, they've likely faced some hurdles, like finding doctors or navigating plan coverage.

Here's a way to make their journey a little easier.

You can add applied behavior analysis as a *covered benefit* on your behavioral health plan. It's considered the most effective therapy for this condition. And there's just a small fee.

As a covered benefit, accessing treatment can be easier. And *earlier* — when it's most effective.



### Terms to know

#### Autism spectrum disorder

Three conditions fall under this umbrella — autism, Asperger syndrome and pervasive development disorder. They share a core set of symptoms, but differ in severity. That is, each child falls on a unique part of the "spectrum."

#### Applied behavior analysis

Simply put, it's applying behavioral principles to everyday situations to affect behavior. It can help improve good behaviors, like language, play or social skills. And downplay those like aggression or self-injury.

## Every child is unique

Many children with autism spectrum disorder share common traits, like repetitive behavior or having a tough time interacting socially. In others, it can show up as excellence in art, math or music.

More facts<sup>1</sup>:

- 1 in 68 children have autism spectrum disorder.
- It's 4 to 5 times more common in boys than girls.
- It's considered a life-long condition.
- It can be diagnosed as early as 18 months.

## The right support at the right time

Treating autism spectrum disorder is a long-term journey, filled with various tests and therapies. To help parents navigate the process, we connect them with a *single* point of contact — their autism advocate.

They can help:

- Promote early treatment, when it matters most
- Pair the child with the right provider
- Coordinate services, from physical therapy to counseling
- Keep costs in check
- Get the child's school involved and aware

## A seamless authorization process

After your employee schedules an appointment with a network provider, a few things happen:

- 1. Request:** We ask the provider to do a functional assessment and develop a targeted treatment plan.
- 2. Review:** We check this plan to make sure it's clinically appropriate.
- 3. Approve:** We authorize up to 25 hours a week for 6 months. (A medical director reviews requests for longer treatment.)
- 4. Follow-up:** We review treatment progress.

**The goal:** Treatment that changes behaviors. A shift from intense intervention to other support sources. Parent and caregiver training.

## Professionals who specialize in autism

Our network includes providers specially trained in applied behavior analysis. If your employees call us, we can connect them. Or they can visit their member website at [www.aetna.com](http://www.aetna.com).

Now your employees can focus on their child's health — instead of how to get care.

## Less guesswork, less legwork

With applied behavior analysis as a covered benefit, your employees can access treatment easier. And earlier, when it's most effective.

### In the past

Not all services were covered, or it wasn't clear what was. So employees would go back and forth with their benefits department to get coverage approved. A very timely process.

### Now

Their children are covered for various services — like speech, occupational and physical therapy — multiple times per week, over many years. Much of the runaround is gone.

**Support when it's needed most.** To learn more or opt in, speak with your Aetna representative.

<sup>1</sup>Autism Speaks. What Is Autism? Available at: [www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism](http://www.autismspeaks.org/what-autism). Accessed September 8, 2016.

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