



Florida Autism Center

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The Florida Autism Center Specialty Clinics

The Florida Autism Center Specialty Clinics, in collaboration UF Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment and the Behavior Analysis Research Clinic (BARC), will be a site for specialty applied behavior analytic (ABA) therapeutic services. These services are different from the community-based ABA clinics in that they will provide short-term intensive therapy. Short term generally means around 6 months (one insurance authorization period). In some cases, the clinical team may determine that the patient (your child, your adult, or you) might need to spend a little more time in the specialty clinics to ensure a smooth transition to the lesser restrictive level of service. The goal of the specialty clinics will be to provide high-hour therapy for a focused small number of goals such that the individual then can be integrated into, or back into, their community-based school, program, or early-intensive-behavioral intervention (EIBI) clinic, which are designed to provide comprehensive care.

Specialized early skill acquisition clinic

Our specialized early skill acquisition clinic uses a personalized approach to intervention for children to acquire the skills needed to integrate into a community-based school or early intensive behavioral intervention (EIBI) clinic. A focus will be on children who are newly diagnosed with autism or related neurodevelopmental disorders. This specialty clinic will focus on skills such as pre-requisite learning skills (such as imitation), communication skills, play skills, early social-interaction skills, potty training, and following instructions given by an adult (such as a teacher). Family guidance/caregiver training is an important emphasis.

Specialized behavioral assessment and treatment clinic

Our specialized behavioral assessment and treatment clinic is for individuals with behavior that is interfering with learning (e.g., aggression, self-injury, pica, disruption, property destruction) and is resistant to treatment or too resource-intensive for community-based services. The goal will be to evaluate and provide effective strategies that will allow the individual to integrate back into community-based services. Our outclinic program will serve individuals with behavior that can be treated with less intensive therapy hours such as a couple hours, once per week, or individuals who graduated from the intensive day-treatment program. Family guidance/caregiver training is an important emphasis.

Specialized behavioral pediatric feeding clinic

Our specialized feeding program provides treatment for individuals with feeding difficulties including selective or picky eating, tube or formula dependence, issues with self-feeding, or problem behavior surrounding mealtime. Our intensive day-treatment program consists of intensive daily therapy including feeding evaluations and treatment during snacks and meals, caregiver support and training, and coordination of care with other disciplines. Our outclinic program serves children with feeding difficulties who can benefit from less intensive therapy, such as one hour, once a week, with one discipline, or children who graduated from the intensive day-treatment program needing additional assistance. Family guidance/caregiver training is an important emphasis.

Specialized social, community, and life skills clinic:

Our specialized social, community, and life skills clinic uses a personalized approach to intervention for individuals interested in improving skills necessary to integrate into the community and social settings, as well as independent living skills for transition to adulthood. Generally, individuals enrolled will be school-aged

Frequently Asked Questions

Does my child need to be enrolled in a specialty clinic?

Usually the answer to this question is “No.” The providers will review the referrals for the specialty clinic and as a clinical team including the family, will determine the least restrictive and most appropriate setting for treatment. Sometimes that will be in the existing setting, sometimes it will be with a community-based provider, and sometimes it will be at the specialty clinics. The specialty clinics are meant to be intensive therapy for a small number of targeted goals including a high level of caregiver training. A provider may refer you for an assessment to determine the most appropriate setting and medical necessity for intensive treatment and at times that referral will not result in enrollment in the specialty clinic.

What does short-term mean?

Short term generally means around 3-6 months (one insurance authorization period). In some cases, the clinical team may determine that the patient (your child, your adult, or you) might need to spend a little more time in the specialty clinics to ensure a smooth transition to the lesser restrictive level of service. The provider will work with the clinical team and family to identify the appropriate level of services and the duration of those services.

Can I still get Speech, Occupational therapy, or Physical therapy at UF CAN if I am moving to a community-based ABA provider?

Yes. All of the providers at UF CAN Rehab and FAC Specialty Clinics will work together to help each family access the level of service that is needed for them. That combination of services might look different across each individual. Also, in some cases a family might be receiving ABA at the specialty clinics but be transitioning to a community-based Rehab provider.

Can I keep my non-UF SLP, OT or PT provider and still get ABA therapy at the FAC Specialty Clinic?

Yes, but we will encourage collaboration with the providers to ensure the best quality of therapeutic services.

What if my child (my adult or me) graduates from the FAC specialty clinics with a recommendation to go to a community-based provider, but they all have waitlists?

The providers at UF CAN, and FAC Specialty Clinics will begin working with you on day 1 of enrollment at the specialty clinics to plan out the next level and place of service. In some cases that may be school, home-based care, or sometimes another community-based ABA clinic. If there is a delay to the next level of service, the UF CAN clinical team will work with you and your family to identify what services can and should be provided during that time.

Helpful links:

UF Health Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment: <https://autism.psychiatry.ufl.edu/>

UF Behavior Analysis Research Clinic: <https://barc.psych.ufl.edu/>

UF Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD): <http://card.ufl.edu/>

What are the benefits of short-term, specialty services?

Short-term, specialty services provide clients with access to services that may not be available through their community provider. UF CAN has access to additional resources and personnel, such as experts from the University of Florida, that can address the acute needs for your child and eliminate barriers to community-based care.

What is the age range of clients?

The age range of clients will be from age of diagnosis through the lifespan.

Will my child participate in research studies or evaluations?

The FAC specialty clinic is a collaboration with the Behavior Analysis Research Clinic (BARC) and integrates research and practice to provide your child with evidence-based treatments. Your child might have the opportunity to participate in research, pending both appropriateness of fit with ongoing research protocols and your consent.

Will insurance cover these services?

Yes, services will be covered by insurance plans; however, not all insurance plans cover ABA services and coverage requires insurance approval. Prior to initiating services, we will ensure that your plan covers ABA and will communicate with you regarding your insurance's authorization of services. We encourage you to contact a representative at your insurance company and inquire about “behavioral health” to understand the benefits of your specific plan.

What insurance do you accept?

We accept all major insurance companies, including all Florida Medicaid plans, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Cigna, Aetna, United, among other payors. If your plan is not listed, please inquire and we will determine if we can accept your insurance. We are currently unable to accept Medicare and Med-Waiver.

Will these services cost me more than community-based services?

Client responsibility for services will depend on individual insurance plans and benefits. Cost of services will not differ from any other ABA providers. Please contact a representative at your insurance company to get more information about any costs you may incur. We will do our best at the time of onboarding to provide an estimate of patient responsibility, however, this may vary based on the number of service hours provided.