

OVA Gland Center
**GETTING STARTED WITH ABA
SERVICES**
All you need to know



To provide a brighter future to children with autism

Active since September 2004, granted « public utility » status since Jan 2009 for the Cantons of Geneva and Vaud

Introduction

«What really matters is not to live like others but to be amongst them »

Daniel Tammet*



** Author of "Born on a Blue Day", high functioning individual with autism*

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Objectif/Objective

We, the parents and members of this organisation, are driven by our desire to help our children with autism reach their potential. We shall do everything in our power to give them access to the most effective interventions and the most appropriate education for autism available, this is our **objective**.

Vaincre/Defeat

As there is no known cause for autism, there is no known cure. Yet scientists are optimistic that a breakthrough in fully comprehending the neurobiological causes of autism might be made in the next ten years. In the meantime, effective treatments do exist, and with them all children with autism can learn and move towards a brighter future. Experiencing these accomplishments brings a tremendous sense of joy and empowerment to the child and the family. What was first viewed as a tragic disability can be changed into an appreciation of what makes these children different, this is our idea behind the verb **to defeat**.

Autisme/Autism

Autism is a neurobiological disorder that disrupts the way the brain processes information. Children with autism cannot learn in the same way as normally developing children. Children with autism cannot interact in typical ways with people, events, and objects in the environment. Setting up an early intensive intervention will enable the child to acquire the communication and living skills necessary for a more independent and brighter future. This is why OVA was created.

Mission and Objectives

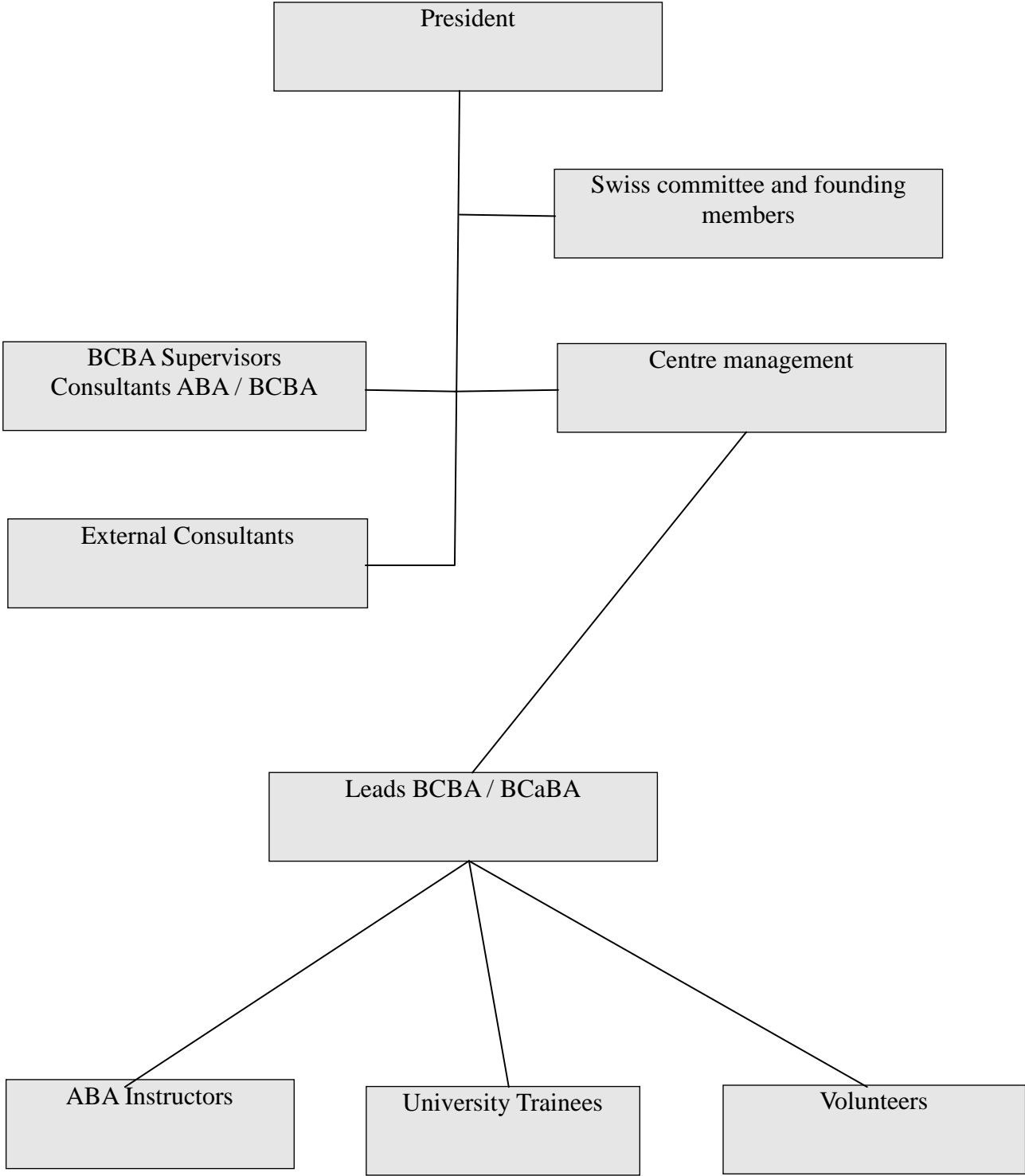
To provide a brighter outcome to children with autism by offering efficient ABA intervention

Our Objectives

- Maximize the potential of each child with autism by providing behavioral education programs based on scientifically validated ABA principles.
- Provide ABA intervention and individualized programs thanks to our dedicated and experienced professionals.
- Support families with children with autism in providing information and efficient intervention strategies.
- Training centre for families and professionals: we provide training to families as well as professionals and students
- Provision of financial support to lower-income families in order to have access to an ABA intervention program



OVA Team



What is Autism?

According to the DSM-IV-TR, Autism falls under the category of Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD). Pervasive Developmental Disorders are characterized by severe pervasive impairment in several areas of development: reciprocal social interaction skills, communication skills, or the presence of stereotyped behavior, interests, and activities.

According to the DSM-IV-TR, children with autism show difficulties in the 3 main following areas:

1. Social interactions :

- Difficulties with social non verbal behaviour (face expressions, visual contact etc.)
- Difficulties in relations with their peers
- Lack of spontaneity, sharing
- No sharing of emotions with others or social interaction

2. Communication :

- Delay or absence of language or communication
- Absence of communication and conversation with others
- Self stimulatory or repetitive language
- No social imitation play or pretend play

3. Restrictive, repetitive and self stimulatory behaviours :

- Limited interests
- Rituals
- Self stimulatory and repetitive movements

American Psychiatric Association. (2000). *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th edition, Text Revision (DSM-IV-TR)*. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Publishing.

Prevalence of Pervasive Developmental Disorders

Currently, there are no Swiss statistics available on Autism and PDD. However, Autisme Europe estimated that as of 2011, 1 in 100 children were diagnosed.

Getting Started

How to choose an intervention or therapy for your child with autism?

As far as autism is concerned, there is a wide range of interventions, treatments, approaches available (see below). But which of them are really efficient? Which of them are really scientifically based rather than subjective observations or appreciations?

A difficult choice

Once the diagnosis of autism has been made, the disorder will affect the child for the rest of his life. Parents are often confused and vulnerable, and often would like to believe in a « miracle treatment ». Additionally, the autism spectrum is very wide, children with autism being affected in different ways.

So if you are confronted with several suggestions for interventions or therapies, here are the right questions to ask :

- Is there research validating the suggested intervention?
- Contact other parents through local organizations
- Review all the options carefully in order to determine what intervention would have the greatest impact on the quality of life of my child.

The efficacy of a therapy

For children with autism, **quality** (efficacy) and **quantity** (intensity) are essential.

- **Efficacy** : shows observable and measurable progress
- **Intensity** : 25 to 40 hrs per week. The National Research Council recommends 25 hrs per week for 12 months per year.

It is highly recommended that parents turn to interventions based on scientific research.



Applied Behavior Analysis

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is a science. Its teaching procedures are used systematically in order to improve significantly social behaviors (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007). This is achieved by:

- Dividing complex tasks into several small and easy steps that enable a personalized and intensive teaching.
- Identifying reinforcers (rewards) **in order to create an enjoyable teaching environment** and in order to **motivate** the child **to learn**.
- **Individualize** and **adapt** teaching according to the learner, since each individual is unique.
- Increase success by **providing sufficient help to the learner** so that he is successful when accomplishing a difficult task.
- **Provide multiple opportunities to practice and learn** in order to facilitate the acquisition of skills.
- Regular data collection and evaluation is needed to measure progress and efficient teaching. Adjustments will be made accordingly if progress has not been made.
- **Parental involvement** is highly recommended for skills to be generalized and to increase the positive impact of these skills on both the child and the family.
- Emphasis on **decreasing inappropriate behaviours** and **increasing socially appropriate behaviours** and **alternative behaviours**.

Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2007). *Applied behavior analysis* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice-Hall.

Verbal Behavior (VB) applies the principles of ABA to communication. In 1957, Skinner demonstrated that teaching language could be taught, as a function of various environmental variables, exactly as any other behaviour, such as, for example « walking ». He specified different functional language units or verbal operants such as asking (mand), labelling (tact), and to have a conversation (intraverbal). For example, a child can say the word « ice cream » when he wants ice cream, because he sees a picture of ice cream in a book, or if a friend asks him for his favourite desert. This analysis of the different verbal operants provides a better understanding of language and can be used to set up individualized teaching programs for our learners.

Skinner, B. F. (1957). *Verbal behavior*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts.

OVA: Our ABA Centre

Our ABA centre, based in Gland covers the Geneva and Vaud Cantons. Our sister organization OVA France, also has another centre across the border in nearby France.

At our centre, we are accepting children with PDD from age 2 to 8 on a full time basis.

Monday to Friday, 9H – 16H

Snacks and lunch are provided by the parents.

Functioning of the center

- Intensive sessions: instructor to learner ratio of 1:1.
- Individualized: each learner has a personalized program
- Efficacy: the intervention at the centre is developed according to the principles of ABA.
- On-going training and supervision of our teams

Tuition:

- Full time= CHF 4'900/month equivalent to CHF 58'800/year. This amount includes the cost of all intervention-related aspects (ABA instructors and Leads, centre maintenance fees, clinical meetings, etc.) with the exception of consults with our supervisors.
- Please see the next page for more details on how to fund ABA therapy



Center Closures

- Official Cantonal Holiday
- 25 days per year, 2 consecutive weeks in the summer

Parental Involvement

- Obligatory participation to workshop on Applied Behavior Analysis (it is recommended to attend most of the workshops organized by OVA).
- Attend monthly parent meetings with your Lead.
- Continuity of intervention in home environment
- The family has an **essential role to play** in the process of **generalization**.

Intervention and Financial Support

Financial support

- « **Allocation impotente** » and « soins intensifs » is a subsidy from the Swiss state to families with a child with a disability. It can be used freely by the parents and can participate in the funding of an ABA intervention. The state categorizes disabilities into 3 different levels (mild, medium, substantial). Typically, parents with a child with autism are granted the degree « medium » or « substantial » and usually obtain a subsidy of 2'000 to 2'500 CHF monthly (paid retroactively every quarter).

The core of OVA's funds come from

- Private donations, charity events, fundraising activities from active members of the OVA committee.
- Volunteers helping during charity events or contributing to fundraising with their professional or personal skills.



Expenses covered by OVA from donations collected through its fundraising activities

- Half of the centre maintenance cost (educational tools, furniture etc ...)
- On going training of our local staff by external ABA experts.
- Funding of ABA diplomas (in France) as well as the training, supervision and exams for BCBA certification.

FAQs

When to start?

- The earlier the better
- Research shows that an early intervention can help make significant gains in communication, socialization, pre-academic skills and adaptive skills.
- In Switzerland, a formal diagnosis of autism, autism-related disorder or pervasive developmental is often delayed or provided much later (5 to 7 years)
- **Treatment can be started without a confirmed diagnosis**

Why OVA ?

- Ongoing supervision from Board Certified Behavior Analysts
- Ongoing training of our teams and the clinical directors of our centre.
- Intensive, consistent, and individualized teaching for our learners

I have decided to enroll my child at the OVA centre and start an ABA program , what should i do ?

- Contact the OVA centre in Gland : info@ovassociation.com and provide the following info:
- Your contact information
- Age, diagnosis (if available) and concerns
- The centre management will put you in contact with one of our Leads to set up an appointment
- This initial meeting will enable us to :
 - Meet your child and establish a preliminary evaluation of his skills.
 - Discuss your expectations.
 - Give you an overview of the functioning of the centre and our services.
 - Provide a tour of the centre facilities.
 - Enroll your child on our waiting list.

The fee for this initial meeting is CHF 220.-, however no payment is requested if the child is enrolled at our centre.

Contact Us

Association Objectif Vaincre l'Autisme

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1196 Gland

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(Our team is also fluent in English)

