

# ACT



## A Change in Trajectory



NARROWING THE DEVELOPMENTAL GAP

**1.855.227.1414**

[www.act-works.net](http://www.act-works.net)

# WELCOME TO A CHANGE IN TRAJECTORY!



**A CHANGE IN TRAJECTORY (ACT)** is a family-oriented agency that is committed to narrowing the gap between the developmental path of individuals with special needs and individuals with typical development. ACT provides services for infants, children, adolescents, and adults with autism and other related disorders. ACT is equipped with highly professional, courteous staff who are respectful of privacy and are dedicated to the individuals they serve. **THE OPERATING MODEL OF ACT PROMOTES PERSONAL GROWTH AND POSITIVE ENCOURAGEMENT FOR CONSUMERS, FAMILIES, AND TEAM MEMBERS.**

All therapeutic services provided by ACT are based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), the most scientifically-validated approach for changing behavior. The treatment modalities used by ACT are evidence-based practices that range from naturalistic teaching methodologies such as Pivotal Response Training (PRT) to more structured methods such as Discrete Trial Training (DTT) depending on the need of the individuals receiving therapy. Program development and implementation are data-driven to ensure the best outcome for the individuals we teach.

ACT utilizes a model of service delivery that is best described as the clinician-family partnership model. Parents are an integral part of the assessment and intervention from start to finish by helping establish goals of treatment, implementing behavioral procedures, and evaluating treatment outcomes. Parents have the best understanding of the unique strengths and deficits of their child with special needs. The child benefits greatly when parents and clinicians partner to create

a custom-tailored program comprised of a range of evidence-based behavior treatments. At ACT, we know that every family has a unique story and experiences which are treated with the utmost respect.

Behavior Analysis (ABA)



# MEET THE DIRECTOR



Mariela Feldman is a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), who specializes in the treatment of children with autism and related disorders. She has 15 years of experience in the field and holds a Master degree in Behavioral Psychology from the American Jewish University. Ms. Feldman oversees the provision of all services at ACT and is supported by highly-trained clinicians in the field.

*Mariela Feldman*



Ms. Feldman has appeared on the TV show, “Los Niños en su Casa,” (the Spanish version of “A Place of Our Own,”) as the Autism Expert on KCET. She has taught BCBA courses at National University in Los Angeles and has presented at conferences such as CalABA.

ACT strongly upholds the belief that individuals with special needs have a right to a high quality of life. All of ACT’s programming is carefully designed with the guiding principle that pursuing personal achievement and striving to fulfill ones potential is a natural right for all individuals.

## OUR MISSION

**We believe that equipping individuals who have special needs with skills necessary for independent functioning can foster personal development and facilitate living a full and dignified life. ACT is committed to this mission.**

## GUIDING RULES

- All individuals have the potential to develop skills beyond their current level and should be free of behaviors that cause injury or pain to themselves or others.
- Functional skills that will be meaningful in an individual's everyday life will be targeted in interventions. Goals selected for a curriculum are developmentally and socially significant.
- Treatments are based on evidenced-based literature to achieve positive outcomes.
- Reliable data is gathered on every targeted goal and will be analyzed in order to make informed decisions regarding type and direction of treatment.
- Effectiveness of treatment is closely monitored. The program is expanded or edited according to the actual progress being made.

## SERVICES PROVIDED BY ACT (some services are unique to specific locations)

- 16-Hour Parent Education Group
- Infant Development Assessment and Intervention
- Intensive Behavior Health/ABA Treatment and Assessment
- In-Home Parent Education Training
- Adaptive Skills Training Assessment and Intervention
- Social Skills Groups Assessment and Intervention
- Parent Seminars
- Behavior Respite Services
- Sibling Workshops

## MEDICAL INSURANCE

**ACT currently accepts families who have coverage through the following health insurances:**


- |                                    |                              |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| • IEHP (Inland Empire Health Plan) | • United Behavioral Health   |
| • Anthem / Blue Cross              | • Care 1st                   |
| • Blue Shield / Magellan           | • CompCare                   |
| • Aetna                            | • Kaiser                     |
| • CIGNA                            | • Tricare                    |
| • The Holman Group                 | • ASG (Autism Service Group) |
| • Health Net HMO                   | • Medi-cal                   |
| • L.A. Care                        | • Molina HealthCare          |



## 16-HOUR PARENT EDUCATION GROUPS

As a part of the clinician-parent partnership model of intervention, ACT offers a 16-hour Parent Education Group in ABA before any behavioral treatment takes place. ACT prepares parents for treatment by giving them the initial tools to make their participation and involvement with the ABA program more effective.

The training occurs at one of ACT's offices. During the 16-hour workshop, parents acquire knowledge about a broad variety of topics including:

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- The impact of having a child with autism or other special needs on parents and care providers and discussion of a variety of coping styles.
  - How autism and other neurological anomalies impact the trajectory of children's development.
  - The clinical definition of an intensive ABA program; which includes, discrete trial training (DTT) pivotal response training (PRT), and verbal behavior (VB) programs.
  - The applications of Discrete Trial Training, Pivotal Response Training, and Verbal Behavior programs.
  - Applied Behavior Analysis as the treatment of choice for narrowing the gap between typical and atypical development (findings of National Standard Project).
  - The principles of reinforcement.
  - The four functions of behavior.
  - Antecedent and consequence strategies of intervention.
  - Managing behaviors at home and in the community.
  - The importance of coordination of care across professionals working with the patients.

For schedule of classes, please visit [www.act-works.net](http://www.act-works.net)

## ASSESSMENT

The soundness of any intervention begins with a thorough and accurate assessment. ACT utilizes a variety of assessment tools depending on the age and the needs of each individual. The assessor creates a function-based behavioral intervention as well as developmentally appropriate treatment program based on this assessment. This results in an accurate road map to guide families through the child's intervention program.

## INFANT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Research clearly shows that early intervention achieves better outcomes for the vast majority of cases. ACT's infant development program is designed to achieve better outcomes as early as possible when the behavior differences between a typical and an atypical child are still modest. It is easier to close a narrower gap of development than a wider gap. ACT's infant development program provides a comprehensive, inclusive, and multi-modal approach to the assessment and

treatment of infants.

ACT collaborates with families to address the emotional and developmental considerations that an infant with special needs may face. ACT creates a positive and nurturing environment for infants to experience life-altering engagement with their families. Assessment and intervention strategies are provided by speech therapists, occupational therapists, and physical therapists and are implemented by our experienced early interventionists.



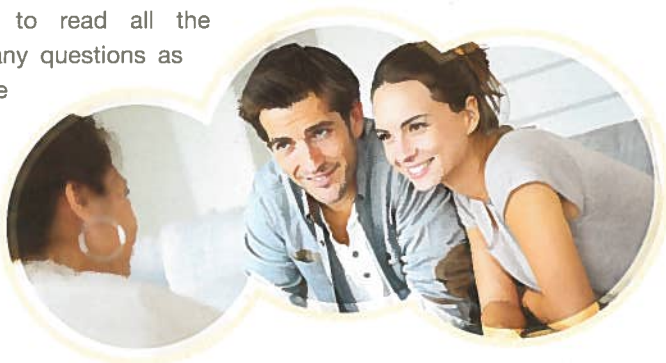
## INTENSIVE BEHAVIOR HEALTH/ABA TREATMENT

The goal of the Behavioral Assessment and Intervention Programs is to help individuals with autism and related disorders overcome their core deficits so that they may achieve more typical functioning and maximize their unique talents. Direct, 1:1 services are provided to our clients to achieve this goal. As the student masters his or her core skills (e.g. attention, imitation, compliance), more naturalistic ABA methodologies will replace tightly structured ones. Treatment viability depends on parental acceptance of treatment goals, participation in behavioral procedures, and commitment to the treatment outcome; therefore, parent involvement is as essential to the success of the treatment as the clinician's involvement. As the student's observational learning skills develop, ACT gradually shifts the direction of services from clinician-implemented to parent-implemented. This approach ensures that the outcome achieved and skills acquired will survive in the natural environment of the family and independent of formal services in the future. Some of our DTT/ABA clients are later referred to our Adaptive Skills Training or Social Skills Training Programs based on individual progress and need.

## IN-HOME PARENT TRAINING

Parents embark in a journey of knowledge and discovery. Together, parents and supervisors will analyze the child's behavior and discover the purpose that is serving. As a result together parents in partnership with the clinician will design a plan of action composed of ABA techniques to help the individual increase appropriate behaviors and eliminate inappropriate ones. This will require learning, patience, and consistency on behalf of the entire team. Parents will be given several handouts throughout the course of the parent training.

Parents are suggested to read all the materials and ask as many questions as necessary to ensure comprehension of the protocols received.



## Hablamos Español



## ADAPTIVE SKILLS TRAINING

The goal of the Adaptive Skills Program is to enhance functional skills such as personal hygiene, self help skills, communication, and community integration primarily to meet their IPP goals.

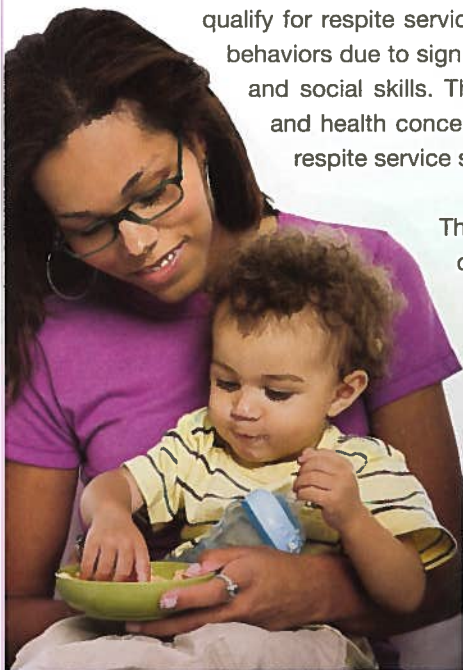
Socialization, play and leisure skills are also worked on in the context of developing functional skills. This service focuses on teaching the individual skills needed to function in every day life independently. Direct services will be provided to help individuals achieve these goals. Parent education will also be an integral part of the program.

## BEHAVIOR RESPITE SERVICES

The goals of the Behavior Respite Services is to support families who qualify for respite services and whose children exhibit challenging behaviors due to significant deficits in cognitive, communication, and social skills. The challenging behaviors may pose safety and health concerns that exceeds the ability of a traditional respite service staff to support the child and the family.

This program will allow parents who have children with developmental disabilities (i.e., Intellectual Disability, Autistic Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Seizure Disorder) to take temporary relief from the responsibilities of caring for their children, to provide families with staff who have been trained in managing children with challenging behaviors by interpreting and implementing behavior procedures designed and developed for the child by a behavior agency. Behavior respite services closely collaborates with behavior vendors to allow for

consistency of behavior management and accompany the child in his daily activities as planned by parents. Services take place at the individual's home.





## SOCIAL SKILLS GROUPS

Friendships enhance the quality of life for every person. Individuals with special needs, particularly individuals on the autism spectrum, often face barriers in creating and maintaining friendships, as well as understanding the complex social world around them. Social skills necessary for social relatedness and navigating appropriate relationships are an area of relative weakness for many individuals with autism and other related disorders. Therefore, teaching social skills is a cornerstone to successful integration of individuals with special needs in a typical social life.

ACT's Social Skills Group is designed to address the social skills of children, adolescents and adults in distinct ways that are consistent with the social tasks facing each group. Children learn to play appropriately with peers,



invite peers to play, ask to be included in activity of others; as well as perspective taking and coping with stressful situations appropriately. They learn to ask questions and respond congruently and without getting off topics. They will also practice social pragmatics such as understanding body language, following social cues, and maintaining adequate personal space. Individualized goals will be determined by the child's assessment.

Adolescent Social Skills Groups focus on developing strong, flexible social skills which are crucial to being socially accepted in this developmental stage. Topics covered may include: teaching good social manners, social awareness, and appropriate communication initiation, maintenance, and termination. Adolescent Social Skills training will also focus on social issues important to this age group such as developing friendship and maintaining healthy relationships with peers.

ADULT SOCIAL SKILLS GROUPS ADDRESS THE SOCIAL NEEDS OF ADULTS SUCH AS FRIENDSHIP, healthy relationship with partners, sex education, personal boundaries, as well as employment skills such as building relationships with co-workers, working collaboratively within a team, and communicating effectively with management.

## PARENT SEMINARS

Parent seminars will be offered periodically in order to provide parents with different topics of interest and to meet other families. Topic could include:

- IEP Survival Guide!
- Sibling Relationships
- Peer Playdates Facilitation
- Reducing Family Stress
- Managing Sleep Difficulties
- Eating Habits
- Occupational Therapist Guest speaker
- Speech and Language Pathologist Guest Speaker
- Autism Research and Implications



**Hablamos  
Español**

## SIBLING WORKSHOPS

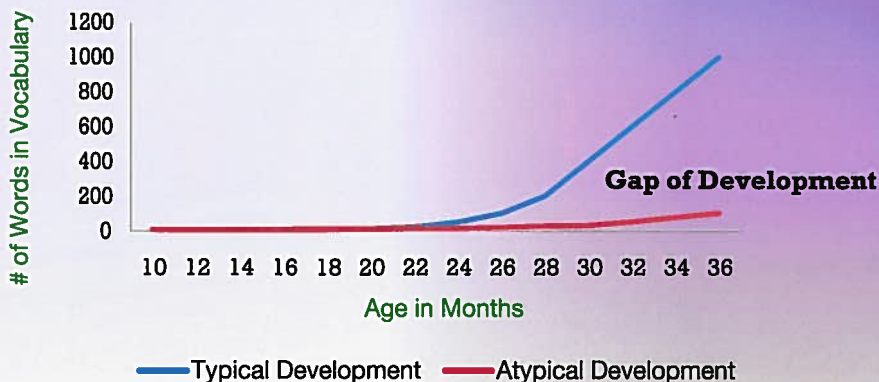
Siblings play a very important role in the life of children with special needs. ACT has created a space just for them!

During SibTime, children socialize with other siblings of children with special needs who are experiencing similar life experiences.

The groups offers peer support and education with a recreational context. The sibling workshops have a great impact for those who attend!



# Trajectory of Language Development



**Narrow This Gap NOW!**  
CALL US TODAY

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## **ACT San Gabriel Valley**

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## **ACT Central Valley**

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CALL TOLL FREE **1.855.227.1414**

Visalia

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

see full address inside

• Bakersfield

• Santa Maria

Palmdale

• Santa Barbara

Los Angeles

Van Nuys

Covina

Riverside

• Long Beach

• Palm Springs

**ACT**



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