



# **Client Handbook**

**January 2016**

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## **Mission**

The mission of the Brent Woodall Foundation is to empower parents of children with autism and developmental disabilities and to encourage their involvement in their children's therapy by providing educational training, customized academic and behavioral plans, psychological assessments, and modest financial support.

## **Philosophy**

While there is no cure for autism, there are many treatments available. The Brent Woodall Foundation (BWF) uses the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) to teach and improve the level of functioning in children with autism. Children with developmental disabilities often have serious deficits (i.e. none or limited expressive/receptive language, limited social skills, limited independent living skills, etc.) and ABA has been used to teach a variety of skills to overcome such deficits. In addition, ABA has been shown to successfully decrease behavioral excess (i.e. aggressive behaviors, tantrum behaviors, etc.) often demonstrated by children with autism. ABA uses rewards to engage children and teach them new skills. The therapy involves a breaking down of skills into small, discrete, and measurable tasks that are taught through a highly structured clinical method. ABA is the only intervention empirically proven to provide results. What makes our approach unique is not only are the programs clinically individualized to address each child's particular cognitive problems, social deficits, and behavioral issues, but they also take into consideration the roles various family members can play in the treatment of the child. All services provided by the Foundation are offered at little to no cost. Our programs show families how to connect with their children not only by educating them about autism and other developmental disabilities, but also by providing them with the technical training necessary to understand their children's treatment programs and how to carry these programs out at home.

## Registration & Scheduling Policy

The Brent Woodall Foundation provides therapy year round, within a three Cycle format.

- Spring Cycle- January - May
- Summer Cycle- June - August
- Fall Cycle- September - December

Parents must register for their child's therapy for each Cycle. When completing the registration form, parents will indicate their top 2 preferred session schedules. No schedule is guaranteed; therefore, it is required an alternate schedule be provided. Sessions are given out on a first come, first served basis. There is a waiting list for Saturday sessions, and these are not guaranteed. Once reviewed, parents will receive an email confirmation of their approved schedule. Please note, requested schedules are not guaranteed until they are confirmed in email by a director. Changes in the client's insurance authorization may require changes in schedule and those changes will be made accordingly. Registration forms are due December 1<sup>st</sup> for the Spring Cycle, May 1<sup>st</sup> for the Summer Cycle, and August 1<sup>st</sup> for the Fall Cycle. The Registration Fee of \$50 will be waived for all who turn in their registration form on or before the due date. Any forms turned in after the due date will incur the \$50 registration fee. Please turn the registration form in to the black money box located on the wall in the waiting room. Please do not turn them into any staff members. Any schedule changes that occur without 30 days' notice will incur the Registration Fee of \$50. All accounts must be up to date and paid in full before schedules will be confirmed.

Sessions are scheduled by the hour. We do not provide half-hour sessions. Sessions are available Monday-Friday from 8am-6pm and Saturday 9am-5pm.

## Center Hours

The Brent Woodall Foundation is open Monday-Friday from 8:00am-6:00pm and Saturday 9:00-5:00pm. Children must be escorted into the waiting room. Their therapist will pick them up in the waiting room at the time the therapy session is scheduled to begin and bring them back out to the parent when the session ends. Parents are responsible for their child while in the waiting room until the behavioral technician takes them for their session.

## Waiting Room Policy

The BWF waiting room is intended as a quiet place for parents and other family members to wait while their child attends therapy. Children under 14 should not be left in the waiting room unattended. Parents should monitor their children closely while in the waiting room. Please, no climbing on the furniture or playing with the blinds. There should be no food or beverages, with the exception of bottled water.

## Center Closings

The Brent Woodall Foundation is closed for the following days each year:

- |                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Memorial Day (Saturday and Monday) | Thanksgiving Holiday (Thursday-Saturday) |
| Independence Day                   | Winter Break (TBD)                       |
| Labor Day (Saturday and Monday)    | Staff Development Days (TBD)             |

Please visit our website for our complete calendar for specific closing dates.

# Cancellation Policy

Regular attendance is essential for each child's growth in therapy. A cancellation policy has been put in place to ensure smooth operations and keep costs as low as possible. Scheduled sessions are reserved especially for your child based on the Service Agreement. Therefore, that time cannot be used for another child and is time lost to the office. Children who miss more than 2 weeks of therapy, may lose their slot on the schedule. Please note, if a child does not use all of the therapy hours authorized by their insurance company, the insurance company will likely decrease the number of authorized hours in the next authorization period.

Sick Day Cancellations: Each child will receive 10 Sick Day Cancellations (regardless of makeup sessions) per calendar year. Notification of Excused Cancellations due to illness must be made by 8am the day of the absence. Notifications should be made via email to [tracy@woodallkids.org](mailto:tracy@woodallkids.org). If a child is sent home sick, this absence will be counted as a Sick Day Cancellation. Any cancellations for illnesses beyond the 10 allowed days will be considered an unexcused cancellation and the cost of the session will be charged to the parent.

Excused Absences: Children may take an Excused Absence with 30 days' notice. These can be used for vacations, doctors' appointments, and religious holidays. There will be no charge for these missed sessions. Notification of Excused Cancellations due to vacations must be made 30 days in advance.

Unexcused Cancellation: All cancelled sessions beyond the 10 Sick Day Cancellation sessions will be considered Unexcused Cancellations. If proper notice is not provided before a cancellation, it will be considered an Unexcused Cancellation. The client will be charged a Cancellation Fee in the amount of \$25 per hour missed. This fee cannot be billed to an insurance company or a grant organization. The Cancellation Fee cannot be used to pay for makeup sessions.

Make up sessions: Makeup sessions are provided as a courtesy to ensure children are able to receive the recommended therapy hours; however, they are not guaranteed. Makeup session will be provided upon request and based on schedule availability. **Makeup sessions must be requested by emailing [tracy@woodallkids.org](mailto:tracy@woodallkids.org) within 10 days of the missed session.**

# Sick Policy

Any child who is ill will not be admitted to the center unless approved in writing by a doctor. If a child becomes ill while at our office, parents will be called to pick him/her up immediately. ***Children must be fever, diarrhea, and vomit free for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication*** before returning to the office after being ill. Following serious or extended illnesses, the BWF may require a note from a doctor allowing the child to return to therapy. Children may not come to therapy if they have had any of the following within 24 hours:

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Chickenpox (Varicella) | Meningitis viral          |
| Common Cold            | Salmonellosis             |
| Fever                  | Shigellosis               |
| Gastroenteritis        | Streptococcal sore throat |
| Giardiasis             | Scarlet fever             |
| Influenza              | Undiagnosed rash          |
| Meningitis bacterial   |                           |

## Late Policy

Therapy sessions have a specified start and end time. It is important children be on time for their session or group. It is disruptive for children to arrive late and they miss out on their therapy time. There will be no proration or make-ups for late arrivals. Children who are more than 30 minutes late to their scheduled session will be allowed to begin their session upon arrival; however, the hour will not be billable to your insurance company. In this case, the parent will be charged the full amount of the session.

We cannot accommodate children left past their scheduled therapy sessions. If parents are late picking their child, parents will be charged one dollar (\$1) for every minute you are late. The charge will be added to the next invoice. Insurance companies and grant agencies cannot be billed for these charges and therefore the family will be financially responsible for the charges.

## Duplication of Services

In order to have a successful ABA program, it is important there are not competing programs in place. It can become confusing and impede a child's progress to have two ABA providers. The Brent Woodall Foundation does not allow for a duplication of services, meaning that if the child is receiving ABA from another therapist or therapeutic center, the Foundation will not provide ABA therapy.

## Health and Safety

Prior to starting services, families must submit a written statement from a licensed physician who has examined the child within the past year. Current immunization records for each child are required prior to starting services. The child's immunization record should include date of birth, number of doses and type, and dates the child received the immunization. Compliance with this policy is measured by one or more of the following for each child enrolled:

- A dated record that the child has been immunized against diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella.
- A dated statement from a licensed physician or other authorized health professional stating that immunizations have begun. The immunization cycle must be completed as is medically feasible.
- A certificate signed by a licensed physician stating that the required immunizations would be injurious to the child's health.
- A notarized statement, signed by the parent, stating that immunizations conflict with religious beliefs and practices.

## Medication and Supplement Policy

The staff at the BWF is not permitted to administer medications or supplements to any client. Parents may issue medications and/or supplements to their children, but the medication and/or supplements cannot remain with the BWF staff. Parents must keep medication and supplements with them at all times. Medications and supplements cannot be put into a child's food or drinks. Epi Pens and other emergency medication can be given with orders from a doctor. These medications must be kept in a locked medication box in the Director's office and a protocol for their use must be provided by a doctor.

## **Nut Free Environment**

The Brent Woodall Foundation is a nut-free zone. Clients cannot bring food that contains nuts of any kind. If items containing nuts are brought into the office, the BWF staff will be required to discard them immediately. For the safety of our children, we ask that anyone who has eaten or handled nut products prior to entering the BWF office to wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water.

## **Child Safety Policy**

In order to prevent any incidents due to a child's medical condition, it is mandatory for all clients to wear medical information tags at the BWF at all times. The information on the tag must include but is not limited to: child's name, diagnosis, medical conditions, food or drug allergies, and emergency contact number. Tags can be worn in the form of a medical bracelet or a necklace. Tags for tennis shoes are also available for children who resist any jewelry on their body. Parents may purchase the tags online or at a local store. All services will be withheld until the possession of the tag is confirmed.

## **Medical Forms**

A full medical history and list of current medications and supplements is required to be on file for each child. Please notify a Director of any changes in medications or supplements. In the unlikely event of a medical emergency, Directors depend upon up to date information.

## **Incidents and Emergencies**

Any time a client requires first aid for any reason, an incident report will be completed and a parent will be notified. In the unlikely event of a medical emergency, the BWF will notify parents after 911 has been called.

## **Disaster Plan**

In case of fire emergencies, all children will be escorted out of the building with their Behavioral Technician. Each child will have an emergency plan to ensure their safety should the occasion arise. Emergency contacts will be taken out and parents will be notified by phone as everyone waits in a safe location together.

In case of weather related emergencies, all children and any other people in the facility will be escorted to the innermost room. Weather will be tracked while staff maintains supervision. All emergency contacts for children will be notified by phone.

The BWF may close unexpectedly due to inclement weather or other emergencies in order to provide the safest environment for the children and families we serve. In the event of inclement weather, we will give information regarding closing on our outgoing voicemail. If parents are unsure if the BWF is open, they can call 972-756-9170 to get that information. The BWF staff will post closings with the major news stations. You should also check our Facebook page for up to the minute updates at [www.facebook.com/woodallkids](http://www.facebook.com/woodallkids).

## **Mandated Reporters**

All employees are mandated to report any suspicion of child maltreatment and must immediately notify their supervisor who will contact the appropriate authorities.

## **Background Checks**

As a precaution to our clients and to comply with all federal and state regulations, the BWF conducts background checks on all employees and contractors who work with our clients. Employment with the BWF is contingent on a clear background check.

## **Adult Code of Conduct**

Parents must use appropriate language at all times while at the BWF office. Using inappropriate language or a loud tone of voice is unacceptable. The BWF has a zero tolerance policy regarding threats or threatening behavior. This type of behavior could lead to immediate termination of services. The BWF does not allow parents to use any type of corporal punishment while on the BWF property, including the courtyard and adjacent parking lot. Smoking of any kind (including e-cigarettes) is prohibited in or around the BWF office. There is no standing or parking in the handicap parking zone without a handicap parking tag on the vehicle.

## **Technology Policy**

Children often times use technology (i.e. iPad, tablet, iTouch, portable DVD player) as reinforcement or as an augmentative communication system. Parents are responsible for labeling the device with their child's code. Devices should be charged and come with a charger. The BWF will not be responsible for damage to any devices. It is recommended all devices have shock proof cases to protect them if dropped. Please download all apps and videos to the device as it cannot be connected to the BWF Wi-Fi.

## **Service & Therapy Dogs**

Children who have registered Service Dogs are permitted to bring them with them for therapy. Parents of children with Service Dogs should contact Tracy Pierce Bender in order to discuss and create a Service Dog Protocol. The Brent Woodall Foundation is home to Raven, a Therapy dog. She is a miniature poodle, hypoallergenic, and very friendly. Raven is often times used as reinforcement for children and has been used within programming.

## **Communication Policy**

Email is our main point of contact with each family. Invoices and important notifications will be sent through email. It is also the most efficient way for parents to communicate with the BWF. All appointments, schedule changes, and meeting requests must be made to Tracy Pierce Bender via email at [tracy@woodallkids.org](mailto:tracy@woodallkids.org). Please make sure your email account will accept email from the following: [info@woodallkids.org](mailto:info@woodallkids.org), [development@woodallkids.org](mailto:development@woodallkids.org), [carley@woodallkids.org](mailto:carley@woodallkids.org), [tracy@woodallkids.org](mailto:tracy@woodallkids.org), [irina@woodallkids.org](mailto:irina@woodallkids.org), [bethany@woodallkids.org](mailto:bethany@woodallkids.org), [c.cole@woodallkids.org](mailto:c.cole@woodallkids.org) and [yurmea@woodallkids.org](mailto:yurmea@woodallkids.org).



## **Open Door Policy**

Observation of ABA therapy in the main therapy room is welcomed as a time for the parent to observe their child's progress and take notes on therapeutic procedures/programs. Parents are welcome to observe their child's entire session or observe only a part of the session. A waiting room is available when parents are no longer observing their child or they may leave and return to pick their child up when his/her session is finished. It is distracting to the other children learning to have siblings in the therapy room. Please, do not leave children of any age unattended in the waiting room. Parents should plan to make arrangements for siblings during observation. Cell phones must be put away and turned to silent while in the therapy room. Cameras or any form of recording device are not permitted in the therapy room. Any violation of the rules stated for observation will result in the parent not being permitted to observe again.

Please note that our open door policy remains as a time for parents to observe their child and take notes. Parents should not ask the Assistant Behavior Technicians working with the child questions during this time. Parents are welcome to ask questions directly to their child's Case Manager during their scheduled meetings or via email. Again, the door is always open for observation of your own child's programming, but if you would like to talk or read, please move to the waiting room we have provided for you.

In order to observe their child's session, parents must check in with the front desk and attain a Visitor's Pass. A Visitor's Pass will be granted based on the availability of space in the therapy room to be used for observation. The safety, privacy, and quality of service for each child are the top priority. If at any time a Director feels these are being compromised for any reason, parents may be asked to leave. Once granted a Visitor's Pass, the parent must stay with their child and the Behavioral Technician. Parents are not permitted to walk around the office or to observe or talk to other children.

Due to HIPPA regulations, observation of a child who is working with other children will only be granted with 2 weeks advance notice. The parents of the other children must be notified and permission granted.

## **Required Parent Involvement**

Parent involvement is essential to the success of each client. Parents will work with their BCBA to develop parent goals to be completed at home. Parents will have a binder with their goals. Data must be collected and submitted weekly to the Case Manager. These goals are developed and training will be provided during individual parent meetings and Group Parent Trainings.

All BWF parents are required to attend at least one (1) meeting per month with their child's Case Manager. Monthly parent meetings will be scheduled on a fixed day and time of the month (e.g. every second Tuesday at 4:00 or every last Monday at 10:00, etc.) during the child's scheduled session. This will give parents the opportunity to be informed of the programs their child is working on. Meetings with your child's BCBA will be scheduled as needed without the child present. In order to reschedule or cancel a regularly scheduled parent meeting, parents must provide notice 48 hours prior to the meeting. This meeting can only be rescheduled once a month.

In addition to individual parent meetings, parents are required to attend at least 3 hours of Group Parent Training per month. These Group Parent Trainings will be offered for free at the BWF office. The goal of these Group Parent Meetings is to facilitate the sharing of information, skills, experiences, and

resources intended to strengthen, improve, and enrich family life. The schedule for these meetings will be given out in advance and will be posted on our website and in the waiting room. If parents choose not to attend our Group Parent, they must bring a certificate of attendance from an outside conference or workshop to fulfill this requirement.

Failure meet the parent involvement policy may result in suspension of client services or changes in authorization from the insurance company.

## **Confidentiality of Information**

All employees must abide by all state and federal laws, rules, and regulations as well as the BWF's policy on respecting and keeping confidential information. Employees will not divulge any information concerning any client-family member to any unauthorized person.

## **Staff Interaction Policy**

When your child begins therapy at the BWF, they will be assigned a Case Manager. The Case Manager will be responsible for updating the programs, training Behavioral Technicians on issues specific to each child, and meeting with and updating parents on the program. If you have any questions, please direct them to your child's Case Manager, not the Behavior Technician.

Often times, parents wish to give gifts to our staff members. We ask that parents not give individual gifts. We are a team and each member of our team is important to the success of each and every client. While it is not necessary, if you wish to give a gift to our staff, we ask that it be something we can enjoy together as a team.

It is our policy that our staff does not communicate with clients outside of our office via social media. Additionally, they are not permitted to accept outside work (i.e. babysitting) as it can be a conflict of interest.

