

## **ABA Expansion Project**

In 2012, the Vermont Legislature passed a bill, Act 158, which requires private insurers and Medicaid to cover the cost of diagnosis and treatment, including ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis) services, for children up to age 21 with early childhood developmental disorders. There is a significant body of research that supports interventions based upon the principles of ABA as evidence-based practices, specifically for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders, but also for other developmental and behavioral disorders. ABA services are often provided by Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) and others with advanced training and experience behavior analysis. There are a limited number of professionals in the state with these credentials. In order for the state to meet its obligations for the provision of ABA services for children with Medicaid insurance, there is a need to expand the number of qualified professionals. The state has determined that it will utilize the agencies designated to provide developmental and mental health services for children as part of the Medicaid provider network for ABA services. Vermont Department of Health (VDH) and the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) had a State Implementation Grant for Improving Services for Children with ASD/DD. The federal funders authorized VDH/DAIL to use part of grant dollars to support the state's designated agencies (DA) to develop their capacity to provide ABA services to children with early childhood developmental disorders in their homes and communities.

DAIL contracted with the HowardCenter to provide support for 5 Designated Agencies to develop their ABA capacity. The intended outcome of this project is that designated agencies develop plans for expansion of ABA services and receive support and resources to begin implementing their plans. HowardCenter provided technical assistance to selected agencies to develop their plans to build ABA capacity. The agencies submitted written plans for developing their ABA capacity, including identifying the resources needed to implement the plan. HowardCenter and the state reviewed and approved plans, including providing approximately \$18,000 per agency. The funding is being used for training, mentoring, supervision hours for clinicians or scholarships for coursework. DAIL will receive a progress report in August from the agencies.