

# Consent & Assent in ABA

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*Ethical ABA should prioritize safety, dignity, autonomy, communication, and meaningful participation—not simply compliance.*

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## What is Consent?

Consent means a person knowingly agrees to participate in something. For parents/caregivers, this includes:

- Understanding what ABA services involve
- Knowing the goals, procedures, benefits, and potential risks
- Having opportunities to ask questions
- Being able to decline or withdraw permission
- Being involved in meaningful treatment decisions



## What is Assent?

Assent is the child's or learner's willingness to participate. Even when a child cannot provide legal consent, their signals of willingness or unwillingness should be taken seriously. Assent can be communicated through:

- Words or phrases, AAC, gestures or signs
- Moving toward or away
- Body language, facial expressions
- Engagement or disengagement
- Changes in behavior

Assent is more than saying "yes".