**Navigating the Path from the Diagnosis to the Treatment**

**Your To-Do List**

 *(Many of the steps described below should be undertaken simultaneously to save time, so intervention can start as soon as possible. Please note that this does not constitute legal/medical/other professional advice and is provided as information only. )*

1. Get the autism diagnosis. Without the proper diagnosis, your child can’t get help.
2. Once diagnosed with autism, search for your local FEAT (Families for Effective Autism Treatment) group who can provide locally relevant and detailed information on ABA. For families in the Los Angeles area, please visit [www.lafeat.org](http://www.lafeat.org) for a list of top-notch providers (ABA agencies, special education attorneys and doctors.)
3. Call several ABA agencies and begin the application process. Ask if they serve your area. Ask what type of health insurance they accept. Pick quality agencies by doing your homework; the intensity and quality of the service matter. Speaking to other parents and ask whether the agency provides research-based services. Many superior agencies have a long wait list so contact them right way to get on the list and go with the first available one.
4. Secure funding. Your child may be entitled to ABA services under state and federal laws. Contact your Regional Center, health insurance provider and local school district to start the eligibility process. For health insurance, ask the ABA agencies (see #3) what insurances they take, and what paperwork is needed. Your local public school is governed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (“IDEA”) which entitles every qualifying child to a “Free and Appropriate Public Education” (“FAPE”), and your job is to show to school that ABA is the appropriate education for your child. Your Regional Center is governed by the Lanterman Act which requires Regional Centers to provide persons with disabilities access to facilities and services best suited to them throughout their lifetime. They are the payor of the last resort which means you’d need to explore health insurance first. Regional Center will help with ABA only if you’re not successful with the insurance.
5. Get an independent evaluation by a professional (Ph D. or Psy D) who is familiar with autism and ABA treatment. **This is often the key in building your case for ABA intervention**. “Independent” means a person with no direct or financial ties to Regional Center/ local school district that are responsible for funding the ABA program. Again, talk to other parents or special education attorneys for referral and recommendation.
6. Read up on ABA to learn what intervention based on ABA entails – Learn so your child can benefit from round-the-clock learning. Also, read up on the legal rights you and your child are entitled to so you can be a better advocate.
7. Many families had to resort to special education attorneys to secure a high quality, intensive ABA program for their children-they attest that was expense well spent.

**Remember, everyone is nice. Effective advocacy means getting the right intervention for your child ASAP. There’s no do-over when it comes to intervention so move swiftly and choose wisely.**