

What Progress Monitoring Usually Looks Like

A plain-language look at data, graphs, and review meetings, plus questions you can ask.

In ABA, the team collects information during sessions to understand how a plan is working. This guide explains what that information usually is, how it is reviewed, and how you can be part of the conversation.

Why the team collects data

Data helps the BCBA see patterns over time instead of relying on memory or a single good or hard day. It supports decisions about whether to keep a plan as written, adjust it, or try a different approach.

What may be measured

What gets measured depends on each goal. Common examples include:

- How often something happens
- How long something lasts
- How much help, or prompting, a learner needs
- The share of opportunities in which a skill is used
- Whether a skill is still being used weeks later, or in a new place

How to read a progress graph

- The bottom of the graph usually shows dates or sessions.
- The side of the graph shows what is being measured.
- A vertical line often marks a point where something in the plan changed.
- The overall direction across many points tends to matter more than any single day.
- Ups and downs are common. Illness, sleep, schedule changes, and new environments can all affect a day's data.

Review meetings

The BCBA reviews data regularly and meets with caregivers to talk about how things are going. More formal reassessments happen at set intervals, often on a schedule required by the funding source. These meetings are a time to look at graphs together, share what you are seeing at home, and decide on next steps as a team.

Services, goals, and progress are individualized. Nothing on this page guarantees a specific result, timeline, or authorization.

Data is one source of information

Session data is important, but it is not the whole picture. The team also considers what caregivers observe, your child's comfort and willingness to participate, input from teachers or other providers you have chosen to involve, and changes in health or family life.

Rate of progress varies from learner to learner and over time. Data is one source of information, and no graph or review predicts a specific result.

Questions you can ask

- What is being measured for each goal?
- How often is the data reviewed, and by whom?
- Can I see the graphs, and can you walk me through them?
- What would lead the team to change the plan?
- How is what I see at home included in decisions?
- What does it mean when a goal is considered met, and how will the skill be maintained?

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