

LSA PROVISION

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Small Steps ABA Trained Learning Support Assistant (LSA) Provision

At Small Steps, we recognize the importance of high-quality learning support within mainstream education. Our provision supplies Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) who are trained in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and hold a proven certificate of completion. Certification through an internationally recognized board is not required. This training ensures that students receive individualized academic and behavioral support from professionals equipped with evidence-based strategies that extend beyond the role of a traditional LSA.

The Small Steps ABA-trained LSA works under the ongoing clinical oversight of a Behavior Analyst, ensuring that support is consistent, clinically informed, and aligned with the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Scope of Provision

- The Small Steps LSA is based in the mainstream classroom and supports the student throughout the school day.
- The LSA collaborates with classroom teachers, subject teachers, and the school's inclusion department to ensure alignment with academic and behavioral expectations.
- Pull-out sessions are only permitted if outlined in the student's IEP and approved by the school's Inclusion Department. These sessions must take place in school-provided settings such as the inclusion room, resource room, sensory room, etc.
- Support extends across all curriculum-related activities, including field trips, assemblies, and school events, as part of the student's mainstream program.
- The Small Steps LSA is contracted exclusively to support the identified student. They cannot provide direct support, intervention, or supervision to other students in the school beyond reasonable actions necessary to meet the IEP objectives of the contracted student. This ensures clarity of role, accountability, and focus on the child for whom the provision has been established.

Safeguarding

- All Small Steps Supervisors are GEMS Safeguarding Level 3 trained.
- A GEMS Safeguarding induction must be provided for non-hosting schools to the LSA, covering GEMS Level 1 Safeguarding requirements.
- Safeguarding and reporting structure:
 - LSAs report to the Small Steps Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead (DDSL).

- Supervisors report to the Small Steps Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Veronica Micalizio, Program Director.
- The school DSL, or DDSL overseeing Inclusion Department students, should directly contact the Small Steps DSL (Veronica Micalizio, Program Director) for any safeguarding concerns related to the student or the LSA at veronica@smallstepsbd.com.
- Small Steps follows a Safer Recruitment Policy, which includes:
 - Verification of identity and qualifications
 - Dubai Police Clearance
 - Reference checks with previous employers
 - Mandatory safeguarding and child protection training
- **Personal Hygiene of Student:** Students who require toileting assistance or intimate care support are not eligible for the Small Steps LSA provision. The LSA's role does not extend to personal care tasks. When the student uses the washroom, the LSA will remain outside the designated facility and will not intervene in toileting. In the event of an accident, the LSA will defer responsibility to the class teacher and follow the school's established policies and procedures for managing such situations. This approach ensures that intimate care is provided only by school staff trained and authorized to do so, while maintaining safeguarding boundaries.

Key Responsibilities of the ABA-Trained LSA

Individualized Support

- The LSA helps the student access learning by supporting them with classroom tasks and adapting instructions under the teacher's guidance, implementing IEP goals set by the school Inclusion Team and adapting classroom tasks to match the student's learning profile.
- The LSA applies behavior strategies designed by the supervising Behavior Analyst. These include prompting, reinforcement, and classroom management techniques that reduce barriers to learning and encourage positive participation and are designed for encouraging independence, peer interaction, and engagement with the school curriculum.

Behavioral Support

- Applying ABA-based strategies and interventions developed by the supervising Behavior Analyst.

- Supporting the reduction of barriers to learning through consistent use of behavioral management strategies. Teaching replacement behaviors and skills to promote classroom behaviors conducive to learning and social integration.
- Implementing Positive Behavior Support Plans (PBSPs) when developed for low- to moderate-level behavioral challenges.

Data Collection

- The LSA records a short daily summary of the student's progress in the Small Steps issued Communication Book, which is shared with parents and the supervisor at the end of each school day. The communication book serves as a daily link between the school, LSA, and parents. LSAs record progress on IEP targets, general participation, and behavioral notes. Teachers may add comments about classroom activities, achievements, or concerns. Parents are encouraged to note any relevant home updates to support continuity. Supervisors review the book weekly to ensure consistency, clarity, and follow-up on concerns.
- Collecting daily behavioral data on barriers to learning, uploaded into the data collection software for review and analysis. This data is reviewed regularly by the supervising Behavior Analyst to monitor progress and adjust strategies as needed.

Collaboration with Teaching Staff

- Maintaining daily communication with classroom and Inclusion staff is essential to ensure consistency. The teacher and LSA check in each day to align on the lessons, activities, and specific needs of the student. This collaboration ensures that the student's support is consistent and responsive to the school day's requirements.
- All support strategies provided by the LSA will align with the school's IEP framework. The teacher provides adapted classwork and assignments, while the LSA implements the behavior interventions and strategies required to improve classroom behavior, social skills, and academic performance. Together, they ensure that all support directly addresses the goals outlined in the student's IEP.

Supervision and Oversight

- The provision includes five (5) hours per month of direct supervision by the Behavior Analyst. All collaboration with parents and the school team falls within the allotted five supervision hours per month. These hours are distributed by the Behavior Analyst, in collaboration with the Parent and Inclusion team, based on clinical needs, and may include:
 - Classroom observations of the student.
 - Meetings with parents and school inclusion staff.

- Collaborative planning and IEP review.
- Preparation of updates and reports.
- Data review and analysis.
- Weekly check-ins between the LSA and supervisor provide ongoing feedback and direction. The Behavior Analyst holds a weekly check-in with the LSA to review student progress, clarify goals, provide corrective feedback, and address emerging challenges. These sessions also ensure consistency in data collection and implementation of the Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP).
- A Monthly Parent Update is prepared each month by the LSA and reviewed and approved by the supervising Behavior Analyst. This update provides an overview of the student's progress in key areas, including communication, social interaction, behavioral regulation, and general academic participation. It is designed to keep parents informed of the student's progress within the scope of the LSA provision, without replacing formal school reporting.
- A Termly Progress Report is prepared at the end of each academic term by the supervising Behavior Analyst. This report summarizes the support provided, interventions implemented, and progress made on identified behavioral barriers. The report is shared with the school Inclusion Team and parents, to ensure transparency and alignment of goals.
- On occasion, the Small Steps Program Director may visit the school to observe the provision in practice. These visits are carried out to ensure quality assurance and procedural integrity, supporting both the supervising Behavior Analyst and the LSA team in maintaining the highest standards of service delivery.

Half-Term Provision of Services

- Support is provided during regular school terms. *Services are not delivered during End-of-Term breaks, or public holidays.*
- Half-Term in-school sessions may be offered upon request within host schools where Small Steps already operates, to ensure compliance with safeguarding policies and child protection procedures. These sessions are arranged separately from the standard provision and are subject to the school's approval and the availability of Small Steps staff. Delivery within approved school settings ensures that all support continues to follow safeguarding policies, child protection procedures, and the operational standards of both the school and Small Steps. This approach maintains consistency for the student while upholding the highest standards of safety and care.

Training and Professional Development

- All LSAs provided by Small Steps complete ABA training with verified certificate of completion.

- Ongoing training is delivered throughout the year, including workshops and Teacher Professional Days, to ensure up-to-date practice in safeguarding and ABA methods.
- LSAs receive weekly feedback from supervisors and participate in continuous skill development.
- Supervisors undergo regular professional development to ensure consistency in oversight and alignment with best practice standards.

Service Exclusions

The following are *not included* in this provision:

- Developmental, psychological, diagnostic, or psychoeducational assessments. Referrals will be provided based on student needs.
- Pull-out to the Small Steps classroom for 1:1 Discrete Trial Training (DTT) or similar interventions which require significant frequency of exclusion from the mainstream classroom, clinic-based therapy sessions, or targeting objectives which exceed the scope of the student's IEP.
- Extracurricular or family-based services outside of the school environment.
- Sharing of daily videos, photos, or other media beyond the classroom and school provision.
- PBSPs for high-risk behaviors (self-injury, aggression, running/elopement, severe tantrums). These cases require a higher level of service and are ineligible for this LSA provision.
- Academic reporting and IEP goal setting, which remain the responsibility of the school.
- Daily parent-supervisor check-ins beyond the structured monthly updates. Parent meetings and updates are provided within the allotted monthly 5 hours of supervision.
- Home visits or make-up sessions if the student is absent from school (in such cases, LSAs report to Small Steps as directed).
- The Small Steps LSA is assigned only to the identified student and will not provide support to other students, except for reasonable actions directly related to the assigned student's IEP.

Service Limits

- The provision is designed to support students in mainstream school environments where educational and behavioral needs can be met by an ABA-trained LSA under Behavior Analyst supervision. If clinical observations indicate that the student requires a higher level of intervention due to safety risks or high-intensity behaviors, Small Steps reserves the right to recommend additional services or transition to a more intensive service model.

- If a student demonstrates self-injury, aggression, elopement, or high-intensity tantrums, this exceeds the service limits of this provision.
- In such cases, the supervising Behavior Analyst may recommend an increase in services, transition to a higher support model, or referral for additional interventions.
- Small Steps retains the right to discontinue LSA provision, with reasonable notice, if the student's needs present ongoing safety risks to themselves or others.
- For all other matters relating to the discontinuation of services, reference should be made to the terms and conditions outlined in the service contract.

Sickness Protocol

If the student is sick and will not attend school:

- Parents must notify the Supervisor as soon as possible. The Supervisor will inform the LSA promptly. The LSA will be required to report to Small Steps for assigned duties.
- If the student shows signs of illness within school hours, the LSA will defer to the class teacher, and follow the school illness policies and procedures.

If the LSA is sick and cannot report to work:

- The Supervisor will immediately notify the parent. Small Steps will arrange replacement staff from within Small Steps to ensure continuity of service for the required day/s.

Complaints and Compliments Policy

- At Small Steps, we value open communication and continuous improvement. We encourage parents, schools, and all stakeholders to share both concerns and positive feedback through the designated channels outlined in the *Small Steps Big Dreams Complaints and Compliments Policy* available at www.smallstepsbd.ae. Compliments and positive feedback help us celebrate successes and reinforce best practices, while complaints provide an important opportunity for reflection and growth.
- All complaints are taken seriously and will be addressed fairly, promptly, and in line with our safeguarding responsibilities. Concerns raised will follow a structured process, ensuring they are documented, investigated, and resolved in a manner that upholds the wellbeing of the student and maintains strong professional relationships with families and schools. Outcomes are communicated clearly, and where appropriate, actions are taken to strengthen future practice.

IT and Accessibility

In order to maintain accurate data collection and ensure that therapy and support remain aligned with the student's IEP, reliable IT access is essential.

- Wi-Fi access must be provided by the host school to allow for secure uploading of data and communication with supervisors.
- Each LSA is issued a Small Steps tablet, which is configured for access to the organization's approved data collection software. This ensures that all student data is handled securely and consistently, in line with our privacy and safeguarding policies.
- The LSA must also be provided with a school lanyard and access permissions that allow them to accompany the student across all areas required for their program, including classrooms, specialist learning spaces, and activity areas. This access is essential for maintaining consistency of support throughout the school day.

Additional Information

Small Steps recognizes that the wellbeing of our staff is also important for the delivery of effective support. To ensure smooth coordination:

- LSA breaks are scheduled in collaboration with the class teacher and class assistant, and always planned to minimize disruption to the student's program.
- The LSA remains flexible and responsive, prioritizing the student's safety and continuity of care while respecting the daily routines of the classroom.
- Any adjustments or concerns regarding scheduling are communicated promptly between the school staff and the Supervisor to ensure seamless support.

Summary of Provision

- Support: ABA-trained LSA present daily in the mainstream classroom, including school events and field trips.
- Supervision: Five hours per month of oversight by a supervising Behavior Analyst.
- IEP Alignment: Daily implementation of school IEP goals.
- Data Practices: Daily parent notes and behavioral data collection reviewed by the supervisor.
- Safety: Escalation to higher-level services if safety risks are identified.
- Continuity: Replacement LSAs provided during absences, with immediate communication to school and parents.
- Safeguarding: Services delivered within the safeguarding frameworks of the school and Small Steps.

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