

# PROVIDER ALERT



**To:** AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana Providers

**Date:** November 19, 2025

**Subject:** Healthcare Professional Guidelines for Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluations for ABA Services

**Summary:** Guidelines for Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluations for Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Services

AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana would like to inform you that the Healthcare Professional Guidelines for Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluations for ABA Services is located at the following link on our [website](#) under Clinical Resources:

<https://www.amerihealthcaritasla.com/content/dam/amerihealth-caritas/acla/pdf/provider/resources/forms/provider-healthcare-professional-guidelines-for-comprehensive-diagnostic-evaluations-for-aba-services.pdf.coredownload.inline.pdf>

**Reminder:** If your practice is not registered with our website portal, NaviNet, we highly recommend registering. To register, please visit [www.navinet.net](http://www.navinet.net) to sign up or contact your Provider Account Executive for details.

**Questions:**

Thank you for your continued support and commitment to our patients' care. If you have questions about this communication, please get in touch with AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana's Provider Services department at 1-888-922-0007 or your [Provider Network Management Account Executive](#).

**Missed an alert?**

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**Need to update your provider information?** Send full details to [network@amerihealthcaritasla.com](mailto:network@amerihealthcaritasla.com)



# Healthcare Professional Guidelines for Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluations for ABA Services

## Overview

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services for Medicaid members after they obtain a Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluation recommending such services. AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana will pay for ABA, even for members that get their physical health services through the legacy Medicaid program.

This document serves as a reference guide for healthcare professionals who perform Comprehensive Diagnostic Evaluations (CDEs) for Medicaid members enrolled in the AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana.

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## Who is eligible for Medicaid-covered ABA services?

The Louisiana Medicaid program covers ABA services for Medicaid members who:

1. Are under 21 years old.
2. Exhibit excesses and/or deficits of behaviors that significantly interfere with home or community activities. Examples include, but are not limited to: aggression, self-injury, elopement, impaired development in the areas of communication and/or social interaction, etc.
3. Have a diagnosis after a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation (CDE) by a qualified health care professional for autism spectrum disorder or any other condition for which ABA services are recognized as therapeutically necessary.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Unlike many private health plans, the Louisiana Medicaid program does NOT require that the eligible member be diagnosed with autism or ASD to receive Medicaid-covered ABA services.

## Comprehensive diagnostic evaluations (CDEs) requirements

1. The healthcare professional must be in-network with AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana to bill AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana for performing the CDE, or obtain a single case agreement with the MCO.
2. The healthcare professional will prescribe and/or recommend ABA services through the CDE.
3. See the end of this document for types of healthcare professionals that may perform CDEs.
4. After the healthcare professional completes the CDE, the member gives it to an ABA provider that the member selected. The ABA provider submits the CDE to AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana to request prior authorization.

**The CDE is a report from a healthcare professional detailing, at a minimum:**

1. A thorough clinical history with the member's informed parent/caregiver, inclusive of developmental and psychological history.
2. Direct observation (including virtual) of the member, including, but not limited to, assessment of current functioning in social and communicative behaviors, and play or peer interactive behaviors.
3. A review of available records.
4. A valid *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5* (DSM-5), or current edition, diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder or any other condition for which ABA services are recognized as therapeutically appropriate.
5. Justification/rationale for referral or non-referral of the member for ABA services.
6. Recommendations for any other treatment.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Unlike many private health plans, the Louisiana Medicaid program does **NOT** require specific assessments (such as the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule or the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales) to be conducted for an eligible member to receive Medicaid-covered ABA services.

### **Need for additional assessments**

If the results of the initial screening by the health care professional are inconclusive, or if there is a lack of clarity about the beneficiary's primary diagnosis, comorbid conditions, or the medical necessity of ABA services or other recommended treatment, care, or services, the health care professional may need to perform:

- Autism-specific assessments
- Assessments of general psychopathology
- Cognitive/developmental assessments
- Assessments of adaptive behavior

### **Prior authorization for additional assessments**

AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana does not require prior approval for services that may be part of performing a CDE using the following HCPC codes:

90791	96127	96133	99203	99342
90792	96130	96136	99204	99344
96116	96131	96137	99205	99345
96121	96132	99202	99341	

The type of provider who may bill under each code is listed below.

## Qualified health care professional (QHCP)

Pediatricians using the Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers, Revised with Follow-up (MCHAT-R/F), and clinical judgment may diagnosis and complete a CDE.

- For children who receive a high-risk score of  $\geq$  eight on the MCHAT-R/F, pediatricians can independently make a diagnosis of autism (if their clinical judgment concurs with this score).
- For children who receive a moderate risk score of three to seven on the MCHAT-R/F, pediatricians can complete the MCHAT-R/F follow-up interview, and based on their confidence in their clinical judgment, either independently make a diagnosis of autism or refer to a subspecialist listed below for a diagnostic evaluation:
  - a. Pediatric Neurologist
  - b. Developmental pediatrician
  - c. Psychologist
  - d. Psychiatrist
  - e. Pediatrician under a joint working agreement with an interdisciplinary team (IDT) of providers who are qualified to diagnose developmental disabilities
  - f. Nurse practitioner (NP) practicing under the supervision of a pediatric neurologist developmental pediatrician, psychologist, or psychiatrist; or
  - g. Licensed individual, including speech and language pathologist, licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), or licensed professional counselor (LPC), who meets the requirements of and qualify as a QHCP when:
    - i. Individual's scope of practice includes a differential diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and comorbid disorders for the age and/or cognitive level of the beneficiary;
    - ii. Individual has at least two years of experience providing such diagnostic assessments and treatments or is being supervised by someone who is listed as a QHCP under 1-5 above; and
    - iii. If the licensed individual is working under the supervision of a QHCP, the QHCP must sign off on the CDE as having reviewed the document and being in agreement with the diagnosis and recommendation.

For additional provider requirements regarding CDE, please refer to the Louisiana Medicaid [Applied Behavior Analysis Manual](#) for additional provider requirements.

## Prior authorization

Prior approval is required for services for members whose conditions are not readily apparent to a trained professional. Please refer to the Coding and Billing section (pages 4-6) to review the codes requiring and not requiring authorization.

The healthcare professional must provide explanation to AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana why any additional assessments billed under these latter codes are medically necessary.

## Billing for a multidisciplinary team

Billing codes will depend on the types of professionals on the team. The codes that each type of professional may use for the CDE and the additional assessments are listed below. Please refer to the Coding and Billing section (pages 4-6) to review the appropriate billing codes by provider type.

## Claims

Claims are processed through AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana.

### Electronic Claims

- Option 1 –Optum/Change Healthcare's Provider Support Line, available via online chat or by calling 1-800- 527-8133, option 2, Monday - Friday, 7am to 5:30pm CST.
- Option 2 - Availity Client Services at 1-800-AVAILITY (282-4548). Assistance is available Monday through Friday from 7 AM to 7 PM CST.

### Hard Copy Claims

Paper claims submitted via U.S. Postal Service should be mailed to:

AmeriHealth Caritas Louisiana  
P.O. Box 7322  
London, KY 40742

## Coding and Billing Guide

Provider Types	Code	Prior Authorization	Reimbursement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pediatrician</li><li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li><li>• Developmental pediatrician</li><li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li><li>• Speech and language pathologist</li><li>• Psychiatrist</li><li>• APRN</li><li>• Medical Psychologist</li><li>• Psychologist</li><li>• Licensed clinical social worker (LCSW)</li><li>• Licensed professional counselor (LPC), LPC</li><li>• LMFT</li></ul>	90791 – Psychiatric Diagnostic Evaluation	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pediatrician</li><li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li><li>• Developmental pediatrician</li><li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li><li>• Speech and language pathologist</li><li>• Psychiatrist</li><li>• APRN</li><li>• Medical Psychologist</li></ul>	90792 – Psychiatric Diagnostic Evaluation With Medical Services	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate

Provider Types	Code	Prior Authorization	Reimbursement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pediatrician</li> <li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>• Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>• Speech and language pathologist</li> <li>• Psychiatrist</li> </ul>	96116 – Neurobehavioral Status Examination, First Hour	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pediatrician</li> <li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>• Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>• Speech and language pathologist</li> <li>• Psychiatrist</li> </ul>	96121 - Neurobehavioral Status Examination, Each Additional Hour	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pediatrician</li> <li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>• Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>• Speech and language pathologist</li> </ul>	96127 – Brief Emotional/Behavioral Assessment	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychiatrist</li> <li>• Medical Psychologist</li> <li>• Psychologist</li> </ul>	96130 – Psychological Testing Evaluation Services by Physician/QHP, First Hour	Yes	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychiatrist</li> <li>• Medical Psychologist</li> <li>• Psychologist</li> </ul>	96131 - Psychological Testing Evaluation Services by Physician/QHP, Each Additional Hour	Yes	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pediatrician</li> <li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>• Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>• Speech and language pathologist</li> <li>• Psychiatrist</li> <li>• Medical Psychologist</li> <li>• Psychologist</li> </ul>	96132 - Neuropsychological Testing Evaluation Services by Physician/QHP, First Hour	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pediatrician</li> <li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>• Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>• Speech and language pathologist</li> <li>• Psychiatrist</li> <li>• Medical Psychologist</li> <li>• Psychologist</li> </ul>	96133 - Neuropsychological Testing Evaluation Services by Physician/QHP, Each Additional Hour	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate

Provider Types	Code	Prior Authorization	Reimbursement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychiatrist</li> <li>• Medical Psychologist</li> <li>• Psychologist</li> </ul>	96136 – Psychological or Neuropsych Test Admin/Scoring by Physician/QHP, 2 or More Tests, Each Additional 30 Minutes	Yes	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychiatrist</li> <li>• Medical Psychologist</li> <li>• Psychologist</li> </ul>	96137 - Psychological or Neuropsych Test Admin/Scoring by Physician/QHP, 2 or More Tests, First 30 Minutes	Yes	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pediatrician</li> <li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>• Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>• Speech and language pathologist</li> </ul>	99202 –New Patient Office or Other Outpatient	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pediatrician</li> <li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>• Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>• Speech and language pathologist</li> </ul>	99203 - New Patient Office or Other Outpatient	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pediatrician</li> <li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>• Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>• Speech and language pathologist</li> </ul>	99204 - New Patient Office or Other Outpatient	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pediatrician</li> <li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>• Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>• Speech and language pathologist</li> </ul>	99205 - New Patient Office or Other Outpatient	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pediatrician</li> <li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>• Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>• Speech and language pathologist</li> </ul>	99341 – New Patient Home Visit, Typically 15 Mins	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pediatrician</li> <li>• Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>• Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>• Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>• Speech and language pathologist</li> </ul>	99342 - New Patient Home Visit, Typically 30 Mins	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate

Provider Types	Code	Prior Authorization	Reimbursement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pediatrician</li> <li>Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>Speech and language pathologist</li> </ul>	99344 - New Patient Home Visit, Typically 60 Mins	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pediatrician</li> <li>Pediatric Neurologist</li> <li>Developmental pediatrician</li> <li>Nurse practitioner (NP)</li> <li>Speech and language pathologist</li> </ul>	99345 - New Patient Home Visit, Typically 75 Mins	No	100% published Louisiana Medicaid fee schedule or contracted rate

## Questions?

If you have further questions, including questions about rates or need assistance regarding a CDE, contact us at 1-888-922-0007.

## Which healthcare professionals may complete a CDE?

Pediatricians using the MCHAT-R/F and clinical judgment may diagnose and complete a CDE. For children who receive a high-risk score of  $\geq 8$  on the MCHATR/F, pediatricians can independently make a diagnosis of autism (if their clinical judgment concurs with this score).

For children who receive a moderate risk score of 3 to 7 on the MCHAT-R/F, pediatricians can complete the MCHAT-R/F follow-up interview, and based on their confidence in their clinical judgment, either independently make a diagnosis of autism or refer to a subspecialist for a diagnostic evaluation:

- Pediatric neurologist.
- Developmental pediatrician.
- Psychologist (including a medical psychologist).
- Psychiatrist (particularly pediatric and child psychiatrist).
- A pediatrician under a joint working agreement with an interdisciplinary team of providers who are qualified to diagnose developmental disabilities.
- A nurse practitioner practicing under the supervision of a pediatric neurologist developmental pediatrician, psychologist or psychiatrist.
- Licensed individual, including speech and language pathologist, licensed clinical social worker, or licensed professional counselor, when:
  - The individual's scope of practice includes a differential diagnosis of ASD and comorbid disorders for the age and/or cognitive level of the member.
  - The individual has at least two years of experience providing such diagnostic assessments for ASD and comorbid disorders and treatments or is being supervised by a pediatric neurologist, developmental pediatrician, psychologist (including medical psychologist) or psychiatrist.