

WOW Factor

Welcome to a New Year of Possibilities



Happy 2026! We're excited to partner with you for a year full of growth, new milestones, and joyful moments. Get ready for sensory-friendly events and community activities designed for your whole family. Together, let's make this a year of progress, connection, and shared success!

Check out some highlights from January.



Check out our latest blogs offering emotional support and guidance, educational tools, and inspiring reflections.



[15 Years of Quality: A Reflection on Our Journey](#)



[Empowering Families: A New Approach to Autism Intervention](#)



[A Family's Guide to the Five Stages After an Autism Diagnosis](#)

February Upcoming Events

February 5th
Road to Possibilities -
Greenville, SC

February 9th
2026 Early Childhood Educators
Conference - Matthews, NC

February 12th
Agency 101 - Camarillo, CA

February 17th
Sensory Friendly Night x Main St
Children's Museum - Rock Hill, SC

February 20th
Sensory Night x EdVenture -
Columbia, SC
Autism Social & Mental Health
Conference - San Diego, CA

February 24th
Sensory Friendly Tuesday
Evening x St. George Children's
Museum - St. George, UT

February 9th
2026 Early Childhood Educators
Conference - Matthews, NC

February 27th
2026 Cumberland Pediatric
Foundation Annual Meeting -
Nashville, TN

February 28th
2026 SCAECE Annual
Conference - Columbia, SC

Check out the [Community Events](#) page on our website for upcoming events!



Utah Grizzlies Sensory Friendly Hockey Game - West Valley City, UT

Tips From Our Team!

Create Predictable Routines

Establish consistent daily schedules to help children feel secure, especially during transitions or new activities.

Encourage Movement Breaks

Incorporate short, fun physical activities to help children release energy and stay regulated throughout the day.

Use Positive Reinforcement

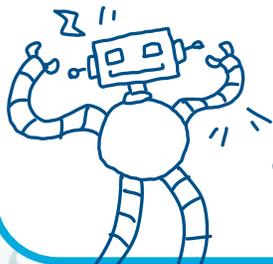
Celebrate progress with praise or rewards, reinforcing behaviors like trying new foods or engaging in social interactions.

Foster Independence

Support children in practicing self-help skills, like dressing or organizing their belongings, to build confidence and autonomy.

Communicate Openly

Work closely with families to understand their goals and challenges, ensuring a collaborative approach to their child's growth.



DIY Noise Maker

Materials:

- Empty plastic bottle (e.g., water or soda bottle)
- Beads, rice, or pasta (for the noise)
- Stickers, markers, or washi tape (for decoration)
- Funnel (optional, for easy filling)
- Glue or tape (to secure the lid)

Steps:

1. **Prepare the Bottle:** Clean and dry an empty plastic bottle.
2. **Add the Noise Material:** Use a funnel to fill the bottle halfway with beads, rice, or pasta.
3. **Seal the Bottle:** Secure the lid tightly. For extra safety, use glue or tape to keep it closed.
4. **Decorate:** Let your child decorate the bottle with stickers, markers, or colorful tape.
5. **Shake and Celebrate:** Test out your noise maker.



Hear from One of Our BCBA's

Meet Daniel Howell, BCBA at ABS Kids Saint George Center in Utah. Driven by a passion for data, creativity, and ethical care, Daniel has become a valued member of our team and a trusted support for families and staff alike.

A Journey to Becoming a BCBA

Daniel's introduction to ABA began during his undergraduate studies at Utah State University, where he was drawn to the field's data-driven foundation and focus on early intervention. After discovering the power of individualized care, he went on to earn his master's degree at Arizona State University and began his career at ABS Kids as an RBT. The experience he gained through the Behavior Analyst in Training (BAT) program was, in his words, **"formative,"** providing mentorship, hands-on learning, and a strong foundation for becoming a BCBA.

Why ABS Kids?

For Daniel, ethics and impact are at the heart of his work. He chose ABS Kids because of its supportive, team-oriented culture and commitment to doing things the right way. He's seen ABS Kids grow from a handful of in-home services to a network of thriving centers and credits the organization's focus on ethical practices for his continued dedication.

WOW Moments

Daniel describes being a BCBA as both a challenge and a joy; no two days or children are ever the same. One standout moment was helping a student successfully return to school after a period of difficulty, a milestone celebrated by family and teachers alike. Daniel is quick to spotlight the efforts of RBTs, saying, "They're really the ones making the change." He thrives on the creativity and teamwork needed to craft individualized plans that help each child succeed.

Supporting Families Through ABA

Understanding that some families come in with questions or worries about ABA therapy, Daniel's approach is shaped by honesty and active listening. He acknowledges the field's complex history but points to its evolution and the positive, reinforcement-based strategies now at the center of ABA at ABS Kids. By building trust, embracing transparency, and relying on compassion, Daniel ensures that every family feels heard and every child receives care designed just for them.

Daniel's commitment to individualized support, ethical practice, and positive change makes us proud to have him as part of the ABS Kids team!



Hear From Our Psychologist

Meet Dr. Marisa Caponi, Licensed Psychologist at ABS Kids in Charlotte, North Carolina. With a keen eye for detail and a heart for helping families, Marisa guides parents and children through the early steps of their ABS Kids journey.

A Passion for Assessment

Marisa's role centers on providing comprehensive diagnostic assessments for children, generally ranging from toddlers up to age thirteen. She uses a mix of interviews, play-based observations, and standardized tests to build a complete picture of each child's needs, often collaborating with parents, teachers, and pediatricians. Her goal is always to create a comfortable environment—turning what could be a stressful process into an approachable one for families.

Journey to Psychology & ABS Kids

Growing up in New Jersey, Marisa's fascination with science and human behavior started young. She played lacrosse at Skidmore College before earning her doctorate from Pace University in New York City. While many psychologists focus on therapy, Marisa was drawn to the investigative, assessment-driven side of the field. Her early experiences volunteering with kids with autism plus, a mom who worked in the field—inspired her to specialize in this population. She joined ABS Kids as a postdoctoral fellow and found the perfect blend of assessment work and meaningful impact.

Moments That Matter

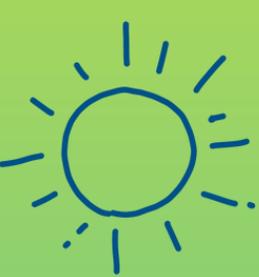
For Marisa, the real “WOW” moments come when a child surprises everyone—imitating a gesture or signing “more” during play, sometimes for the first time ever. Seeing a child break through in these small ways, and hearing parents say, “I've never seen that before,” is what makes her work so rewarding.

Advice for Parents

Marisa encourages parents with developmental concerns to trust their instincts. “You're the expert on your child,” she says. “There's no harm in seeking answers, and the process can offer clarity and support, whatever the outcome.” She believes that by asking questions and pursuing evaluations, families are taking a brave and positive step toward helping their child thrive.

Marisa's commitment to assessment, collaboration, and family-centered care shines through in everything she does. We're grateful to have her as part of the ABS Kids team!





We're proud to be a part of your community. These reviews are a reminder of why we continue to Work in WOW at ABS Kids.

El Cajon, CA

All of the staff who I interacted with at the Mira Mesa location, were so nice and made me feel at home from the start. My son was excited to arrive every day and I was impressed by his improvements in sign language skills and following directions in just a couple of months of attendance.

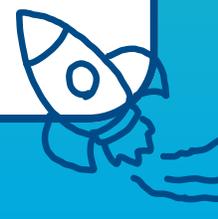
Ogden, UT

They work with me & my son's school to come up with the best plans for his therapy. They are kind & friendly & my son loves his person he works with each day. We have seen improvements in how my son handles the things he struggles with, like loud sounds. They were able to get him potty trained which was a huge feat. I would recommend them to anyone with children on the autism spectrum.



Columbia, SC

My son, diagnosed with level 3 autism at age 2, has made incredible progress since starting at ABS Kids in May 2025. He now responds to his name, sleeps through the night, walks down stairs confidently, and can say and sing his ABCs and 123s—even counting by 3s and 10s! He navigates his iPad with ease and surprises us with songs like the Jeffersons theme. The care and support at ABS Kids, including Speech and Occupational Therapy, have been life-changing. I'm so grateful for their dedication and the amazing work they do every day.



WHAT'S YOUR WOW

CHECK OUT OUR
WOW MOMENTS
FROM JANUARY



Michaela J.

I have loved working with my 2-year-old client and his family since July. I have seen him go from exclusively tacting to manding and requesting removal with up to 5 words! I've also been able to support him in toilet training and after months of consistency between the other RBT on his team and me, he was able to successfully void in the potty! I love this field and that we get to support amazing kiddos in the growth that they are doing everyday.

CHECK OUT ANOTHER
WOW MOMENT ENTRY
FROM JANUARY!

Tawanna P.

My WOW moment is more than just a moment—it's a lasting memory. I had the privilege of working with a 5-year-old kiddo and watching him grow, learn, and become more comfortable with me. We worked on managing his outbursts and encouraging him to use his words, and over time, he made incredible progress. Building that connection by observing his interests and using them to improve pairing made all the difference.

WOW FACTOR

Check out LAUNCH and explore new opportunities for growth! [Learn more here.](#)