ACCEPTING THE SPECTRUM • OCTOBER 2026

# Collaborative ABA Services, LLC

Monthly Newsletter for Families and Community Partners

**Building Partnerships, Building Skills, Building Futures.**

An award-winning, accredited behavioral health practice | Silver Stevie® Award winner | Named one of the Top 5 Best ABA Providers for 2024



MAIN ARTICLE

## A Safe Halloween for Every Child: Inclusion, Sensory Needs, and Trick-or-Treating Safety

*By Alisha Simpson-Watt, LCSW, BCBA, LBA • CEO, Executive Clinical Director & Founder*

Every household marks the season differently, and some families skip Halloween altogether. That is a perfectly good choice too. But if your crew is heading out for candy this year, a little preparation goes a long way toward a night that feels fun instead of frazzled, especially when costumes, crowds, and surprises are hard for your child to navigate.

Halloween brings a lot at once: bright decorations, ringing doorbells, sugar, strangers in masks, and a bedtime that quietly disappears. For a child with sensory sensitivities, that can tip from exciting to overwhelming fast. The goal is not to make the evening look like anyone else's. It is to shape it around what your child can enjoy.

### 1. Rehearse the routine.

Try a practice run days before: walk to a door, ring the bell, hold out a bucket, say trick or treat. When the real night comes, the steps already feel familiar.

### 2. Make the evening visible.

A simple picture list of how the night will go, leaving the house, knocking, collecting candy, heading home, takes the guesswork out of a big evening.

### 3. Give your child the choices.

Costume, route, houses to visit, when to call it a night: let your child weigh in. A timer or a countdown helps transitions land more smoothly.

### 4. Every kind of communication counts.

Candy can be requested with an AAC device, picture cards, or a gesture, and all of it counts. Charge the device before heading out, and skip demands like eye contact.

### 5. Comfort beats the perfect costume.

Do a test wear a few days early to catch itchy fabrics, scratchy tags, or face paint a child will refuse. One favorite piece, like a cape or a hat, is a complete costume. Add bright colors or reflective tape for the dark.

### 6. Have a safety plan, especially for runners.

If wandering is a concern, decide who is watching whom before you leave. Practice curbs and crossings, keep a hand or a stroller close in crowds, and carry a current photo just in case.

### 7. Watch the fuel gauge.

Meltdowns and shutdowns rarely come out of nowhere. Check in often, know where a quiet spot is, and stash headphones or a favorite fidget. Leaving early is a win, not a failure.

### 8. There is more than one way to do Halloween.

A short loop of familiar neighbors, a trunk-or-treat, an indoor party, or staying home to hand out candy all count. Ask your child what sounds fun, rather than assuming.

Nobody is handing out trophies for the most houses visited. A good night is one where your child felt comfortable, got to communicate in their own way, and maybe collected a favorite treat or two along the journey. If your family could use extra support this season, our team is here to help at collaborativeabaservices.com/services.

AGENCY NEWS

# Community and Connection

## Our 5th Annual Meet and Greet

On **Saturday, September 26, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.**, we hosted the **Collaborative ABA Services, LLC Annual Meet and Greet in partnership with South Fire District, Middletown Police Department and Middletown Recreation** at Middletown Recreation, 140 Wilderman's Way, Middletown, CT. This free, inclusive family event featured games, activities, and food, and welcomed families from across our community.

At the heart of the event is something simple and powerful: children of all abilities meeting local police officers and firefighters in a friendly, relaxed setting. When children get to say hello, explore a fire truck, and share a smile with a first responder, familiarity and trust grow. We were joined by community partners including Middletown Prevention, Russell Library, City of Middletown Health Department, Change Inc., Meriden Early Start Program, and the Yale Child Study Center, plus our special guest, **Sonar, the Hartford Wolfpack mascot**.

To every family who came out and every partner who set up a table, offered an activity, or greeted a child by name: thank you. Events like this remind us that supporting children happens through an entire community, and we are honored to be part of yours.



## Downtown Trick or Treat



Our team also enjoyed connecting with families downtown at the **Middletown Recreation Downtown Trick or Treat** on Saturday, October 17th. The rain-or-shine event featured over 100 trick or treat stops from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., followed by the North End Trunk or Treat at the Trolley Barn Parking Lot. Thank you to everyone who stopped by to say hello, and to Middletown Recreation for bringing the community together for a festive fall celebration.



## Congratulations to Jade Hernandez

Please join us in congratulating **Jade Hernandez** on her promotion to **Lead Behavior Technician**. Jade also serves as a Registered Behavior Technician, and her growth reflects both her skill and her genuine commitment to the children and families we serve. We are proud to have her step into this leadership role, and grateful for the care she brings to our team every day.

## BHCOE Accreditation Renewed Through 2027

We are also proud to share that the Behavioral Health Center of Excellence (BHCOE) has renewed our accreditation through 2027, making Collaborative ABA Services one of a few BHCOE-accredited ABA providers in Connecticut. This renewal reflects our ongoing commitment to evidence-based, high-quality care for the children and families we serve. Learn more at www.collaborativeabaservices.com.

FROM OUR BLOG

# New on the Blog

### Parent Training for Autism 101

What is parent training, and what does it look like in practice? This beginner-friendly guide explains how caregiver coaching works, how it connects with ABA therapy, and how to get started at home with everyday routines like mealtime, dressing, and play. Read it on the blog at collaborativeabaservices.com/blog.

**Read it on the blog →**

WAYS TO CONNECT THIS FALL

## Stay in Touch, Anytime

There is no single season to get support. Stay connected with us this fall and all year long:

- **Explore the Resources page** for guides, links, and family-friendly materials at collaborativeabaservices.com/resources.
- **Read the blog** for new articles for parents, caregivers, and educators at collaborativeabaservices.com/blog.
- **Visit the News & Media page** for press releases, news coverage, and media contact information at collaborativeabaservices.com/news-media.
- **Follow us on social media** for updates and behind-the-scenes moments: Facebook (Collaborativeabaservices), Instagram (@collaborativeabaservices), TikTok (@collaborativeaba), YouTube (@collaborativeabaservices), and LinkedIn (Collaborative ABA Services, LLC).
- **Contact our team** anytime at collaborativeabaservices.com/contact or (860) 421-4052.

OUR SERVICES

## Care That Fits Your Family

**Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) Therapy** • Diagnostic Evaluations for Autism • Parent and Caregiver Trainings • Community Trainings • Occupational Therapy • Speech and Language Therapy • Social Skills Groups • Case Management and Consultations

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

## CollabWait: Clarity, Support, and Real Updates — All in One Place

**CollabWait** is a software platform launched by Collaborative ABA Services, LLC that helps families and agencies navigate services with confidence. Instead of wondering where things stand, families can see waitlist positions, agency availability, and important updates in real time, all in one place. Learn more at **www.collabwait.com**.

SUPPORT ACCESS TO CARE

## Help Keep Services Within Reach for Local Families

At Collaborative ABA Services, LLC, our mission is to provide high-quality, compassionate, and accessible Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services to children and families in our community. As a privately owned small business, we are dedicated to personalized care, community connection, and family-centered services. Today, more than 80% of the families we serve rely on Medicaid-funded insurance to access medically necessary autism services. Ongoing reductions in reimbursement rates and changes in healthcare funding have created significant financial challenges for providers committed to serving these families.

We are finding creative ways to continue providing equitable, high-quality care to *all* families, regardless of insurance coverage. This fundraiser helps bridge that gap so children continue to receive the support they need to learn, grow, and thrive. Funds raised sustain essential operations, maintain employment for our dedicated team members, and expand access for families who may otherwise face barriers to services. By supporting Collaborative ABA Services, you are investing in children, families, and a future where every child has access to the services they need to reach their full potential. Thank you for helping us continue our mission and make a lasting difference in the lives of the families we serve.

**Support Autism Services for Local Families →**

PRODUCT SPOTLIGHT

### Collaborative ABA Merch Store

Show your Collaborative pride! Our merch store offers branded apparel and more for the whole family. Shop at collaborativeabastore.com

**15% off your order with discount code COLLABCHEER15**

FEATURED BOOK

### It's Okay, Mattie: A Story About Autism, Big Feelings, and Learning to Cope

Written by our CEO, Executive Clinical Director & Founder, Alisha Simpson-Watt, LCSW, BCBA, LBA, and illustrated by Urwa Maqsood, this children's book helps young readers understand autism, big feelings, and coping skills, with resources for parents and caregivers. Find it on Amazon and wherever books are sold.

## Get in Touch

**Collaborative ABA Services, LLC** | www.collaborativeabaservices.com

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**Building Partnerships, Building Skills, Building Futures. Thank you for being part of our community.**