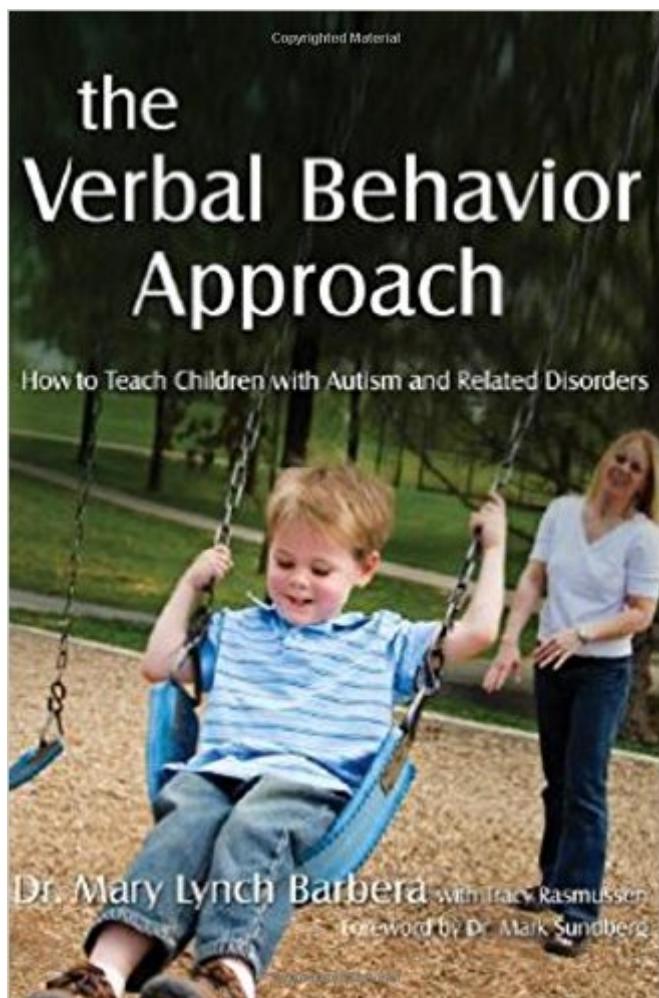


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# The Verbal Behavior Approach: How To Teach Children With Autism And Related Disorders



## **Synopsis**

The Verbal Behavior (VB) approach is a form of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), that is based on B.F. Skinner's analysis of verbal behavior and works particularly well with children with minimal or no speech abilities. In this book, Mary Lynch Barbera draws on her own experiences as a Board Certified Behavior Analyst and also as a parent of a child with autism to explain VB and how to use it. This step-by-step guide provides an abundance of information about how to help children develop better language and speaking skills, and also explains how to teach non-vocal children to use sign language. An entire chapter focuses on ways to reduce problem behavior, and there is also useful information on teaching toileting and other important self-help skills, that would benefit any child. This book will enable parents and professionals unfamiliar with the principles of ABA and VB to get started immediately using the Verbal Behavior approach to teach children with autism and related disorders.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

As a mother of three children on the spectrum, I want to share how much this book has changed our lives forever. Hope is a powerful feeling and one given to us from this book. We were going along following the "standard" recommendations of the professionals working with our children on the spectrum without much change for over the past two years. Sure, we had some changes, but not like the ones we were about to experience using the Verbal Behavior Approach. This book was very easy to read and did a great job of detailing exactly how to do what we were reading about. For us,

the concepts were all completely new and a totally different way of intervening. Having Mary Barbara's personal story throughout the book helped make it more real for us as parents. This book has given us the power to help our children ourselves. No longer do we have to follow recommendations from others that just don't seem "quite right" for our children. We have the tools to make a difference ourselves. The therapists we do have that work with our children, are much happier also and feel a better sense of direction now. They have told me how much more hopeful they feel now having the resources they needed. They report that following the Verbal Behavior Approach has changed them professionally as well. We have spent the past few months working through behavior problems with our children. I am glad to report that for my middle son, age 4, 20+ meltdowns a day is literally down to none or an average of 3 a week. What a difference! We have our lives back! Each child on the spectrum is different of course, but I just wanted to share one personal detail in this review to give specific evidence of the changes we are experiencing.

This isn't so much a review of the book's structure as a review of the book's content (i.e., the Verbal Behavior,) but as a quick aside - the book itself is well written, user friendly, and meant as an informative introductory course in VB. On to the content... I am on a sort of lifelong search for the Be All End All Autism approach, from RDI to Floortime to ABA to VB. No luck yet. I find that VB, like all of the other therapies out there, has its pros and cons, and is by far more appropriate for certain types of children than others. Pros:- VB relies heavily on communicating in order to get what you want. Asking for favorite items, actions, songs, etc. Even later skills like asking wh- questions are centered around motivation, i.e., if a child loves candy they learn to ask 'Where' the candy is in hide-and-seek type games. Personally, I think this is primarily the most powerful thing about VB. Children who are not socially motivated and never had a 'reason' to communicate before suddenly have one, and this alone can accomplish a lot. - VB is fairly concrete and tangible. Unlike other programs where goals can be murky, what you are working on and how the child is progressing is clear and easy to measure. - VB takes a positive approach toward the child, engaging them via positive interactions and reinforcement. Cons:- The biggest con in my opinion is that VB never strays far beyond very functional language. It revolves largely around children learning to use language in order to have wants and needs met. Now, certainly, for less verbal children, this may be the primary focus.

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