



CLIENT HANDBOOK

Updated January 2025

WELCOME LETTER

Dear Families and Caregivers,

On behalf of our entire staff, we welcome you to The Hangout Spot, Connecticut's first center using the fundamentals of science to teach social smarts. We are thrilled that you have chosen to become a part of our community and appreciate the trust you have placed in our staff to provide exceptional social skills instruction rooted in the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis.

We are dedicated to using this science to support your child to master the art of social interaction. Moreover, we look forward to working with your family to support the development of meaningful relationships with others throughout your child's world. Here at The Hangout Spot, we are committed to delivering the highest quality services and leading ethical treatment to our clients.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a comprehensive resource detailing the services we provide. Please feel free to contact us with any questions pertaining to the information provided herein or to inquire further about our services. We look forward to getting to know your child and empowering them to navigate the complex world of social nuances.

Best,

Meghan Perazella, M.Ed. BCBA LBA (CT)

Co-Founder

The Hangout Spot

Justyna Balzar, M.Ed. BCBA LBA (CT)

Co-Founder

The Hangout Spot

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Hangout Spot is a behavior analytic social skills development center where we believe that all children have a right to meaningful relationships with others. We strive to eliminate barriers to friendship and empower children to be socially successful across the lifespan using the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis. Everything we do is rooted in research, empirically validated, and proven to work. We conceptualize critical, previously considered “tricky to teach” skills through a scientific framework. In doing so, we achieve socially-significant change for our clients by providing the support they need to develop real connections with other people beyond our walls.

OUR PHILOSOPHY AND PROGRAM

The Hangout Spot embraces a scientific approach to teaching play and social skills.

1. Everything we do is rooted in Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), the science of learning and behavior. ABA is the leading empirically-validated intervention used to improve lives in socially significant ways. To learn more about Applied Behavior Analysis, visit <https://www.bacb.com/about-behavior-analysis/#ABAFactSheets>. We highly recommend watching the short video, *Behavior Analysis: An Overview*, featured on this site.
2. We are unique in our use of the Standard Celeration Chart to monitor your child's progress. Using the Standard Celeration Chart, we make data-driven decisions with in-the-moment certainty. This system has been proven to not only transform but accelerate developmental trajectories.
3. We embrace Natural Environment Teaching (NET). Our learning environments are designed to mirror “the real world” and contrive authentic practice opportunities. NET fosters flexible, problem-solving social partners who generalize skills beyond the walls of our center.

WHO WE SERVE

The Hangout Spot is a welcoming space for all individuals. We accept friends ages birth through young adulthood, and there are no prerequisite skills required. Our programming benefits both individuals with and without diagnoses, including but not limited to those:

- Growing up without siblings
- Hooked on technology
- Learning to be leaders
- Experiencing social anxiety
- With autism and other special needs
- Who play a role in bullying

MENU OF SERVICES

The Hangout Spot offers the following speciality social skills services to our clients:

Service	Description
Social Skills Classes	The Hangout Spot provides specialized play and social skills instruction for learners ages birth through young adult rooted in Applied Behavior Analysis in a thoughtfully structured, small group setting. Classes are facilitated by our experienced behavior technicians and supervised by our Board Certified Behavior Analysts. Classes meet one to two times per week, depending on each child's individual needs.
	Make-Up Classes provide additional practice opportunities and promote the

Make-Up Classes	generalization of skills across settings and people. They also serve as a bonus class. Make-Up classes are structured as fun get-togethers, including holiday events, teen nights, etc. Successful social interactions are facilitated by staff throughout the class.
Little Buds	Our developmental playgroups provide a small, supportive environment for our littlest friends to embark on their first learning experience with peers. A particular focus is placed on building a strong social foundation by the teaching critical toy play, people play, and group skills that young children need to succeed.
Evaluations	Our staff complete comprehensive Behavior Analytic Assessments that aid in appropriate decision-making regarding future programming, including Social Skills Evaluations, Functional Behavior Assessments, Behavior Intervention Planning, and more.
Consultation	Our staff partner with schools and other teams (e.g. daycares, extracurricular providers, non-clinical social programs) who are interested in learning more about effective social skills instruction. Contracts for facilitation of off-site social skills programming are also available.
1:1 School/Camp Based Support	Our staff works closely with your child to provide tailored support based on their unique needs, whether it's fostering emotional regulation, helping with peer interactions, or guiding them through social challenges. We take an active role in facilitating meaningful connections with their peers, offering strategies to encourage positive, reciprocal social exchanges that promote both social and emotional growth.

OUR FOUNDING TEAM

The Co-Founders of The Hangout Spot, Meghan Perazella and Justyna Balzar, are Board Certified Behavior Analysts, otherwise known as BCBAs.

Meghan Perazella, M.Ed BCBA LBA (CT) brings passion and over eighteen years of experience to The Hangout Spot. She has provided special education and behavior analytic services in both home, community, and public school settings throughout Fairfield County. Meghan earned her Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction for Students with Severe Special Needs and Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Human Development with a minor in Special Education from Boston College. She later completed her Post-Master BCBA Certificate at Endicott College. Meghan has co-authored publications in *Autism Parenting Magazine* and served as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Saint Joseph. Meghan is the Co-Founder of The ABA Advocacy Project, which utilizes Applied Behavior Analysis to unify the advocacy practices of parents and professionals. She is a five-time prize recipient of awards honoring excellence and leadership in working with children with disabilities.

Justyna Balzar M.Ed BCBA LBA (CT) has over twenty years experience providing behavior analytic services to diverse learners ages three to young adult in the public school, private school, and home settings. Justyna earned her Master in Curriculum and Education in Applied Behavior Analysis from Arizona State University and Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with a minor in Economics from Fordham University. She received her Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA) certification in 2014 from Florida Institute of Technology followed by her BCBA certification in 2016. She has authored and co-authored publications in *Autism Parenting Magazine*. Driven by a passion for educating others about the wide-reaching applications of ABA, Justyna founded BehaviorChik, an online persona intended to disseminate behavior analytic resources, and The ABA Advocacy Project, an initiative spearheaded by The Hangout Spot founders and another BCBA that unifies the advocacy practices of parents and professionals using ABA.

OUR STAFFING

All of our BCBA's are licensed in the state of Connecticut, have a Master degree in Applied Behavior Analysis or a related field, a national certificate through the Behavior Analysis Certification Board, and experience working with a wide range of learners across ages, diagnoses, and skill levels. BCBA's complete assessments, develop interventions, monitor progress, and provide ongoing supervision to Behavior Technicians. In addition, our BCBA's provide or facilitate certain services offered by The Hangout Spot.

Behavior Technicians, otherwise known as BT's, provide direct intervention consisting of skill acquisition and behavior reduction programs under the supervision of BCBA. All of our Behavior Technicians participate in a rigorous training program and ongoing Professional Development. In addition, all Behavior Technicians participate in extensive background checks prior to time of hire. It is beyond a Behavior Technician's scope of practice to modify goals, intervention plans, service schedules, or intervention locations, or to address client-related concerns. If you have any questions regarding your child's services, please contact your supervising BCBA, not a Behavior Technician.

Given our commitment to providing the highest quality care possible, our BCBA's double the industry standard for Behavior Technician supervision. During supervision, BCBA's review progress, observe program implementation, provide feedback, and provide any additional support required.

Please note that our staffing model is purposefully designed to rotate staff between groups. By offering our clients the opportunity to learn and practice with a variety of staff, we program for generalization from the start, thus increasing the likelihood that your child will be able to apply their social skills with other people in the future. The Hangout Spot reserves the right to assign an alternate staff member to a group if the regularly scheduled staff is ill or otherwise unable to provide services.

The Hangout Spot holds its employees accountable to adhering to all Policies and Procedures. Employees found to be in noncompliance with Policies and Procedures are susceptible to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

On occasion, we may be privileged to welcome interns, volunteers, and college students seeking supervision to The Hangout Spot. We welcome the opportunity to give back to the future generation in our field and ensure that all individuals working on our premises participate in a thorough onboarding process.

WHERE WE PROVIDE SERVICES

Our services may be received at numerous locations, including our center, satellite locations, home, school, camp, other community locations, and remotely through a telehealth platform. Please note that our staff are not permitted to accompany your child or family on vacations or to other personal events with little behavior-analytic content or relevance to goals identified in his or her intervention plan.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Say hello at hello@thehangoutspotllc.com or 203.354.9257. You can also visit us on our website at www.thehangoutspotllc.com or send us snail mail at 124 East Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06851.

UNDERSTANDING BENEFICIARIES OF SERVICES

Your child is the primary beneficiary of The Hangout Spot's services. Therefore, our services will be designed specifically for your child's benefit. Any other individuals or agencies (e.g. siblings, family members, school professionals) who may be affected by or benefit from ABA Services are considered secondary beneficiaries of services. In accordance with maintaining your child as the primary beneficiary, all discussions with our staff should be based on goals and objectives pertaining to your child. You are not permitted to share marital, personal, or family concerns with our staff, unless they directly pertain to your child's care.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

BCBAs are ethically bound to practice within their boundary of professional competence. In the event that your child would benefit from services outside of the competence of our BCBAs, you will be informed and may be provided with suggestions of applicable providers to address specific concerns. Any suggestions provided are a courtesy only. The Hangout Spot makes no representation or warranties nor bears any liability related to such referral.

UNDERSTANDING SUPERVISION TOWARDS A BACB CREDENTIAL

The Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) offers credentials at four levels: Registered Behavior Technician (RBT), BCaBA (Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst), BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst), and BCBA-D (Board Certified Behavior Analyst Doctoral). From time to time, our staff may provide supervision to staff or other individuals pursuing one of these credentials. Supervisees may interact with your child in a variety of capacities to meet the criteria for obtaining a BACB credential. Our staff adhere to the BACB supervision guidelines and experience standards when providing supervision of any kind. Your flexibility and cooperation is appreciated as we support others in our field to gain the experience and knowledge required to best serve their clients.

SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE

All clients must complete a screening questionnaire in order to initiate intake at The Hangout Spot. The information you provide will help the team determine whether or not our service model represents an appropriate intervention for your child at this time. Here at The Hangout Spot, we believe that there are no pre-requisite skills required to benefit from social skills instruction, so we welcome all families to participate in our screening process. However, we also have an obligation to ensure that we are recommending the best possible interventions for your child. So, if our team recognizes significant potential to be achieved through participation in another intervention, you will be informed and may be provided with suggestions of applicable providers to address specific concerns. Any suggestions provided are a courtesy only. The Hangout Spot makes no representation or warranties nor bears any liability related to such referral.

INFORMED CONSENT

The goal of our assessment process is to determine the best intervention possible for your child. Prior to completing any assessment procedures, you will be given the opportunity to discuss the procedures, their risks, and their benefits with our staff. We require your informed consent before beginning any assessment procedures. In addition, we will share some additional paperwork that needs to be completed prior to getting started.

CONSENT TO CONTACT

During our intake process, you will be asked to complete a Preferred Method of Communication form that authorizes us to contact you through a variety of modalities.

Please keep in mind that communications sent via email over the internet and text are not secure. Although it is unlikely and our staff take reasonable precautions to avoid risks, there is a possibility that the information you include in an email or text can be intercepted and read by other parties besides the person to whom it is addressed. We are unable to communicate with you via email or text without express permission to do so.

Please do not include personal identifying information such as your child's birthdate or personal medical information in any emails or texts you send to us. Our staff cannot provide consultation from email, texts, or other written communications, and electronic communication cannot replace the relationship you have with our staff.

ASSESSMENT

All services start with an assessment to identify objectives and develop a programming plan. Upon receipt of your questionnaire responses, our team will contact you to schedule this assessment, which may include any of the following: a parent/guardian interview, a record review, and a Meet and Greet. Assessments cannot be completed without receiving the Screen Questionnaire at least 24-hours in advance of the scheduled intake, in order to give our team ample time to best prepare for your child's intake meeting.

BCBAs will identify your child's current level of social/play performance and identify instructional areas of focus to prioritize. If your child demonstrates ongoing problem behaviors, a Functional Behavior Assessment may be recommended for an additional cost. These assessment tools are designed to provide information critical to the development of effective treatment procedures. A combination of assessment strategies may be used, depending on your child's needs. It is important to note that assessment is an ongoing practice that may recur throughout service delivery to inform continued programming.

If The Hangout Spot has previously completed an assessment for your child or you provide an evaluation prepared by another provider, it is within our sole discretion whether to implement the recommendations.

Information gained during the assessment process will be used to assign your child to one of five levels of play and social development. Children are assigned to "best-fit groups" based upon our formula for friendship potential. Developmentally-appropriate interventions are carefully designed within each level to address the entire spectrum of social learning, from children who require a developmental playgroup to teenagers learning appropriate social media use. Considerations are given to age, gender, preferences, strengths, and areas of need. We identify a common fundamental focus for each group, so every child's individual needs are addressed within a shared learning theme.

Please be aware that our team is dedicated to identifying groups with peers of within a suitable age-range, need, and interests- and also groups that include positive peer models for each and every client. Therefore, if a "best-fit group" is not available at this time, your child may be added to our waitlist while we search for a "just-right" option. We appreciate your patience and cooperation throughout the decision-making and placement process.

SEVERE PROBLEM BEHAVIORS

At The Hangout Spot, we believe that social skills instruction holds great value for individuals with a wide range of learning profiles. In fact, from the very moment we are born, we rely on successful interactions with others to survive. However, as Behavior Analysts, we are charged with the unique responsibility of ensuring that we are recommending services that stand to yield the most significant impact possible for our clients. Therefore, if a client demonstrates severe problem behaviors, such as significant aggression or self-injurious behavior, you will be informed and may be provided with suggestions of applicable providers to address specific concerns. Any suggestions provided are a courtesy only. The Hangout Spot makes no representation or warranties nor bears any liability related to such referral.

That being said, we certainly welcome children who demonstrate problem behaviors that do not pose a risk of imminent harm or danger to participate in programming at The Hangout Spot, as we have significant experience in this realm, and research shows that an improvement in social skills will likely result in a decrease in problem behaviors as well. A Functional Behavior Assessment may be recommended, at an additional cost, for clients who demonstrate problem behaviors. A Functional Behavior Assessment is an evaluation that analyzes barriers to social progress and yields the development of a Behavior Intervention Plan, which outlines procedures to decrease problem behaviors over time.

CLASS RESERVATION

You may choose to reserve a class enrollment for your child in the next seasonal session anytime within 90 days of the start of that session. Planning group enrollment and schedules is a labor- and clinically-intensive process for our staff, so we require a reservation fee at the time of reservation. In the event that your child participates in the reserved session, the Reservation Fee will be applied to that season's tuition. See our Private Client Services Agreement Service

Charges and Financial Terms for more information.

HSA/FSA ACCOUNTS

Our services may qualify as reimbursable expenses for Health Savings Accounts or Flexible Spending Accounts. We encourage you to defer to your tax advisor in considering this option.

SCHEDULING

Your child's schedule for a given season is based upon their specific needs and the availability of a "best-fit grouping." Our scheduling team will work to accommodate your and your child's existing schedules to the greatest degree possible; however, we ask that you provide availability that will allow our team to provide the recommended number of intervention hours with an appropriate grouping assignment.

Please note that schedules vary from season to season. If you elect to continue with The Hangout Spot into the next season, you will have the opportunity to provide our team with your family's availability and scheduling preferences prior to the start of the season. Our team will work to schedule your child for a best-fitting group in accordance with the scheduling information you provide. In addition, The Hangout Spot reserves the right to reschedule or combine classes if required to ensure effective service delivery.

HOURS OF OPERATION

The Hangout Spot's hours of operation are generally Monday through Friday from 10:00 am - 6:30 pm. Daytime services are offered to clients of all ages. Priority scheduling is provided to school-age, school-attending clients for late afternoon and early evening classes, though scheduling during these time slots may be open to birth to preschool clients if available.

Our staff members are generally available Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. although hours may vary among staff members. Please speak with your assigned BCBA if you have questions about their hours. During the noted time period, you may call The Hangout Spot to speak with a staff member or leave a message. Please use email if you need to correspond with our staff outside of our standard hours of operation. Our staff make their best effort to respond to your communications as soon as possible. If you have an emergency situation, please call 911 immediately. If you need to contact a staff member during your child's service, please contact us via phone call.

The Hangout Spot is closed on the following holidays:

New Years Eve, New Years Day, MLK Day, Presidents Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day.

In the event that a holiday falls on a weekend, the holiday will be observed the day before or the day after. Holidays falling on a Saturday will be observed on the Friday prior and holidays falling on a Sunday will be observed on the Monday after. The Hangout Spot is unable to reschedule services that fall on a holiday.

TRANSPORTATION

A parent/guardian must provide client transportation to and from all services. Under no circumstances are The Hangout Spot staff permitted to transport a client or caregiver.

Parking

All families are welcome to park in our Parking Lot. In order to alleviate parking congestion and ensure there is room for everyone, families should not arrive more than 10-minutes before the start of their child's session.

ARRIVAL PROCEDURES

Your child must arrive at The Hangout Spot no earlier than ten minutes nor later than five minutes after the scheduled start time. If your child is not present within 5 minutes of the scheduled class start time, he or she will be considered tardy. On time arrival will ensure that your child accesses instructional time and that you have the opportunity to communicate important information to our staff. We require a responsible party to escort and supervise your child in the waiting room until our staff meet your child in the waiting room and escort them into the service room. Employees are not available to start sessions early or provide consultation outside of scheduled class times due to other job responsibilities.

DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

A parent/guardian or authorized individual must be available for pickup no later than 5 minutes prior to the scheduled end time. The Hangout Spot will allow a 5-minute grace period prior to recording tardiness. If a child is not picked up within 10 minutes of the class end time, a parent/guardian will be contacted.

Your child will not be permitted to exit the premises without a parent/guardian or an authorized individual. All individuals who may pick up your child must be listed on the Participant Pick Up Authorization form. It is your sole responsibility to update the Pick Up Authorization Form with The Hangout Spot when changes need to be made. All unfamiliar individuals who are authorized to pick up your child will be required to produce a state-issued photo identification prior to participant's release to their care. If an individual is listed on the pick up authorization form, you are giving consent for our staff to provide a summary of your participant's service and information about any incidents that occurred during the service.

SIBLING STAY AND PLAY

Siblings and other children who are not enrolled in services at The Hangout Spot are prohibited from "staying to play" while your child is participating in on-site services. All children who are not enrolled in services at the Hangout Spot must be supervised by a parent/guardian or authorized individual while on the premises.

GUIDELINES FOR PARENT PARTICIPATION IN TELEHEALTH SERVICES

We are excited to offer remote services through our virtual platforms. Parents/guardians are expected to comply with our guidelines for parent participation in telehealth services, as outlined below:

1. Installing the video conferencing on a desktop is recommended to allow for facilitators to utilize all video conferencing features such as remote access and annotation during the lesson
2. A list of needed materials will be sent via email in advance. In order to make our telehealth sessions as engaging as possible, we may ask you to print and set up materials or gather items for your child to use during our sessions. When planning our telehealth sessions, we try our best to incorporate materials that are commonly found around the house to minimize any required prep time. However, should you not have the needed materials readily available, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are happy to suggest alternatives and adjust our plans accordingly, as needed
3. Please make sure your child is set up with working technology in a quiet area with minimal distractions. Headphones are helpful but not necessary
4. Gather any needed materials so you are ready to begin on time
5. Support your child in being on time for meetings
6. When you log into the telehealth platform, rename the user using your child's first name. Please do not include last names or any other identifying information. Using your child's first name will help facilitate social interactions

with new peers

7. Only the instructor should provide verbal directions
8. Report absences in advance by emailing your child's BCBA
9. If your child is assigned to our Budding Socialite level or you are participating in family coaching
 - Sit off screen and next to your child
 - Act as if you are a participant. Participate alongside your child as an additional model
 - Prompt your child as needed to participate
 - Provide support using the least intrusive and most effective prompt possible
10. Prior to each session, review the Zoom Room Rules with your child:
 - We don't use the *raise hand* feature
 - One person talks at a time
 - Sometimes, we will share a screen. If you can't see the screen, ask for help
 - Stay on-task and have appropriate behaviors
 - If you forget to be on-task and have appropriate behaviors, you will be given one warning
 - After the first warning, you will be muted until you are ready to rejoin the group. The group will not be able to hear you until you are ready
11. Families/caregivers are to refrain from interacting directly with any other social group participants. Interactions are peer-to-peer and facilitator-to-participant only
12. While group is in service, respecting and protecting the privacy of all participants is the utmost priority, as such the following is not allowed:
 - Video recording or screenshotting of any kind at any time on behalf of any participants
 - The use of last names and any identifying confidential client information, such as diagnosis, will never be shared by staff
 - Groups may be supported by peer mentors, who serve as role-models during instruction. No distinction will be made between participants and peer mentors
 - Observations by any individuals without complying with The Hangout Spot's policies and procedures related to observations

ILLNESS POLICY

Upon arrival, all individuals entering The Hangout Spot must participate in a health screening for any observable illness, including cough, fever, shortness of breath, or respiratory distress, prior to entering. Prior to entering The Hangout Spot, please confirm that your child and any individuals who will be waiting on site do not have a fever, shortness of breath, or cough. Our staff will make a visual inspection of your child and any individuals who will be waiting on site for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.

In order to ensure the safety of our children, families, and staff, it is our policy that anyone showing signs of sickness must stay home and will not be permitted to enter The Hangout Spot. Symptoms of sickness include but are not limited to:

- Symptoms of COVID-19
- Fever equal to or higher than 100.4 F
- Are under evaluation for COVID-19 (for example, waiting for the results of a viral test to confirm infection)
- Have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and not yet cleared to discontinue isolation
- Diarrhea (2 occurrences in a single day)
- Vomiting (1 occurrence)
- Any rash other than diaper rash
- Eye infection which may include the following symptoms: eye drainage other than clear or persistent redness on white part of the eye
- Bad cold with hacking, persistent cough, or productive cough with yellow or green phlegm
- Atypical nasal discharge (i.e. green or yellow)

- Extreme irritability or exhaustion
- Severe sore throat, headache or chronic coughing
- Any communicable or contagious disease (e.g., chicken pox, influenza, lice, streptococcal infections)

If a child arrives for services with any of the symptoms noted above, they will not be permitted to participate in services and will instead be asked to stay at home until they are well. Any individual who has been sick may not return to The Hangout Spot until they have met the criteria to discontinue home isolation, as defined by the Center for Disease Control.

If an individual who has been present at The Hangout Spot is diagnosed with COVID-19, they must immediately notify the Company. The Company will notify families and staff about the exposure and comply with the DPH and local health department reporting requirements. If an individual who has been present at The Hangout Spot has been exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19 (a household member, caregiver in the home, or an individual who has had close contact for a prolonged period of time), we ask that they comply with CDC guidelines. The Hangout Spot may exclude the exposed individual from onsite programming in accordance with CDC and health department recommendations.

If your child will not be attending services, please contact the Company via phone or email as soon as possible. Cancellations should be made 24 hours prior to the cancelled session, whenever possible. At its sole discretion, The Hangout Spot may offer onsite families the option of participating in groups virtually should circumstances prevent the child from attending in person. Please contact your child's BCBA to inquire about such options. Our staff will regularly monitor the phone line and voicemail for cancellations. Supervisors may combine groupings, if clinically appropriate, in the event that client absences significantly limit group instruction. Or, if clinically appropriate, one-to-one coaching experiences may be provided when other participants are absent from a group. One-to-one coaching experiences allow our staff to provide intensive, highly individualized instruction intended to accelerate progress within the small group setting. Please note, we are not able to reschedule cancelled classes due to illness, though telehealth options may be offered, as described above at The Hangout Spot's sole discretion. In case of highly contagious illness, a doctor's note may be required to return to The Hangout Spot. We will notify you of this requirement when applicable, and a copy of the doctor's note will be maintained in your child's file.

If a child becomes ill (see list above for symptoms) during a service, an employee will escort the child to an area away from other children, contact you for pick up (or the emergency contact if you cannot be reached within 10 minutes), and provide supervision in accordance with CDC guidelines until you arrive.

INCLEMENT WEATHER AND EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

The Hangout Spot is committed to the safety and security of its clients, staff, and visitors. As such, the decision to close our programming is based on the overall concern for the safety and security of our community. In general, The Hangout Spot's practice is to remain open and to provide continuity of care during periods of inclement weather. However, inclement weather, including, but not limited to, snow, storms, icy roads, storm warnings and other emergency conditions may result in closings or delays in opening until conditions improve. Should inclement weather conditions arise or be anticipated that would make in-person programming unsafe, The Hangout Spot may elect to close for a defined period of time. A recorded message will provide closure information on the center's main line and closure notifications will be sent via text. In addition, closing information will be posted on our website.

In the event of inclement weather, we encourage you to use good judgment and not take undue risks to travel to and from The Hangout Spot. Ultimately, the decision to send your participant to services is yours. If you do decide to keep your participant at home due to inclement weather when the center is open for operation, please contact us via phone a minimum of two hours in advance of the scheduled start time. Please leave a voicemail if you are calling before the center's hours of operation. Please note, The Hangout Spot is not able to reschedule services cancelled due to inclement weather or emergency closings.

ATTENDANCE

Adherence to class schedules is imperative not only to ensure the effectiveness of intervention, but it is also a requirement of The Hangout Spot.

Why is consistent attendance important?

- Parent and child involvement is a key component of our services
- Frequent attendance is necessary to ensure consistency and integrity of our programming and to ensure progress
- Children must receive the recommended services on a consistent basis to achieve desired outcomes

While we understand that occasional changes are to be expected, all non-illness related cancellations and/or changes to service modality (e.g. requests for telehealth alternatives during a vacation) must be communicated to The Hangout Spot at least five business days in advance, so that modifications to groupings and staffing may be made as needed. Requests for illness-related transitions to telehealth alternatives must be made a minimum of 24 business hours in advance. The Hangout Spot will be unable to accommodate requests made outside of these timeframes, as our staff are deeply dedicated to preparing for successful transitions to different service modalities for all of our clients. In addition, The Hangout Spot's ability to accommodate requests to transition to virtual services received over the weekend for a Monday service will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Once a request has been made for a transition to virtual services, The Hangout Spot will be unable to accommodate a return to in-person services for that session. Refunds/credit will not be provided for cancelled classes, and The Hangout Spot is unable to reschedule cancelled classes.

Your child is expected to attend 80% of scheduled classes. If your child is in excess of 20% cancellations, they will be considered to have excess cancellations and may be subject to discharge from The Hangout Spot. Please note that these are general guidelines and that all absences and tardiness will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

VISITOR POLICY

If your child is receiving services in a center-based environment, visitors may occasionally be present in our setting. The word visitor used in this handbook refers to all individuals who may come into the center who are not employees of The Hangout Spot or a participant in The Hangout Spot's services. Visitors may include: interns, supervisees, advisory board members, investors, other parents, service coordinators or case managers, parents of prospective participants, interviewees, or contracted workers who are unable to perform tasks before or after center operating hours. All visitors must check in with our staff upon arrival and sign a confidentiality agreement. Depending on the purpose of the visit, visitors may observe services, see your child while on-site, or hear your child's first name. No other information regarding your child will be shared with visitors. All visitors will be accompanied by a Hangout Spot supervisor at all times. Interviewees, interns, and supervisees may interact with clients to complete supervision requirements or assess their ability to work at The Hangout Spot.

Access to instructional areas of the center is limited to individuals with prior approval from the Site Leaders. The duration of visits into instructional areas will be limited to the amount of time necessary for the purpose of the visit to be accomplished.

The Hangout Spot retains the right to refuse entrance to any visitor who is unable to produce identification and/or is unable to verify the reason for visit. Additionally, The Hangout Spot reserves the right to ask any visitor to leave the center if disruptive or unruly. Law enforcement authorities will be called if a visitor is unwilling to leave upon request.

DRUGS, ALCOHOL, AND SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

The Hangout Spot is a drug-, alcohol-, and smoke-free environment. Drugs, alcohol, and smoking are prohibited in, on, or around the property at all times.

WEAPON-FREE ENVIRONMENT

All weapons are prohibited on The Hangout Spot premises and must be secured in a safe place in all other service environments (e.g. home setting).

ILLEGAL ACTIVITY

Illegal and illicit activities are prohibited in, on, or around the property at all times. All illegal and illicit activities will be reported to the relevant authorities.

PHOTOGRAPHY CONSENT

For purposes of this handbook, the term "photograph" shall mean all forms of visual or audiovisual reproduction of an individual's likeness. This shall include, but is not limited to: film, videotape, audiotape and other electronic reproductions. Photographs are strictly confidential and may only be used for the purposes defined in this handbook, unless written authorization is otherwise obtained. By enrolling in Services, you acknowledge and consent to your child being photographed, filmed and/or recorded by The Hangout Spot for the purposes of supervision, data collection, client training, facility security, or quality assurance. In addition, photographs of your child will be used in their Central Reach profile and the final week's take homes, commemorating your child's experience at The Hangout Spot. Your permission will also be verbally requested before each telehealth session is recorded. Clients are strictly prohibited from photographing, video-recording or audio-recording of services.

SNACKS AND MEALS

Clients are not permitted to bring snacks or meals to The Hangout Spot premises, in order to maintain safety for our clients and staff with food allergies.

TOILETING AND ADDITIONAL CLOTHING

Restrooms are available to our community. If you need help locating a restroom, ask our Business Administrator. If your child has a need for regular assistance with toileting/bathroom use, you must inform The Hangout Spot during intake. When needed, child-specific toileting plans will be developed by the supervising BCBA and caregivers. You must sign consent for your child to be assisted in accordance with their toileting plan during service time at The Hangout Spot.

Children who utilize pull-ups and/or diapers must bring them in from home along with wipes. All clients requiring assistance with toileting at The Hangout Spot must bring at least one spare change of season-appropriate clothing and one plastic bag for soiled clothing storage to services. We are unable to store pull-ups, diapers, wipes, plastic bags or spare clothing on-site. Spare toileting supplies are not available on-site. Any soiled clothing will be sent home with your child at the end of the service in a plastic bag for laundering. If your child has an accident during services and spare clothing is available on-site, a parent/guardian will be called for pick-up.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS

The Hangout Spot discourages participants from bringing other personal belongings to the center from home. If personal belongings are brought, items must be labeled to help keep them from being lost. The Hangout Spot cannot ensure the safety of personal items that are brought from home and waives responsibility for lost or damaged personal property.

MEDICATION AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL CONDITION PROTOCOLS

The Hangout Spot does not administer medication to its clients.

If your child has a known, life-threatening allergy or other emergency medical condition, this information must be communicated to The Hangout Spot at the time of registration and an emergency protocol must be provided by your child's physician prior to your child beginning services. You will be required to sign an agreement authorizing our staff to implement the protocol provided by your physician in case of a medical emergency and an agreement authorizing our staff to communicate directly with your child's physician.

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

If an emergency situation arises, emergency personnel will be sought immediately. Our staff will contact a parent/guardian immediately after emergency responders are called. If a parent/guardian is not reached, the listed emergency contact will be called. Our staff will implement any physician-provided and parent/guardian-authorized emergency protocols on file until medical emergency personnel arrive.

The Hangout Spot staff will complete an Incident Report form for any emergency requiring emergency medical attention. You will receive a copy of this form within 24 hours of the incident.

The planned location for emergency medical care is Norwalk Hospital located at 34 Maple Street, Norwalk CT. If an alternative location for emergency medical care is identified, a parent/guardian will be notified immediately.

INJURIES, FIRST AID, AND CPR

The Hangout Spot holds the health and safety of our participants as a top priority. A CPR and First Aid certified staff member is present at the center during all hours of operation. At times, it may be necessary to provide minor first aid or to seek emergency medical attention to ensure the safety and/or health of your child.

The Hangout Spot staff will document any injury involving your child on an Incident Form. A copy will be provided to you within 24 hours, and you (or the authorized individual picking up your child) will be notified verbally of the incident by our staff at the time of pick-up.

RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

The Hangout Spot uses the principles of behavior to decrease challenging behavior and teach appropriate replacement behaviors. Staff are trained to use the least restrictive measures possible whenever managing challenging behavior. The use of restraint and seclusion is avoided whenever possible; however, its use may become necessary if dangerous behaviors pose an imminent risk of harm or danger to your child or others in the environment.

If your child engages in challenging behavior, a Behavior Intervention Plan may be developed during the assessment phase using Functional Behavior Assessment or Functional Analyses to reduce the occurrence of behaviors. A Behavior Intervention Plan will include both preventative and behavior management procedures that are based on the function of the targeted behavior. Preventative procedures will be utilized throughout all services to reduce the likelihood that challenging behavior will occur. Behavior management procedures will be utilized when responding to behaviors. Behavior management procedures always represent the least restrictive possible. The strategies utilized will be reviewed with you prior to implementation; however, at times alternative strategies may be necessary. If a crisis situation occurs or if an unsafe, novel behavior occurs, restraint and/or seclusion procedures may be necessary to ensure the safety of your child, staff, or other individuals in the environment.

All staff who implement restraint and/or seclusion procedures are appropriately trained. By enrolling your child in services at The Hangout Spot, you acknowledge that restraint and seclusion procedures may be required as an

emergency procedure to maintain the safety of your child or others in the environment, and you authorize the use of these procedures. If The Hangout Spot staff utilize restraint and/or seclusion procedures to manage crisis behavior, you will be notified within 24 hours. Additionally, written documentation of the restraint/seclusion procedure will be provided to you within 48 hours.

INCIDENT REPORTING

The Hangout Spot is unable to predict all situations that may arise that may require additional documentation or parent notification. If any notable situation occurs outside of our injury, medical emergency, or restraint/seclusion policies, an incident report will be completed by staff who witnessed or were involved in the incident. You (or the authorized individual picking your child up) will be notified at pick-up of any incident that occurred, unless it is deemed by a supervisor that immediate notification is appropriate. You will receive a copy of the Incident Report within 24 hours of the incident occurring.

CONTACTING PHYSICIANS

A critical tenet of Applied Behavior Analysis is to rule out all medical variables before implementing an intervention. If a BCBA suspects a possible medical barrier to intervention, they may recommend consultation with your child's physician. A BCBA may communicate directly with a child's physician, with a parent/guardian's written authorization to do so.

CONSULTATION WITH OTHER PROVIDERS

A half-hour consultation with other providers, including but not limited to daycare providers, extracurricular providers, childcare providers, school providers, and mental health providers, is included in seasonal tuition, an additional consultation is available as a supplemental service for an additional fee. Consent to communicate with these individuals must be obtained in writing. Depending on the circumstances, a confidentiality agreement may be required before consultation services may be provided.

MANDATED REPORTING

All employees, agents, and owners of The Hangout Spot, as well as all persons under the supervision and/or training from our company, are mandated reporters for child abuse/neglect as well as for abuse/neglect of individuals with disabilities. By enrolling your child in services, you agree that you understand that The Hangout Spot, its employees, agents and/or representatives are required by law to immediately notify the appropriate governmental agency of any and all indications of child abuse and/or neglect observed or detected before, during, or after the course of any service.

PARENT/GUARDIAN PARTICIPATION

Our programs are designed to support your child through collaboration with your family. Unlike medical interventions where results automatically generalize across environments, ABA is based on the patterns of interactions between your child, the environment, and people who interact with your child. Therefore, ABA is a team-oriented intervention. Interventions must be implemented in the absence of scheduled classes in order to see improvements across multiple environments. Your child can show substantial improvement in skills and behavior reduction during their classes but demonstrate dramatically differentiated skills/behaviors outside of class. Therefore, the purpose of our program is to educate, support, and communicate with you, as an active participant in intervention.

The benefits of family involvement include:

- Maximizing the rate of learning and skill development

- Promoting generalization of skills across environments and persons
- Providing strategies to help teach skills and manage behaviors
- Increasing knowledge about any diagnosis
- Notable improvement in family interactions outside of class

The expectations of family involvement are as follows:

- Ensure your child's consistent participation in services
- Communicate successes/concerns with the BCBA on a regular basis. BCBA communication is a key element in the success of our program
- Implement homework assignments with your child in the home and community settings as instructed by our staff
- Implement recommendations outside of services
- Review all reports/assessments provided by The Hangout Spot
- Participate in seasonal Parent/Guardian Conferences (designed to review your child's progress, family input, need for continuation of Services, and barriers to continuation), and Parent Training
- Participate in Parent Orientation during your child's first session

OUTSIDE THERAPIES

Other interventions may affect your child's response to intervention. Thus, it is important to make our staff aware of those interventions and to evaluate any associated therapies to determine detrimental effects of those interventions.

If you decide to pursue other therapies for your child, our staff may provide you with current research on the effectiveness of that intervention for decision-making purposes. If your child participates in therapies or activities beyond those delivered by The Hangout Spot, you must notify your supervising BCBA in writing immediately. To the extent that the therapies or activities are non-evidenced based, our staff are prohibited from consultation with the providers of these therapies and activities.

PARENT/GUARDIAN TRAINING

Group parent/guardian training opportunities may be offered during your child's service time, special event class time, or on alternate days/times. When you participate in group training, you will be interacting with the parents/guardians of other clients. You may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to participating in any training. We require all training participants to interact with others in a respectful manner and to maintain the confidentiality of any information shared or discussed during training sessions.

PARENT/GUARDIAN OBSERVATIONS

The right to observe a child's services resides solely with a child's parent or legal guardian and does not extend to grandparents, other interested close relatives, or caregivers. Observations may be granted to individuals other than a parent or legal guardian in order to provide best practice care or continuity of services. The sole purpose of such a visit is to observe your child and the instructional program being presented. At no time should your motive for or focus of a visit be to observe another client or clients in the class. If our staff have knowledge of or suspect that the focus of a visit is to observe another client, we reserve the right to deny the requested visit or to end a visit in progress. Observations must be scheduled through your child's supervising BCBA for a time and date convenient to both the parent and the BCBA. A request for a specific date must be made no less than 5 business days in advance. Observations may not be allowed while your child is participating in an assessment or other service for which your presence may impact or alter results. The Hangout Spot is unable to accommodate virtual observations unless explicit consent is obtained from all client's parents/guardians. The observer will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement prior to completing any observations. To minimize potential interruptions and distractions during instructional time, we reserve the right to limit the duration of observations and to request that certain procedures be

followed.

Individuals observing should arrange their schedules to enter and exit the instructional site in a manner that would not interrupt the instructional activities in progress. While observing, the supervising BCBA will designate an area for you to sit, generally in the back of the instructional site or in an observation room. You are asked NOT to sit with your child, as this could create an unnecessary disruption for other clients. Once in the instructional area and seated, you are asked to remain seated and refrain from interacting with children or the staff, unless the staff initiates the interaction. Unnecessary noise and/or movement must be kept to a minimum. Our staff are not available to discuss observations at the time of occurrence. If you wish to discuss your observation with our staff, please contact the supervising BCBA to schedule a time to do so.

Individuals who fail to observe the stated guidelines during their observation may be asked to leave the room if their presence or conduct unduly interferes with the orderly operation of services.

Video and/or audio recording of observations is strictly prohibited. Electronic devices which could be used for video or audio recording should not be visible during the visit. Violation of this guideline can result in dismissal from the observation and premises. A supervisor may also be in the room during the observation to protect the learning environment for all clients.

DATA COLLECTION ACCESS

If your child participates in social skills classes, you will be provided with information related to your child's care, including your child's data and graphs. We encourage you to review this information on a regular basis, so you can be an informed, active participant in decision-making about your child's program.

AVOIDING DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

To maintain a professional relationship between our providers and clients, The Hangout Spot staff are not permitted to engage in social relationships or personal events (e.g. parties, graduations, etc.) with our clients. You are expected to comply with the following expectations and avoid dual relationships with our staff at all times:

- Clients must direct all communication regarding a child's services to the supervising BCBA.
- Clients are prohibited from engaging with staff on social media in any capacity.
- Clients are prohibited from requesting/or communicating via a staff member's personal cell phone or email. All communications with our staff must occur through company modalities.
- Clients are prohibited from discussing topics unrelated to a child's care with staff.
- Clients are prohibited from inviting/engaging staff in personal or social events outside of The Hangout Spot.
- Clients are prohibited from soliciting, hiring, employing any employee, consultant, or contractor of The Hangout Spot for any outside services while a child is receiving services at The Hangout Spot. (e.g. childcare, respite, personal care services, home-based ABA services).
- Clients are prohibited from encouraging any employee, consultant, or contractor of The Hangout Spot to leave while a child is receiving services at The Hangout Spot.
- Clients are prohibited from soliciting, hiring, employing or encouraging to leave, any employee, consultant, or contractor of The Hangout Spot for a period of two years after discharge from The Hangout Spot.
- Clients shall not solicit, hire, employ or otherwise retain any employee, consultant or contractor of The Hangout Spot for a period of one year after such employee, consultant, or contractor has left The Hangout Spot's employment or contract.
- Clients (and any individuals related to clients) are prohibited from obtaining clinical supervision (e.g. supervision towards a BCBA, BCaBA, or RBT credential) from any employee of The Hangout Spot.
- Clients are prohibited from engaging in any offensive, physical, written or spoken conduct of a sexual or derogatory nature or based on any other characteristic protected by law.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

Adding our staff as friends or contacts on social media sites can compromise involved parties' confidentiality and respective privacy and blur the boundaries of the therapeutic relationship. As such, you are prohibited from connecting with, communicating with, or otherwise engaging with any of our staff's personal pages on social media, and we expect that you will take measures to ensure that your child complies with these policies as well.

You are welcome to follow The Hangout Spot on Facebook or Instagram. Please do not use messaging on social networking to contact our staff. These sites are not secure and our staff may not read these messages in a timely fashion. Do not use wall postings, @replies, or other means of engaging with our staff in public online. Engaging with our staff in this way could compromise your confidentiality.

TESTIMONIALS

You may find The Hangout Spot on websites that list businesses. Some of these websites include forums in which users rate providers and add reviews. Many of these sites comb search engines for business listings and automatically add listings regardless of whether the business has added itself to the site. If you should find The Hangout Spot on any of these sites, please know that the listing is not a request for a testimonial, rating, or endorsement from you as a client. Of course, you have a right to express yourself on any site you wish. You should be aware that if you are using these sites to communicate your feelings about The Hangout Spot, our staff may not ever have the opportunity to review your communications, so we encourage you to direct any concerns to your child's supervising BCBA.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

We are eager to work with you to resolve any disputes that may arise. Complaints, including the date, your child's name, the date your concern arose, and the nature of your concern, should be sent to either President/CEO, Meghan Perazella or Justyna Balzar, in writing. The Hangout Spot will meet and confer with you in person or telephonically, or via electronic mail correspondence, within ten business days of receipt of your complaint or dispute notification. In the event that an issue is not resolved within twenty business days, both you and The Hangout Spot will submit to binding arbitration, to be conducted in the State of Connecticut, in accordance with the rules of the American Arbitration Association, and the judgment upon award may be entered in, and enforced by any court of competent jurisdiction. If you suspect that a BACB (Behavior Analyst Certification Board) applicant or certificant is violating ethics requirements, you may contact the BACB at www.bacb.com for guidance or to make a formal complaint.

STATEMENT OF NON-DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES

The Hangout Spot treats and will treat all participants and their families with equality in a welcoming manner that is free from discrimination based on age, race, color, creed, ethnicity, religion, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, veteran or military status, or any other basis prohibited by federal, state, or local law.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Hangout Spot will likely receive confidential information about your child and family. We maintain comprehensive records of our clients' information, including session notes, client data, and other documents related to intervention. The Hangout Spot has thorough policies and procedures to protect clients' privacy and security. Please see our Notice of Privacy Policies for more information.