

**BUSINESS PLAN FOR 103 CENTRE  
STREET  
TOWN OF ESSEX**



**B E H A V I O U R**  
E S S E N T I A L S INC.

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## **A Brief Introduction to Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and Behaviour Essentials Inc.**

Our team at Behaviour Essentials Inc. provides Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) Services in Windsor-Essex. ABA is the science of human behaviour. It helps us to understand how behaviour works, how the environment influences behaviour, and how learning works. The interventions that are used in ABA are supported by extensive research in peer reviewed journals. The interventions are used to improve socially significant, meaningful behaviour, decrease interfering behaviour that is harmful or has a negative impact on learning and the person's day to day life, such as aggression and self-injurious behaviours, maintain behaviours that have already been learned, and generalize behaviours to new environments, people, and conditions. We can teach a number of skills using ABA, including: communication skills, motor skills, imitation skills, leisure and play skills, social and interpersonal skills, academic skills, safety skills, community participation skills, activities of daily living, toilet training, and so much more! ABA can be used to teach skills to individuals across a number of different populations, but our team at Behaviour Essentials primarily works with children and youth, ages 0 to 18, with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), or other behavioural challenges and diagnoses.

Behaviour Essentials Inc. was established in November of 2020 by our Clinical Supervisor/Owner, Deanna Marchese-Cunningham. Deanna is a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst with a Master's degree in Autism and Applied Behaviour Analysis. She has over 11 years of experience working in the field of ABA with children and youth with Autism and other diagnoses. When Behaviour Essentials was first established, we only provided services in the homes of our clients and within daycare settings. As our services began to grow, there was a need to have a physical office space for our staff to store toys, program materials, meet to discuss clients, and more. On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, our team moved into an office space at 8 Talbot Street North. We were able to expand our services to offer one on one in centre therapy to our clients which became a much-needed service. We were also able to offer a small social skills group for children with Autism.

### **Our Mission & Values**

Our mission at Behaviour Essentials Inc. is to provide high quality, empirically validated services based on the principles and practices of Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) to children with autism, behavioural challenges, and their families. Our goal is to work collaboratively with families and other professionals to ensure that essential, lifelong skills are taught to the clients we work with so that they can live safe, happy, and independent lives.

Our team at Behaviour Essentials aims to provide services that align with our core values:

- Affordability
- Collaboration with Others
- Compassionate and Ethical Care
- Continuous Learning
- Family Centred Care
- Flexibility
- Teaching Functional and Meaningful Skills
- Utilizing Evidence-Based Practices

### **Hours of Operation**

Our hours of operation are as follows:

- Monday to Friday- 9:00 am to 6:00 pm
- Saturday- 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
- Closed on Sundays, the entire Easter weekend, Civic Holiday in August, the week of Labour Day, the week between Christmas Eve and New Year's Day, and all Statutory Holidays

### **Location of Our Services**

Most of our services are provided in the homes of our clients. We also provide services within schools at the Catholic School Board, daycares, after school programs, day camps, or in our centre on Talbot Street. We have some clients that receive services in multiple settings. Currently, we have 6 clients that come to our centre for services, along with receiving services in other settings. The table below outlines the days of the week and the number of clients/hours that currently use our centre for one-on-one therapy:

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>
1 client (2 hours)	1 client (2 hours)	1 client (4.5 hours)	1 client (4.5 hours)	1 client (2 hours)	2 clients (2 hours/3 hours)

### **Number of Employees**

Behaviour Essentials currently employs six full time staff and two part time staff. Two of our staff are Board Certified Behaviour Analysts that clinically oversee each client's ABA

services and six of our staff are Behaviour Therapists that work directly with our clients implementing the goals laid out by our Behaviour Analysts. As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, ABA will be regulated in Ontario and our Board Certified Behaviour Analysts will be regulated health professionals under the College of Psychologists and Behaviour Analysts of Ontario.

### **Clients of Behaviour Essentials**

Behaviour Essentials provides ABA services to 28 children with ASD or other behavioural challenges and diagnoses across Windsor-Essex. Below is a chart breaking down each municipality in Windsor-Essex, along with the number of clients we provide services to in that area. As depicted, our team provides services across the area, but most of our clients are located in municipalities outside of Windsor. All of our clients receive one on one ABA services. At least half of our clients receive funding for services through the Ontario Autism Program (OAP) while the other half of our clients are paying out of pocket for our ABA services.

<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Number of Clients</b>
Amherstburg	3
Belle River	2
Essex	1
Harrow	2
Kingsville	1
LaSalle	3
Leamington	5
Tecumseh	2
Windsor	9

### **103 Centre Street: A Home for Behaviour Essentials**

103 Centre Street was purchased with the sole intention of it being a place to call home for Behaviour Essentials Inc. When 103 Centre Street was put on the market and Deanna had the chance to look at it, she felt that this home was the perfect place for Behaviour Essentials to provide services out of. The home has many windows to allow for natural light to come in, is open concept, has a backyard for our clients to play in, and it is in a quiet and safe area, but is still close to the main street in town. With that being said, there are a number of reasons why we believe a home is more beneficial to provide our services in:

- **Safer outdoor environment for our clients**
  - Our current commercial space is located on Talbot Street North which is a busy road.

- The commercial areas of Essex are busy and it could be dangerous for some children with autism and other disabilities to be close to a busy road due to elopement (running away from others) and not understanding or being aware of the dangers of the road.
    - Even if there was a home on the main street in town, it would not be an ideal location due to the traffic that frequents the main street.
  - We currently do not have access to any type of outdoor space such as a backyard or a park. Parks are not within a safe walking distance for our staff and clients.
  - There is a fenced in backyard at 103 Centre Street which would allow us to have a play set with swings, a slide, and a climber.
  - Outdoor leisure skills can be taught such as riding a bike, playing catch and throw with a ball, etc. These are skills that most typical children naturally learn, but many of our clients need to be systematically taught how to engage in these skills.
  - We also want to teach our clients some outdoor skills such as tending to a garden, raking leaves, planting a vegetable garden, etc. and the home has the space and yard to allow our team to teach these skills.
  - Where we would be located on Centre Street, it is quiet and a low traffic area that would allow us to work on safety goals with our clients.
    - Some of these safety goals include walking with a caregiver, responding to “stop” and “come here”, crossing a street safely, stopping at intersections, etc.
  - Centre Street is also only 2 blocks away from the downtown core, so it is close enough to walk to different stores to practice other community skills with our clients such as grocery shopping, paying for items, walking in the community, etc.
- **A home is a setting that is familiar, safe, and comfortable for most individuals, especially for those on the autism spectrum.**
  - Children with autism and other disabilities learn skills more quickly and maintain skills more easily when they are taught in a setting that is most similar to the natural environment where they will use the skill.
  - We want the home to (mostly) stay as it is and we will utilize all of the typical spaces of a home to teach skills that are needed within that setting.
  - A commercial space does not have the same feeling as a home. Our current setting is within a center commercial building. There is only a window/store front at the front of the building that allows natural light into the space, while the rest of the building does not have any natural light. For the mental health of our entire team and the clients we provide services to, a home setting would be more welcoming.

- **We can teach lifelong, essential life skills to our clients within a home setting much better than we could within a commercial building.**
  - The home already has all of the amenities that we need to teach life skills:
    - A laundry room
    - A kitchen
    - A bedroom
    - We can teach our clients to do their own laundry, make meals, do dishes, organize a kitchen, make a bed, sweep, vacuum, put away clothing, etc.
  
- **The current commercial space we are in limits the services that we can provide.**
  - Our capacity to provide services to children at the same time is limited.
  - We can only provide services to 2 children at a time in our current centre due to limited space.
  - A home allows for small group areas along with spaces that can be dedicated to one-on-one intervention.

### **Why Does Behaviour Essentials Want to Be in Essex?**

- Essex is such a central location in Windsor-Essex and our team can easily provide services to children in Windsor and the county.
- There are many small businesses and non-profit organizations that provide programs and resources for adult with different abilities (Lola's Round Table, Abode Respite Services Inc., Refuel Respite, Community Living) BUT there are no services for children with autism and other disabilities.
- Being in Essex has allowed us to meet so many fantastic clients due to our services being accessible in the county (there are very limited services in the county and parents may not access the services their child desperately needs due to them being located in Windsor).
- Essex is a safe community. All employees within our organization are women and the clients we provide services to are from a vulnerable population. No one on our team has ever felt unsafe working in Essex.
- Our team and the families we work with have come to really enjoy Essex and frequent businesses and restaurants in the area, even on their days off/when their kids do not have therapy.

## **The Impact on the Neighbourhood**

- Our impact on the neighborhood would be no greater than the impact of having a typical family within the home.
  - It might be less of an impact of a typical family due to not being in the home in the evening, on holidays, or on Sundays.
- Our Hours of Operation
  - Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 6:00 pm
    - Currently, all after school sessions are within client homes, so we currently do not have any clients in our centre past 2:30 pm.
  - Saturday 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
    - Our last session in the centre is at 1:00 pm and staff usually stay a bit later to clean up and organize for the following week.
- Although no one will be sleeping in the home, we take safety very seriously. We have a camera system and light timers to ensure that the home is protected and well lit.
- Most people are at work during our operating hours so others in the neighbourhood would not be disturbed.
- When clients come to our space for services, it is a quick drop off and pick up.
- There are limited people going in and out of the home.
  - By having people in the home during the day, this could deter possible break and enters in the neighbourhood as there are people watching what is happening throughout the day when others are at work
- Our services are conducted within the home and clients will be able to go outside to play or to work on community safety goals. This may be the only time noise is heard from our home. The noise would not be anything above the noise a typical family with children has (kids play outside, scream, run around, listen to music, etc.). There would also not be any parties, animals making noise, loud music, or power tools being used, unless we are completing a renovation.

## **Why Are Our Services So Important and Needed?**

- There are only a handful of ABA Service providers in Windsor-Essex.
- There is a 5-to-7-year waitlist for funding through the OAP/Ministry of Children, Youth, and Community Services.
- There is also a waitlist for our services due to limited ABA providers. Having this property will allow us to shorten our waitlist by having a bigger space.
- When children and youth receive intervention services, their lives improve, the lives of individuals in their family improve, and there are impacts on the community in the future as some individuals can hold quality employment and pursue further education. It is also better for the government as these children



may not rely as much on government assistance if they are taught the necessary skills to hold a job and live as independently as possible.

## **Safety Features Needed in the Home**

Through consultation with other ABA providers in the province that operate out of residential homes, these are the safety features they have in place:

- Smoke Detectors
- Carbon Monoxide Detectors
- Fire Drill Plan
- Evacuation Plan
- First Aid Locations
- Fire Extinguishers
- Camera System

## **Other Organizations in Essex that are Similar to Behaviour Essentials in Residential Communities**

- Community Living Homes are in residential communities
- Abode Respite Services operates out of two homes in Essex on Arthur
- Homes Daycares

## **ABA Organizations in Ontario Operating Out of Residential Homes**

- There are 3 organizations (that we know of) that provide ABA services within residential communities
  - London
    - Nurturing Behaviours Inc.
    - 11535 Longwoods Rd, Delaware, ON N0L 1E0
    - [www.nurturingbehaviours.ca](http://www.nurturingbehaviours.ca)
  - Waterloo
    - Boma Learning Centre
      - 9 Willow St, Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6
      - [www.bomalearningcentre.com/](http://www.bomalearningcentre.com/)
    - Best Behaviour Inc.
      - 15 Willow St, Waterloo, ON N2J 1V6
      - [www.bestbehaviour.ca](http://www.bestbehaviour.ca)

## **Future Plans for Behaviour Essentials Inc.**

With having a permanent location and a bigger space to provide ABA services out of, our team has a number of future plans for Behaviour Essentials. One idea we have discussed is offering a preschool life skills program for young children with autism. This would be offered in a small group format that takes place Monday to Friday. This group would teach children the skills that are needed to succeed in a school setting, such as being able to transition between activities and locations, tolerating waiting, sharing with others, sitting and attending to group instructions, and so much more. Our school systems are overwhelmed by the needs of children coming in and there are not enough support staff to assist them. By teaching these skills early on, this could lessen the stress on the school system and allow children to thrive in a group environment. Our team has also discussed an independent life skills program for teens and young adults to teach them how to be as independent as possible within a home setting, with the hope that they could live independently, or semi-independently, in the future. We discussed possible overnight opportunities where our team could help support the individuals through an evening routine, followed by sleeping in the home, and then supporting the individuals through a morning routine. Respite services are also very limited within Windsor-Essex. Our team has discussed developing a respite division of Behaviour Essentials, where respite workers are trained in basic ABA principles and procedures. The home could be a training hub to ensure that respite workers are appropriately trained to work with individuals requiring respite services.

## **Final Thoughts**

Thank you for taking the time to read through this business proposal. I hope that the love our team has for the field of ABA, the clients we work, and the Town of Essex was evident throughout this document. I hope that everyone that reads this will see the value in the services that our team provides and the number of lives our team can change by having a permanent and welcoming space to call home. The lease for our current location ends on August 31, 2024. We are closed for the first week of September and will reopen on Monday September 9, 2024 and will need to have 103 Centre Street ready for our clients to transition into. We would love to provide any further information that is necessary or answer any questions that arise!

\*\* As a side note, we have spoken to the neighbours on both sides of the home to let them know our intentions for the home. Both families have been supportive about our intentions. As the home has been empty, even before it was listed for sale, they have been keeping an eye on it to ensure that it stays safe and secure without someone living in it. \*\*

## Contact Information

Any questions, comments, or concerns can be brought to:

Deanna Marchese-Cunningham, M.Ed., BCBA

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[REDACTED]

Steven Cunningham

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]