THE HAVEN FAMILY CENTER

The Science of Connection

What to Ask Before You Hire a Behavior Analyst

A short list for families who've already been through this once

If you're reading this, there's a decent chance you've already tried a provider who didn't quite see your kid, or who saw the diagnosis before they saw the person. That experience is common, and it's exhausting. This list won't undo that, but it might help the next conversation go better.

How do you decide on goals, and who's involved in choosing them?
You want to hear your child's needs and interests in the answer, not just a list of deficits to fix.

How do you involve parents and other caregivers in the actual work, not just the paperwork?
Real involvement looks like coaching you in session, modeling strategies you can use at home, and building consistency across parents, grandparents, and any other regular caregiver. A form you sign once at intake is not the same thing.

What happens if my child is uncomfortable or upset during a session?
This tells you whether the provider adjusts to the child or expects the child to push through.

Do you consider sensory needs and communication style before you consider compliance?
The order matters. Compliance-first approaches and needs-first approaches produce very different sessions.

How do you define progress, and how often will I actually hear about it?
Vague answers here usually mean vague tracking. You deserve real updates, not just a report every few months.

What's your training beyond your certification, and how does it show up in session?
Certifications set a floor. Ask what continuing education actually changes about how they work with your kid.

Will my child be included in decisions about their own care as they get older?
Especially relevant for tweens, teens, and young adults. Their voice should grow into the process over time.

What does a first appointment actually look like?
You should get a concrete answer, not a brochure answer. If they can't describe it clearly, that's information too.

What happens when something isn't working?
Every plan needs adjusting sometimes. You want a provider who expects that, not one who's surprised by it.

You don't need to memorize this list or bring a clipboard to a consultation call. Just notice how it feels to ask. A good fit usually feels like a conversation, not an interview.

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