



Scholarship Essay Prompt

ABA Beyond the Individual

A reflection on systems, scale, and impact

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Introduction

This essay prompt is part of the Bierman Rising Clinician Scholarship. It is designed to help you reflect on the broader reach of Applied Behavior Analysis, beyond individual learners and into the systems that shape them.

You are not expected to propose a formal program design or demonstrate advanced systems expertise. Instead, this prompt invites you to think critically about where ABA principles could create meaningful change at a larger scale, and what role you might play in that work.

About this prompt

ABA is most commonly associated with direct care — working one-on-one with learners to build skills, reduce barriers, and improve quality of life. And that work matters deeply.

But behavior analysis is not limited to the treatment room. The same principles that guide individualized programming, like reinforcement, data-based decision making, functional assessment, and feedback loops can be applied to classrooms, clinical teams, workplace environments, and even organizational culture.

This prompt asks you to look outward: to identify a system that could benefit from a behavior-analytic approach, and to articulate how the science you are learning could drive change beyond the individual level.

How to use this prompt

Read the prompt carefully and consider a real or observed system that stands out to you. Reflect on what a behavior-analytic lens might reveal in that context.

Connect your thinking to your personal path in ABA and the kind of clinician you want to become.

Focus on reflection, not perfection.



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What we're looking for

This scholarship is designed to highlight:

- Systems thinking and big-picture clinical reasoning
- Conceptual grounding in behavior-analytic principles
- Thoughtful, ethical application of ABA beyond direct care
- A learner-first, outcomes-driven mindset

There are no right answers. Reviewers are looking for authenticity, curiosity, and a clear sense of how you hope to grow as a clinician.

Scholarship Essay Prompt

ABA Beyond the Individual

ABA is often applied at the individual level, but the same principles influence entire systems — classrooms, families, even organizations.

In your essay, address the following:

1

Reflect on a system (school, clinic, or workplace) that you observed or experienced that could benefit from ABA-based change. Describe what you noticed, and why it stood out to you.

2

Identify one behavior-analytic concept that could improve outcomes in that system — such a reinforcement system, data-based decision making, or performance feedback. Explain why you chose that concept and how it applies.

3

Describe how you hope to use your skills to create a larger-scale impact in ABA. Connect your answer to your current training, your career goals, and the kind of clinician you are working to become.

Suggested length: 1,000–1,500 words

Format: PDF or DOCX

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Submission Requirements

Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Have completed at least 8 graduate credits in an ABA master's program
- Be in good academic standing (if applicable)
- Submit an original essay response to the prompt

Essay File

Your essay must begin with a cover page that includes your name, school/program, and contact information.

Everything after the cover page must not contain any identifying information — no name, school name, or other details that could identify you.

This allows for blind, fair review.

Save your file using this exact format: **LastName_FirstName_Essay**
Example: Smith_Jordan_Essay.pdf



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Timeline

- **Applications open:** May 26, 2026
- **Applications close:** June 26, 2026
- **Winners announced:** August 4, 2026

Transcript file

Upload a copy of your transcript showing at least 8 completed graduate credits in an ABA master's program. An unofficial transcript or screenshot is acceptable.

Save your file using this exact format:

LastName_FirstName_Transcript

*Example: Smith_Jordan_Transcript.pdf or
Smith_Jordan_Transcript.png*

Submission details: Please submit your essay and transcript through the Bierman Rising Clinician Scholarship application page.

Link:

biermanautism.com/rising-clinician-scholarship

Questions? Contact:

scholarshipinfo@biermanautism.com

Important: AI use policy

Submissions suspected of being written by AI will not be scored and will be immediately disqualified. The ideas and writing must be your own. Light editing tools (grammar, spell check) is acceptable, but AI-generated content is not permitted.



*This essay prompt is provided as part of the Bierman Rising Clinician Scholarship.
Full Terms & Conditions and judging criteria are available at biermanautism.com/rising-clinician-scholarship.*

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