

# Understanding Your Priorities as a BCBA

Tasks That Impact  
Billing

Tasks That Impact  
Client Progress

Tasks That Impact  
Staff/Program  
Development

# Prioritizing Tasks

## Get the Important Tasks Done

You have an endless list of tasks that need to be done:

- Programming
- Motivating staff
- Supervision
- Assisting staff with behavioral events
- Parent training
- Treatment plans
- Staff training
- Annual reviews
- FBAs and BIPs
- Coordination of care meetings
- Collaborating with peers
- Research
- Phone calls
- Emails
- Team meetings
- And...

Get your tasks organized so you know which tasks you should work on at any given moment.



Faced with many seemingly conflicting priorities, how do you decide where to focus your attention?

Categorize tasks to make the decision easier. Most tasks can fit into 1 of 3 main categories:

- Tasks that impact billing (most urgent)
- Tasks that impact client progress (some urgency)
- Tasks that impact staff/programming development (least urgent)

While all these tasks are important, they don't all hold the same urgency. Attending to the tasks that are both important and urgent first provides the direction you need. Once you assign a task to a category, you know how urgent the task is. Fit those most urgent tasks into your schedule and fill the holes with those tasks from other categories.

# Activities That Impact Billing

## Treatment Planning

- Monitor due dates
- Ensure adequate behavior/program progress
- Conduct peer-to-peer reviews

## Direct Services

- Scheduled
- Coverage for early/late arrivals

## RBT Supervision

- Training
- Feedback
- Skills assessments

## Parent Training

- Clinics
- Group
- Play clinics

# Top Priority

The tasks that impact billing are typically your most urgent tasks. Without these billable tasks, the doors on the business can't remain open.



# Tasks that Impact Billing

Many tasks directly or indirectly impact billing.

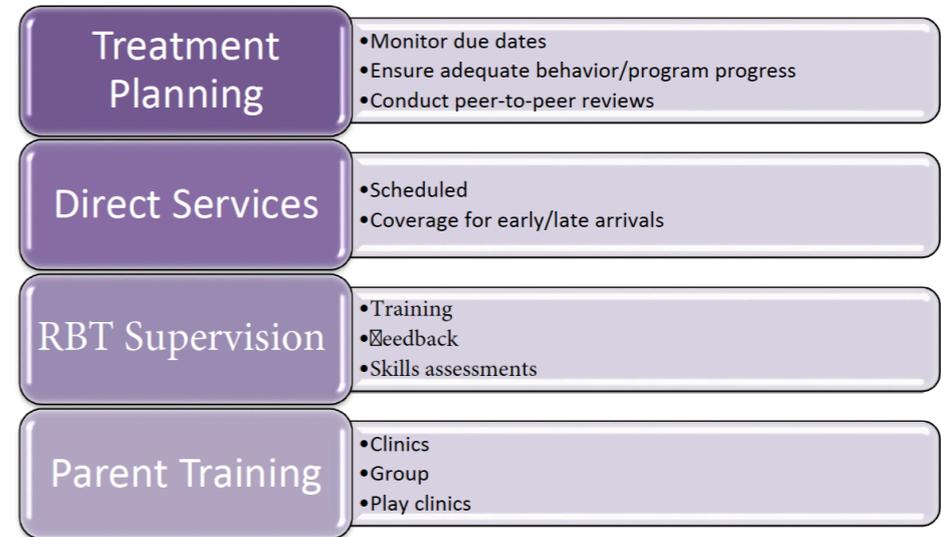
Each insurance company has specific rules about which tasks are billable and which are not. Some tasks like treatment planning have a waterfall effect if not completed by the deadline. Other tasks like parent training are important, but do not effect the delivery of other services.

Learn the billing codes and rules for each of the insurance companies you work with. This allows you to understand which activities are billable and which are not. Activities that are commonly billable include:

- RBT supervision
- Direct services
- Initial and reassessments
- Parent/caregiver training (this may include training for school staff or even some meetings)

While it's much less common, some insurance companies will pay for time spent treatment planning or programming.

The image above loosely depicts the order of importance for these billable tasks. Complete



Giving priority to tasks that impact billing help the business remain viable so you can continue to help your clients.

treatment plans/reassessments/initial assessments or the client goes without services and the company can't bill for those services. Monitor due dates and build time into your schedule to work on them far ahead (i.e. 4-6 weeks) in advance of the due date.

Many agencies rely on BCBA's to cover sessions when RBTs call out sick, take vacations, or leave the agency. This time comes out of the approved hours for the BCBA code so make sure there are adequate approved hours to bill for the direct service time needed.

RBT supervision makes up the majority of your billable time and parent training occurs at a comparatively low frequency, allowing these tasks to be rescheduled when needed.



# Activities That Impact Client Progress

## Reviewing Data

- Behavior
- Program
- ABC

## Updating Programs

- Monitor sufficient programs open in treatment
- Monitor settings

## Behavioral Support

- Planned
- Spontaneous

## Coordination of Care Activities

- School meetings
- Communication through email with other services such as OT, speech, therapists, etc.

## Some Priority

Client progress is why we are in business. Many of the tasks in this category are critical to success but not necessarily billable.

# Tasks that Impact Progress

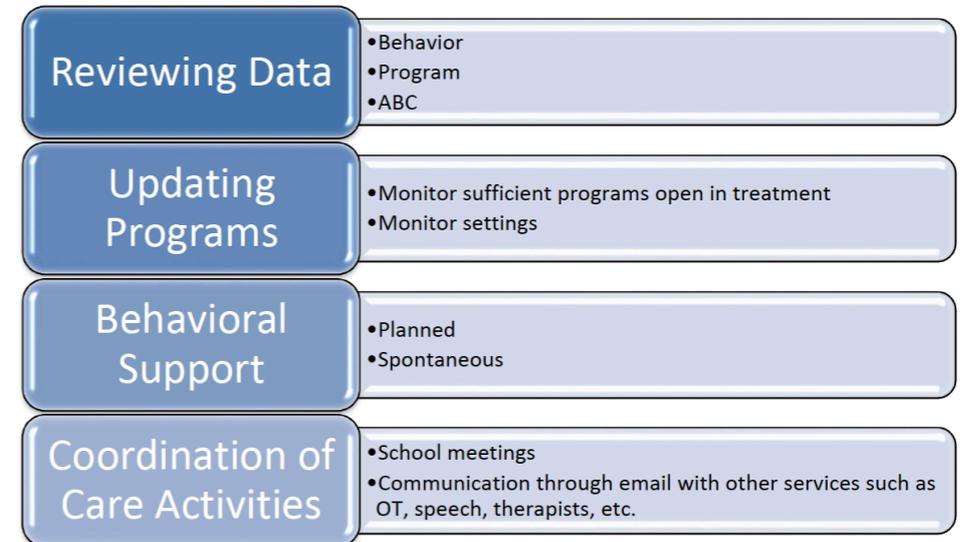
Many tasks directly or indirectly impact client progress.

Many of the skills you learned in school or practiced in your field experience fall into this category. These tasks tend to feel more comfortable than the tasks in the previous category and you might feel tempted to move these up on the priorities list. It's easy to justify prioritizing progress over billing, but the billable tasks allow your RBTs to get paid and keep the lights on. Your client won't make progress if the business is forced to close.

As you become more efficient (through practice and developing systems) with some of the more mundane paperwork, you will free up time to address more of these tasks. While some insurance companies will authorize codes for some of these tasks, most of these tasks are non billable.

Consider delegating some of these tasks if you have BCBA candidates or BCaBAs who are able to tackle them. Delegate repetitive tasks as much as possible including tasks such as:

- Adding programs to an online data collection system



Prioritize tasks in this category that result in the most influence over client progress.

- Monitoring the number of active programs for each client
- Offering behavioral support according to a BIP
- Attending school meetings that involve a simple exchange of information or will involve the school primarily sharing information
- Assessing ABC data to identify new target behaviors or changes to current behaviors

While you must closely monitor the tasks you delegate, even reducing the load by a few tasks can make a difference, especially when you have several high priority tasks due at the same time.



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# Activities That Impact Staff/Program Development

## BCBA Supervision

- Weekly group meetings
- In-vivo supervision
- Regular individual meetings when possible

## Staff Meetings

- Skills assessment
- Weekly group meetings
- Routine in-vivo supervision

## Creating Training Materials

- Group staff training
- Group parent training
- Other training materials

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## Lowest Priority

These tasks improve your overall program and often build staff moral. Although these tasks are important, other tasks should be completed first.

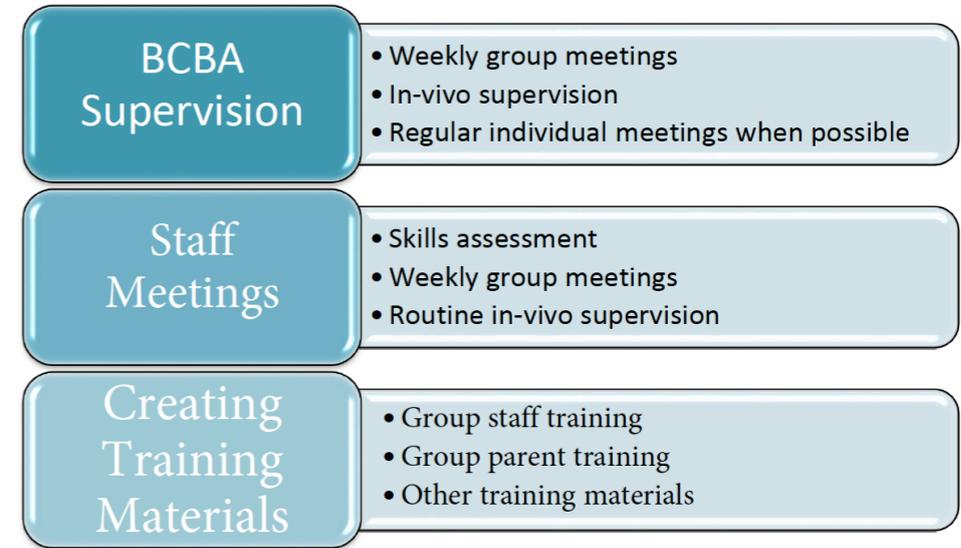
# Tasks that Impact Development

Staff and program development impacts staff retention.

The tasks that are included in this category may significantly improve staff satisfaction and retention. In addition, they may influence parent satisfaction so are important considerations.

You must meet minimum requirements for supervision for BCBA candidates, but once your other tasks are complete, spend a little extra time providing feedback, modeling or training. Consider ways to individualize the supervision experience to meet each candidate's needs. Identify their goals and areas of special interest. Create projects or assignments for them to complete. This all takes time, but significantly improves the supervision experience.

Staff meetings help ensure all staff hear the same message and everyone remains on the same page. They also create a sense of community when conducted in a way where everyone has the opportunity to speak. Staff meetings provide opportunities for staff recognition and positive feedback. Plan for these meetings as frequently as your time and budget allow. Provide snacks or another reinforcer during the meetings to ensure staff have a positive experience.



Prioritize tasks in this category that result in the most influence over client progress.

Your ABA program is only as strong as the skills of your staff. Regular training to expand their skills keeps staff motivated and interested in the importance of their role. When large group trainings are not possible, offer a Personalized System of Instruction (PSI) of different topics that are relevant for your staff. These trainings provide instruction and feedback that staff can access on their own. Although these don't provide an opportunity to practice skills, building a library allows you to supplement larger trainings.

Creating group parent training takes time, but it provides parents with a way to connect with others and normalizes the skills you want them to utilize. Try planning a few per year if you don't have time monthly.



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# Enjoy Your Career

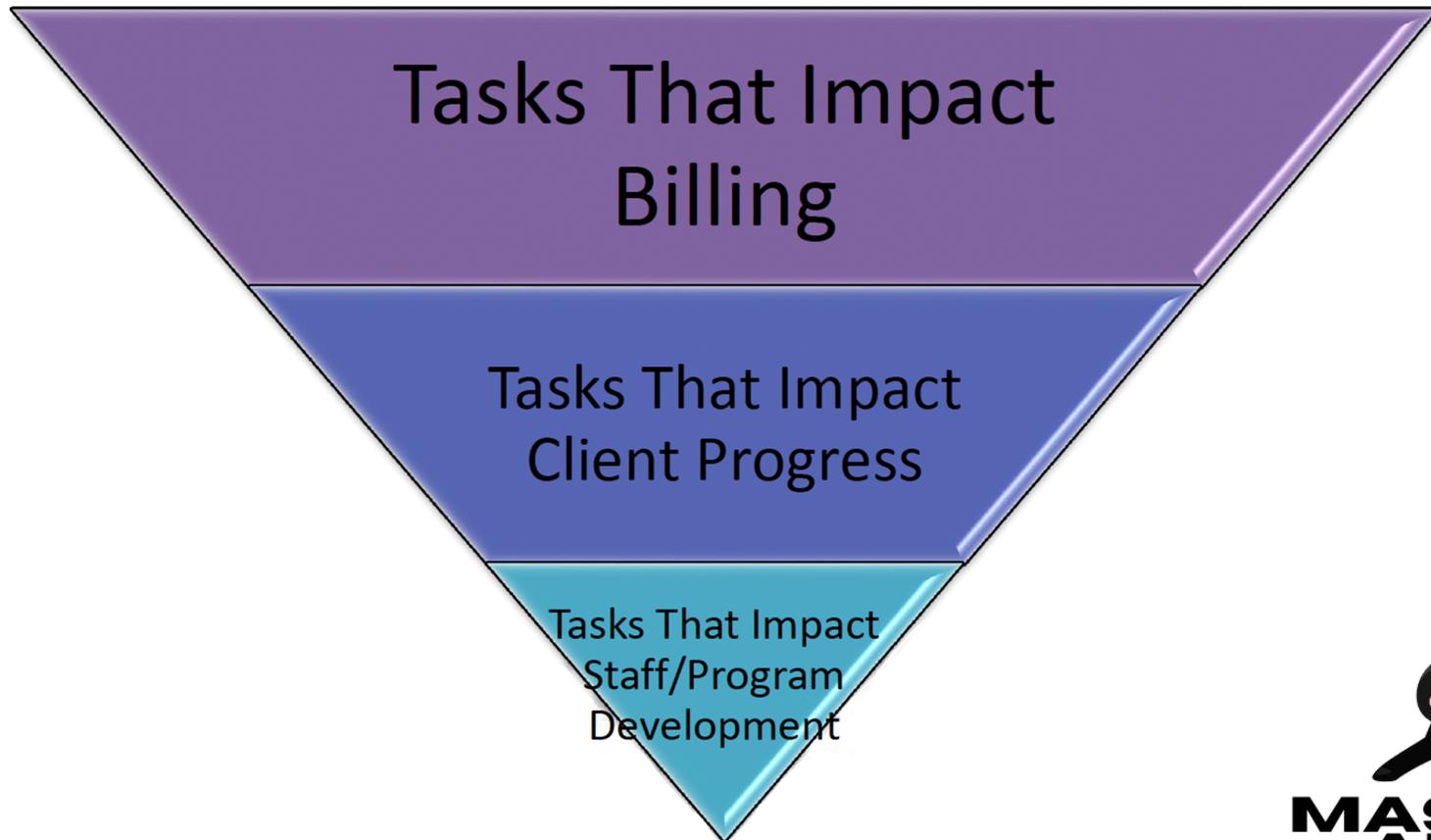
Prioritizing your tasks doesn't sound fun or glamorous, but it will reduce stress and help you enjoy your day-to-day.

Your agency might prioritize tasks a bit differently. What's critical to remember is to create a system for categorizing the tasks you complete most often. Systems improve efficiency and make your day-to-day tasks much smoother. If you're struggling with prioritizing your tasks, ask your supervisor for help or reach out to a mentor for advice.



# BCBA Priorities Matrix

Reduce stress and get more done!



# How to use the matrix

Most tasks required of a BCBA can fit into 3 main categories:

- Tasks that impact billing
- Tasks that impact client progress
- Tasks that impact staff or program development

Categorizing tasks provides a framework for prioritizing those tasks. Once the priority is established, it's a simple matter of doing the first things first.

This matrix includes the framework used in the Eisenhower method. The Eisenhower method categorizes tasks according to urgency and importance. Using this framework you will:

- Do the tasks that are urgent and important
- Decide when to do the tasks that are important but not urgent (schedule the tasks)
- Delegate tasks that are urgent but not important
- Delete tasks that are neither urgent or important

Complete the chart within each of the 3 main categories of BCBA tasks. You now have a firm hold on your to-do list!

## Tasks that impact billing

Important	<b>Do</b>	Decide
Not Important	Delegate	Delete
	Urgent	Not Urgent

## Tasks that impact client progress

Important	<b>Do</b>	Decide
Not Important	Delegate	Delete
	Urgent	Not Urgent

## Tasks that impact staff/program development

Important	<b>Do</b>	Decide
Not Important	Delegate	Delete
	Urgent	Not Urgent

# Tasks that impact billing

Do

Decide

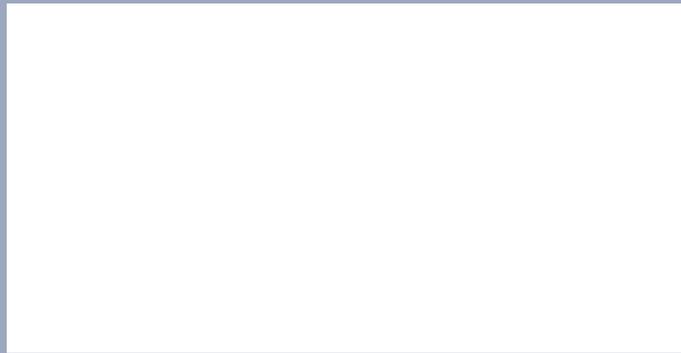
Important



Delegate

Delete

Not Important



Urgent

Not Urgent

# Tasks that impact client progress

Do

Decide

Important

Delegate

Delete

Not Important

Urgent

Not Urgent

Tasks that impact staff/program development

Do

Decide

Important

Delegate

Delete

Not Important

Urgent

Not Urgent