Why one ABA CEO deliberately slows down onboarding

Discover how ABA organizations can balance hiring speed with effective clinician training, enhancing care quality and retention through better onboarding practices.

Published July 30, 2026



Days to hire is one of the most important metrics in ABA hiring. It measures how quickly you move a strong candidate from application to a signed offer, and in today's competitive labor market, that speed often determines whether you secure a great RBT or BCBA or lose them to another provider.

In a recent Behavioral Health Business panel discussion, three leaders responsible for ABA hiring made the case for keeping days to hire front and center while tracking a second metric that begins where the first ends.

"The key metric today is the time it takes to get to a billable clinician," said Adam Lewis, general manager of talent workforce development at Viventium and founder of Apploi. "Every other piece is underneath that."

Joining Lewis were Moishe Bobker, CEO of Kids Club ABA, and Joey Toledano, CEO of Supportive ABA. Together, they highlighted a shift many growing ABA organizations are making: measuring not only how fast they hire clinicians, but how quickly those clinicians begin delivering authorized, billable care.

Meet the second number: days to working

Days to hire measures how efficiently you move a candidate from application to accepted offer. What it doesn't capture is everything that happens afterward: credentialing, background checks, payroll setup, license verification, training, and the many administrative steps that separate an accepted offer from a clinician's first day with clients.

That's where **days to working** comes in.

In ABA, every unnecessary day between offer acceptance and a clinician's first billable session delays both revenue and access to care for children waiting for services.

Lewis noted that some organizations spend "30 or 40 days to get someone fully onboarded" after an offer is accepted. The panel agreed that organizations should be aiming much closer to 10 to 14 days whenever possible.

The important distinction is that these are two separate metrics measuring two different parts of the hiring journey. Days to hire answers how quickly you secure talent. Days to working measures how efficiently you prepare that clinician to begin providing care.

The plot twist: one CEO intentionally slows part of onboarding

Just as the panel established the importance of reducing days to working, Bobker shared an idea that initially sounds contradictory.

Kids Club ABA aggressively optimizes days to hire. But once a candidate accepts an offer, Bobker deliberately refuses to rush one part of the onboarding process: training.

Every RBT and BCBA completes structured preparation before becoming client-facing. While there is naturally some drop-off between offer acceptance and a clinician's first day working independently, Bobker believes protecting that training period pays dividends later through stronger retention, better prepared staff, and higher-quality care.

This means separating administrative efficiency from clinical readiness.

Organizations should eliminate delays caused by paperwork and redundant processes, but they shouldn't sacrifice the training that prepares clinicians for success simply to improve a dashboard metric.

Two metrics, two different jobs

These metrics serve different purposes.

Days to hire should be as short as possible. A slow hiring process costs organizations great candidates.

Days to working should focus on removing unnecessary friction while preserving the activities that genuinely improve clinician readiness. Training and competency development aren't delays to eliminate. They're investments in quality.

That distinction matters because organizations that lump everything together often end up optimizing the wrong part of the process. Leadership sees onboarding taking 30 or 40 days and looks for opportunities to shorten it. Without understanding where the delays occur, it's easy to reduce training instead of eliminating administrative waste.

The result may be faster onboarding on paper, but less prepared clinicians supporting clients.

Finding the real delays

If training isn't where organizations should save time, where should they look?

Toledano pointed to one of the biggest sources of unnecessary friction: duplicate data entry between applicant tracking systems, payroll, and EMRs.

He described what he called the "data double take," recalling his own experience entering the same information multiple times throughout the hiring process.

Bobker shared another practical improvement. Rather than requiring candidates to scan and upload documents, his team often accepts photos taken directly from a phone while maintaining the same level of human review for credential verification.

In other words, the biggest opportunities usually aren't found by reducing oversight or shortening training. They're found by simplifying the administrative work surrounding onboarding.

One recommendation both operators endorsed was surprisingly simple: apply to your own organization.

"If you mock hire yourself and fill out that info, you'll get the real experience of how people feel when they go through it," Toledano said.

Walking through your own hiring process quickly reveals where time is spent protecting quality and where it's simply being wasted.

Speed and connection aren't opposites

Another concern discussed during the panel was whether increased automation removes the human touch candidates expect from a caregiving organization.

The panel's answer was no.

Automation should reduce paperwork so teams have more time for meaningful conversations with new hires. Bobker explained that Kids Club ABA reinforces onboarding with personal check-ins at 30, 60, and 90 days to identify concerns before they become resignations.

"Let's not wait 90 days, let's not wait 120 days to make any of those modifications as needed," he said.

Supportive ABA takes a similar approach, combining automated text messages with personal outreach so new employees can raise concerns early.

Neither organization views automation as a replacement for people. Instead, it creates more opportunities for connection while reducing administrative burden.

What this means for your organization

Days to hire still deserves a prominent place on every ABA hiring dashboard.

But by adding days to working alongside it, organizations gain visibility into what happens after a candidate accepts an offer. That makes it easier to distinguish between delays that protect quality and delays that simply create frustration.

As you evaluate your own hiring process, consider a few questions:

- Are you tracking days to hire and days to working as separate metrics?
- Which onboarding delays are driven by essential training and credentialing, and which are caused by redundant administrative work?
- If you shortened your onboarding timeline tomorrow, would you be removing paperwork or reducing clinician preparation?

The organizations that answer those questions well won't just fill positions faster. They'll build onboarding experiences that prepare clinicians for success, improve retention, and ultimately help more children receive care sooner.

Turn better metrics into better outcomes

Making the shift from measuring hiring speed alone to optimizing the entire journey doesn't require sacrificing quality or creating more work for your team. It requires better visibility, connected workflows, and fewer manual handoffs.

With Viventium + Apploi, ABA organizations can streamline hiring and onboarding from application through a clinician's first day of care. By connecting recruiting, onboarding, payroll, and workforce management in a single workflow, teams can:

- Eliminate duplicate data entry
- Automate administrative tasks
- Accelerate credentialing and onboarding
- Spend more time preparing new hires for long-term success

The result is a faster path from candidate to billable clinician without compromising the training, oversight, and human connection that drive better retention and better care.

Ready to see how it works? Request a demo to learn how Viventium + Apploi can help your organization reduce time to hire, streamline onboarding, and build a workforce that's ready to deliver exceptional care from day one.

This post draws on insights from "The recruitment-to-retention roadmap for growing ABA organizations," a webinar hosted by Behavioral Health Business and sponsored by Viventium + Apploi, featuring Adam Lewis (Viventium/Apploi), Moishe Bobker (Kids Club ABA), and Joey Toledano (Supportive ABA).

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