Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans Information Packet

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What is a Functional Behavioral Assessment and How Is It Used? An Overview for Parents

When a child with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) has challenging behaviors in school that are not improving, parents may request a re-evaluation to more closely examine the behaviors of concern.

As part of that re-evaluation, a district may conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) to identify special education and related services and develop or modify a behavioral intervention plan.

What is an FBA?

The FBA is a structured data gathering process an IEP team uses to help identify positive behavior interventions and supports to be used in the school. An FBA is used to determine the answers to the following three questions:

- Why does the student have challenging behavior?
- What reinforces the challenging behavior?
- What positive interventions help decrease the challenging behavior and increase the desired behavior.

When is an FBA required?

Federal law requires an FBA whenever a child with a disability has an educational placement change for disciplinary reasons in the following instances:

1. When a child is removed from school for more than 10 consecutive days for behavior that is a manifestation of the student's disability.

2. When a child is removed for more than 10 school days for conduct that is not a manifestation of the disability but the IEP team determines that an FBA is necessary.

3. When a child is placed in an interim alternative educational setting for not more than 45 school days for behavior involving a dangerous weapon, illegal drugs or infliction of serious bodily injury.

Are there other times to develop an FBA?

When positive behavior interventions and supports are effective, your child should be making progress on the IEP goals. If he or she is not making progress, or if there are new behavioral challenges that are keeping your child from making progress, parents should think about requesting a new FBA.

You may also request an FBA if your child's challenging behaviors interfere with other children and their ability to learn. It is always best to put your request in writing and keep a copy for yourself.

What happens next?

After receiving your written request, the IEP team would then meet, review the behavioral concerns, and determine the need for an FBA. Sometimes the IEP team wants to consider new or different positive behavioral interventions, supports, or strategies. Sometimes they may agree that it is necessary to conduct a new FBA.

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Who collects data for the FBA?

The IEP team.

What are the steps in conducting an FBA?

1. **Identify and agree on the behavior(s) that need to change.** The identification process begins with describing the challenging behaviors so that everyone understands the concern. If a child has many problem behaviors, it is important to focus on those that are the most serious.

2. **Determine where the behaviors do and do not occur.** The team may conduct interviews, perform observations, and discuss the following questions:

   - What is different about the places where the behaviors **do not** occur?

   - What is different about the places where the problem behaviors **do** occur?

   - Are the problem behavior(s) related to how the child responds to the teacher or peers?

   - Does the number of other students present, or the difficulty of the schoolwork, cause a problem?

   - Does the time of day or a child's mood affect the behavior? Are there daily problems for the child (such as on the bus in the morning, or challenges with peers in the hallway)?

   - Do the behaviors occur in a specific set of circumstances or a specific setting?

   - What specific events seem to support or influence the problem behaviors?

3. **Collect information on the child's performance from as many sources as possible.** There may be other places to get information about the child's challenging behaviors. That may include a review of previous assessment data, behavior incident reports, and other documented information the school has about the child's behavior. Parents also might share information from other assessments including mental health providers. While this is good information to know, parents should be knowledgeable about how much private health information they should share.

4. **Develop an informed guess** about why problem behaviors occur (the function of the behaviors). Using all the information gathered through observation and review of data, an idea of why the behavior occurs is stated. This helps predict where and why your child's problem behaviors are most and least likely to occur.

5. **Identify behaviors that can be taught** and supported within the school and that provide your child with positive alternatives to the problem behavior(s).

How do you use information from the FBA in your child's IEP?

Children who are using negative behavior can benefit from learning new ways to act. The IEP can include goals for learning alternative, more positive ways to respond when they are frustrated, angry, or afraid. A plan for using positive behavioral interventions should also be in place as part of the IEP process for your child.

Once your child's FBA is completed, you should find these changes made to the IEP:

1. **Goals that teach replacement behaviors.** Children can be taught to recognize their triggers and learn new skills to use in place of the challenging behavior(s) they previously used.

2. **A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).** This plan includes specific strategies for modifying the curriculum, environment, activities, or interactions with the child to prevent occurrences of the challenging behavior.

   It should include positive reinforcement and supports when your child demonstrates that he or she is using the new skills in place of the challenging behavior(s).

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Please note: It is important also to know that a positive Behavior Intervention Plan is NOT a plan to determine what happens to a student who violates a rule or code of conduct. That would more appropriately be called a discipline plan.

For additional information on positive behavior interventions, functional behavioral assessment and related topics, please contact:

PACER Center
PACER.org

Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
pbis.org

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
csefel.vanderbilt.edu/

Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI)
challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/

Minnesota Department of Education
education.state.mn.us/mde/index.html

IDEA.gov
http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/,root,regs,300,E,300%252E530,

Functional Behavioral Assessment and Positive Interventions: What Parents Need to Know

Many children have inappropriate behaviors that are part of their disability. These behaviors may make it difficult to learn, cause harm to the child or others, or isolate a child from his or her peers. Some children have behaviors that they can't control, such as tics for a child with Tourette syndrome or self-harming behaviors for some children with developmental disabilities. Some children may be sad or anxious. Others simply have not learned positive ways to have their needs met. In any of these instances, the behaviors interfere with the children's ability to learn the skills they need to be successful.

We *can* teach appropriate behavior skills to children! To do so, we need to understand problem behaviors, such as where they occur and what purpose they serve for a child. The process of learning about how children develop problem behaviors is called *functional behavioral assessment (FBA)*. If we learn about the behaviors and know when and where they are likely to happen, we can plan positive strategies to teach new behaviors. These strategies are called *positive behavioral interventions*. Teachers and parents will use the information from an FBA to help a child learn new skills. The goal is to teach children how to manage their own behaviors.

This overview will help parents understand functional behavioral assessment and positive interventions. You have a very important role in this assessment, because you have information about your child that no one else has. When you understand the process, you can work effectively with the rest of the team. You will have the tools to make decisions when functional behavioral assessment is proposed for your child. What you know about your child will be used to help develop effective instruction.

Thinking about behavior

Adults often have two different approaches to dealing with problem behaviors. These different approaches are based on different beliefs. One belief is that the child *is a problem*, and the other is that the child *has a problem*.

The child is a problem

Billy is a 12-year-old sixth-grade student. He refuses to do his schoolwork, and then his teacher does not know what to do. He becomes angry when the teacher reminds him to get to work. He screams, swears, and even throws his work on the floor so the teacher will leave him alone. The teacher may think Billy is lazy, mean, or disrespectful. The teacher may feel angry or threatened. Adults who are angry often use punishment or threats: "Do it or else." We do not always realize that children do not think about their problem behaviors the way we do.

When we punish often, children may see us as uncaring. Some may come to fear or avoid us. Others may become even louder and angrier because of the punishment. Children who do not back down when arguing with adults often receive increasingly harsh punishments. Many adults think children should not be permitted to win disagreements. Children, on the other hand, often say things they do not really mean because they are angry. They may refuse to give up even if they lose privileges or are suspended from school.

When a child is suspended from school for problem behaviors, some people think of it as "good medicine for bad behavior." They think the removal teaches the child a lesson and that the child will change the problem behaviors as a result.

But what if that child does not like going to school? He or she may learn that using problem behaviors is a good way to earn a vacation from school. The child may actually want what we think is a punishment.

The child has a problem

Billy, the 12-year-old described earlier, has behaviors that need to change. Let's assume we have assessment data that give a clearer picture of Billy. We find that he reads at a second-grade level. He was sexually abused at age three by a neighbor. Billy is angry over his parents' recent divorce and continuing custody battle. He is worried about where he will live.

Clearly Billy's problem behaviors must change. They are serious and interfere with learning. What we decide to do about the behavior, however, comes from how we feel about it and whether we believe it is willful. That is where functional behavioral assessment comes in. It can help us to identify *why* Billy is frustrated and angry, so we can help him to learn the skills he needs. A reasonable person would have a hard time believing that punishment alone could help Billy succeed.

Positive Behavioral Interventions

Positive: characterized by or displaying approval, acceptance, or affirmation.

Behavior: what we do.

Intervention: an action that changes a course of events.

(Adapted from *Merriam Webster's Tenth Collegiate Dictionary.*)

The 1997 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regulations state:

The IEP team shall, in the case of a child whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider, where appropriate, strategies, including positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports that address that behavior.
IDEA 300.346(2)(i)

Positive behavioral interventions are used *before* problem behaviors occur. To develop positive interventions, the team must understand why a child has problem behaviors and what strategies might be helpful. Many different strategies can be used to reduce problem behaviors in school: changing where a child sits in the classroom, adjusting the schoolwork, rewarding the child for positive behaviors. The child's teacher may speak in a different tone of voice to help the child remain calm. Adults may try to keep calm when the child is angry. The goal is to stop or reduce the problem behaviors so that punishment does not become necessary.

Here is an example: The teacher knows that Mary is more likely to argue with the teacher when she sits next to Mark. If the teacher thinks Mary argues because she wants Mark to notice her, there are several things the teacher can do. She can separate Mary and Mark so that Mary does not try so hard to get his attention. She can also teach Mary more positive ways to gain Mark's attention and provide positive reinforcement for using the new behaviors.

Behaviors are governed by their consequences

John has a fight (behavior) and is suspended from school (consequence). If John loves school and can control the behavior, the consequence is negative because he has to give up something he wants (school). If John dislikes school, however, he may see that same consequence as positive. He may learn that fighting is a good way to be sent home. The next time John does not want to be in school, what behavior is he likely to use?

Many of us have learned to deal with problem behaviors by doing nothing until they occur. After a child uses the behaviors, we punish. Punishment does not teach new skills, though. Its goal is to stop problem behaviors from continuing. If we do not teach a child what to do instead, the child will probably continue to misbehave. Any time a child uses a behavior that is successful in meeting a need, the

behavior is likely to be repeated. The behavior serves a *function* for the child.

Most people agree that we need to have consequences for problem behaviors. We must also focus on teaching the positive behavior skills we would like to see. If we can understand the function of problem behaviors, we can teach a child more positive behaviors that serve the same function, and the problem behaviors are no longer needed.

What is functional behavioral assessment?

Functional behavioral assessment (FBA) is a process for collecting information. The data the team collects are used to help determine why problem behaviors occur. The data will also help identify ways to address the behaviors. Functional behavioral assessment data are used to develop a positive behavioral intervention plan. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act specifically requires an FBA whenever a child with a disability has his or her current placement changed for disciplinary reasons. This does not mean that we should not think about FBA at other times, too.

The evaluation requirements of IDEA make it clear that children must be evaluated in "all areas related to the suspected disability." This means that if your child has problem behaviors that are not improving, your child may need an evaluation to examine the behaviors more closely. You may request an FBA at any time if your child's problem behaviors are becoming worse, or when the team cannot explain to you why the problem behaviors occur.

There are many reasons a child might misbehave. Some have to do with the nature of the child, such as allergies to dust, foods, or plants. A sinus infection, headache, or toothache can also lead to problem behaviors. Some children have a medical diagnosis, such as bipolar disorder or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder that affects behavior. The team's responsibility is to collect data to help it understand why a child has problem behaviors.

The people who complete the functional behavioral assessment use different ways to collect data. School staff may interview you and your child. They observe your child in different settings, such as the lunchroom or classroom, or on the playground. They gather reports from teachers and others. The team reviews your child's records, including any assessments you would like to share.

The results of this process should lead to a *hypothesis* about why problem behaviors occur. A hypothesis is an educated guess, based on the data the team has gathered. Assessment results are used to develop a positive behavior intervention plan.

Behaviors are context-related

Most behaviors are related to their context. This means that behaviors often result from what is happening in the child's world or environment. These are just a few of the factors that may lead to problem behaviors:

- a disagreement between children
- the number of children in a classroom
- the quality of peer relationships
- the size of the classroom
- medicine changes
- the difficulty of schoolwork

Other things, such as who is present and what their expectations are, also affect behaviors. Behaviors may also be a problem when a child is emotionally upset and cannot handle the demands of the environment.

Behaviors serve a function

Problem behaviors usually serve a function, or purpose, for the child. Sometimes we see problem behaviors when a substitute teacher is in the classroom. In this case, we must be careful not to assume that the child doesn't like the teacher or that the child wants to show off for friends. Perhaps the child likes his or her regular teacher and is upset when she is not there. Or the child may be anxious about what to

expect with a new teacher. A child who is upset about having a new teacher may use problem behaviors in order to be placed in a less stressful setting. Some children would rather be in a time-out space than in their classroom.

Unfortunately, consequences that improve the behaviors of most students do not work with all. Sending a child to the principal's office, for example, can be ineffective if the consequence does not address the complex function of a child's behavior.

What a child does (the behavior) and *why* a child does it (the function) may be unrelated. Skipping school and getting good grades are two very different behaviors. Yet they may serve the same function for different children—gaining adult attention. Two children may both want to be noticed by their parents; one may study hard to have good grades while the other skips class. They do very different things to get the attention they want. While the function of both behaviors is positive (parent attention), skipping class is not an acceptable way to be noticed.

Behaviors are influenced by events in the environment (antecedents)

What happens in an environment affects behavior. The size of a classroom, the number of students, transitions, or early morning bus incidents are all antecedents that might affect a child's behavior.

It is important to know what leads to both positive and negative behaviors. If teachers and parents understand the conditions that lead to problem behaviors, then changing the conditions may reduce the need for the behaviors. Positive teaching strategies such as providing structure, routine, and rewards for appropriate behaviors help to increase positive behavior skills.

Steps in conducting a functional behavioral assessment

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act does not define how a functional behavioral assessment is done. The process may vary with the needs of each child. However, several specific steps are always part of this kind of assessment. The process begins with identifying the specific behaviors that must change. If a child has many problem behaviors, it will be important to focus on the most serious one or two behaviors. The problem behaviors are described in a way that helps everyone to understand exactly what the behaviors are. These are typical steps:

1. ***Identify and agree on the behavior(s)*** that most need to change.
2. ***Determine where the behaviors occur and where they do not.*** Identify what may contribute to the behaviors. The team will ask these kinds of questions:
   - What is unique about the environments where behaviors are not a concern?
   - What is different in the places where the problem behaviors do occur? Could they be related to how the child and teacher get along? Does the number of other students or the work a child is asked to do cause the problem? Could the time of day or a child's mood affect the behaviors? Was there a bus problem or a disagreement in the hallway?
   - Are the behaviors likely to occur in a specific set of circumstances or a specific setting? What events seem to support the problem behaviors?
3. ***Collect data*** on the child's performance from as many sources as possible.
4. ***Develop a hypothesis*** about why problem behaviors occur (the function of the behaviors). A hypothesis is an educated guess, based on data. It helps predict where and why problem behaviors are most likely to occur, and where and why they are least likely to occur.

*5. **Identify other behaviors that can be taught*** that will serve the same function for the child.

*6. **Test the hypothesis.*** The team develops and uses positive behavioral interventions that are written into the child's IEP or behavior intervention plan.

*7. **Evaluate the success of the interventions***. Change or fine-tune as needed.

If children have behaviors that place them or others in danger, they may need a crisis intervention plan. Crisis interventions should be developed before they are needed. The team should decide what behaviors are crises and what they (and the child) will do in a crisis. By having a plan that guides actions, teachers can help children through difficult emotional situations.

Behavior intervention plan

An effective behavior intervention plan (often called a behavior support plan or positive intervention plan) is used to teach or reinforce positive behaviors. Typically, a child's team develops the plan. It usually includes:

- skills training to increase appropriate behavior
- changes that will be made in classrooms or other environments to reduce or eliminate problem behaviors
- strategies to replace problem behaviors with appropriate behaviors that serve the same function for the child
- supports for the child to use the appropriate behaviors

A positive behavior intervention plan is *not* a plan to determine what happens to a student who violates a rule or code of conduct. That would be more appropriately called a discipline plan or a punishment plan.

School discipline policies

The IEP team determines whether the school discipline policies need to be amended for a child, or whether the consequences need to be different from those written into the policy. This decision should be based on evaluation and a review of the records, including the discipline records or any manifestation determination review(s) that have been completed by the school. A child's IEP or behavior intervention plan should focus on teaching skills.

Sometimes school discipline policies are not successful in correcting problem behaviors. That is, the child does not learn what the school staff intended through the use of punishments such as suspension. The child may learn instead that problem behaviors are useful in meeting a need, such as being noticed by peers. When this is true, it is difficult to defend punishment, by itself, as effective in changing problem behaviors.

One of the most useful questions parents can ask when they have concerns about the discipline recommendations for their child is "Where are the data that support the recommendations?" Special education decisions are based on data. If school staff wants to use a specific discipline procedure, they should check for data that support the use of the procedure. For instance, if your child has been repeatedly suspended from school for a problem behavior, has suspension taught your child the skills he or she needs to learn?

Zero-tolerance policies

Many school districts have zero-tolerance policies that provide immediate negative consequences for specific behaviors. Such policies simply do not provide effective consequences for all children who violate them. If a child with a disability violates a zero-tolerance policy, the consequence may or may not be effective, given that child's needs. Consequences for problem behaviors must not discriminate against a child based on his or her disability. The IEP team is responsible for determining whether exceptions need to be made to the written school district discipline policy for a student, or whether the student needs a different consequence for misbehaviors than is written into the school discipline policies. Instructional goals may need to be written into the IEP to help remediate the problems a child is having in following school discipline policies.

While some administrators may not want to make exceptions to schoolwide discipline policies established for all students, exceptions are sometimes necessary. Some students who are unable to conform their behavior to the school expectations may need to have individualized consequences that will be more effective in supporting positive behaviors.

In the U.S. legal system, the consequences for breaking a law are generally based on an evaluation of the events around the violation. Yet schools often have one discipline standard for all students regardless of individual needs. They may use the same consequences for all students. Parents must carefully examine school policies to help determine whether modifications need to be made to meet the needs of their child.

Examples of behavioral intervention strategies

Schools use the following common strategies to help reduce problem behaviors and teach children positive behavioral skills.

Stop, Relax, and Think teaches children how to think about the problem they are having and find a solution. Children learn the steps:

1. Define the problem.
2. Decide who "owns" the problem.
3. Think of as many solutions as possible to solve the problem.
4. Select a solution to try.
5. Use the solution.
6. Evaluate its success.

After children understand the steps, role-play and practice can help the process become habit. Helping children to recognize their own response to stress (clenched hands, voice tone, etc.) may become part of the instruction needed to use this strategy effectively.

Planned ignoring is useful in stopping behaviors that are annoying. For example, it is useful for students who yell or interrupt the class to attract the teacher's

attention or that of students who are not prepared for class. Planned ignoring acknowledges that children's problem behaviors serve a function. If the purpose of a problem behavior is to gain adult attention, then not providing attention means that the behavior does not work. The behavior lessens over time and eventually disappears. Ignoring nonserious behavior is especially useful for parents when their child is having a tantrum for attention. Many adults find it difficult to ignore behaviors, however, especially if the behaviors interrupt what the adult is doing. Also, attention-seeking behaviors often get worse before they eventually go away.

Planned ignoring is not suitable for behaviors that are extremely disruptive. It also may not work if other children laugh at the problem behaviors the adult is trying to ignore. Some behaviors, including those that are unsafe or that include peer issues such as arguing, can grow quickly into more serious behaviors. It may not be possible to ignore these kinds of behaviors. Planned ignoring should *never* be used for unsafe behaviors. As children grow older and want attention more from their friends than from adults, planned ignoring is less useful.

Preventive cueing (also called signal interference) lets a child know when he or she is doing something that is not acceptable. Teachers or parents can frown, shake their head, make eye contact, point to a seat for a wandering child, or snap their fingers, to let the child know he or she needs to pay attention or to stop the problem behaviors. When using preventive cueing it is important not to smile or look pleased with a child. Preventive cueing may be used in steps, depending on the behaviors and how often they occur or how serious they are. For instance, a hand motion may work the first time or two, but it may need to be combined with eye contact or a shake of the head for the next offense.

Proximity control means that a teacher or adult moves closer to the child in a gentle way. If the teacher does not get the child's attention by using cues, then he or she may move closer to the student or give the lesson while standing near the child's desk.

Touch control, meaning touch that is not resisted, is a nonverbal guided intervention. It is used to direct a student toward positive behavior. For example, a teacher may gently place a hand on a child's shoulder to steer the child back to his or her desk. Touch control should never be used with children who react angrily or when school policy does not permit its use. If a child's records show that he or she has a history of violence, has been abused or maltreated, is anxious, or has a mental illness or psychosis, touch control should not be used, unless specifically agreed to by a physician or psychologist.

Humor directed either at the teacher or the situation—*never* at the child—can defuse tensions as well as redirect children. Humor must *never* be used to demean a child or be used in a manner that might encourage others in the class to ridicule the child.

Nonverbal warnings give a child the opportunity to regain control without being singled out for a verbal reprimand. For example, a teacher might place a colored warning cue card or a note on a desk as he or she moves through the room, or hold up the number of fingers that corresponds to the rule being challenged.

Discipline privately. Many children see it as a challenge when teachers attempt to discipline them in front of their peers. Children rarely lose these challenges, even when adults use negative consequences. Young people can gain stature from peers by publicly refusing to obey a teacher. A child is more likely to accept discipline if his or her peers are not watching the process.

Positive phrasing lets children know the positive results for using appropriate behaviors. As simple as it sounds, this can be difficult. Teachers and parents are used to focusing on misbehavior. Warning children about a negative response to problem behaviors often seems easier than describing the positive impact of positive behaviors. Compare the difference between positive phrasing and negative phrasing:

> *Positive phrasing:* "If you finish your reading by recess, we can all go outside together and play a game."
>
> *Negative phrasing:* "If you do not finish your reading by recess, you will have to stay inside until it's done."

Positive phrasing helps children learn that positive behaviors lead to positive outcomes. This, in turn, can help them gain control of their behaviors.

I-messages, described by Thomas Gordon in his 1974 book *Teacher Effectiveness Training,* helps children learn about how their problem behaviors affect others. It also demonstrates the importance of taking responsibility for one's own behavior. For example, parents or teachers will use language like "I'm upset when . . ." not "You are bad when . . ."

When a child has a good relationship with parents and teachers, I-messages can help him or her to understand how the problem behaviors affect adults. If the child dislikes the teacher, though, using I-statements can be a problem. It may even help the child to more effectively annoy the teacher.

Behavior shaping acknowledges that not all children can do everything at 100 percent. If a child does not turn in papers daily, expecting that papers will be turned in 100 percent of the time is not realistic. By rewarding small gains and reinforcing the gains as they occur, children learn how to stick with a task and to improve the skill.

Clear routines and expectations let children know what comes next in their school day, reducing anxiety or fear. Teachers who post and review the rules daily establish expectations for behavior during the day.

For additional information on positive behavioral interventions and functional behavioral assessment as well as related topics, contact the following:

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Examples of Positive Behavioral Intervention Strategies

A child with challenging behavior who has an Individualized Education Program (IEP), should have positive behavioral interventions included to help reduce challenging behaviors and support the new behavioral skills to be learned through the IEP goals. These interventions should be specific strategies that are positive and proactive, and are not reactive and consequence-based. The following list suggests some different kinds of positive behavioral interventions that could be useful:

1. **Clear routines and expectations** that are posted and reviewed help children know what comes next in their school day, reducing anxiety or fear.

2. **Stop, Relax, and Think** strategy teaches children how to think about a problem and find a solution. Children learn the following steps:

   a. Define the problem.

   b. Decide who "owns" the problem.

   c. Think of as many solutions as possible to solve the problem.

   d. Select a solution to try.

   e. Use the solution.

   f. Evaluate its success.

After children understand the steps, role-play and practice can help the process become habit. Helping children to recognize their own response to stress (clenched hands, voice tone, etc.) may become part of the instruction needed to use this strategy effectively. Practicing and being successful with these steps can take time for children. Therefore, it is important to consider what kind of support a child may need that will help reinforce progress.

3. **Pre-arranged signals** can be used to let a child know when he or she is doing something that is not acceptable. A hand motion, a shake of the head or a colored card placed on a desk as the teacher moves through the room could alert the child without drawing attention to the child or the behavior. It is important to develop a signal that the child and teacher agree on using and for what purpose.

4. **Proximity control** means that a teacher or adult moves closer to the child in a gentle way. If the teacher does not get the child's attention by using cues, then he or she may move closer to the student or give the lesson while standing near the child's desk.

5. **Planned response method** is useful in stopping non-serious behaviors that are bothersome to other children or adults nearby.

For example, students who interrupt the class to attract the teacher's attention usually are successful in getting the teachers to respond. Planned response method acknowledges that children's challenging behaviors serve a purpose. If the purpose of that behavior is to gain adult attention, then not providing attention means that the behavior does not work. The behavior lessens over time and eventually disappears. Ignoring non-serious behavior is especially useful for parents when their child is having a tantrum for attention. Many adults find it difficult to ignore behaviors, especially if the behaviors interrupt what the adult is doing. Also, attention-seeking behaviors often get worse before they eventually go away.

Planned response method is not suitable for behaviors that are extremely disruptive. This method also may not work if other children laugh at the problem behaviors the adult is trying to ignore. Some behaviors, including

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those that are unsafe or that include peer issues such as arguing, can grow quickly into more serious behaviors. It may not be possible to ignore these kinds of behaviors. The process of ignoring the behavior should **never** be used for unsafe behaviors. As children grow older and want attention more from their friends than from adults, the planned response method is less useful.

6. **Discipline privately**. Many children see it as a challenge when teachers attempt to discipline them in front of their peers. Children rarely lose these challenges, even when adults use negative consequences. Young people can gain stature from peers by publicly refusing to obey a teacher. A child is more likely to accept discipline if his or her peers are not watching the process.

7. **Find opportunities for the child to help others.** For example, a child who is using negative behaviors as a way to get out of class could be given the task of running an errand for the teacher to the front office. Peer involvement is another motivator for appropriate behavior. Finding times for the child who uses disruptive behavior to get attention from his classmates to help another student positively engages attention and can build rapport.

8. **Positive phrasing** lets children know the positive results for using appropriate behaviors. As simple as it sounds, this can be difficult. Teachers and parents are used to focusing on misbehavior. Warning children about a negative response to problem behaviors often seems easier than describing the positive impact of positive behaviors. Compare the difference between positive phrasing and negative phrasing:

   Positive phrasing: "If you finish your reading by recess, we can all go outside together and play a game."

   Negative phrasing: "If you do not finish your reading by recess, you will have to stay inside until it's done."

9. **State the behavior you want to see.** For example, say "I like seeing how everyone lines up so quickly and quietly", instead of "Stop bothering the other students in line."

10. **Behavior shaping** acknowledges that not all children can do everything at 100 percent. If a child does not turn in papers daily, expecting that papers will be turned in 100 percent of the time is not realistic. By rewarding small gains and reinforcing these gains as they occur, children learn how to stick with a task and to improve the skill.

11. **Tangible, token, and activity reinforcers** are also effective ways to encourage and support appropriate behavior. Tangible reinforcers can be awards, edibles or objects. Token reinforcers are tokens or points given for appropriate behavior that can be exchanged for something of value. Activity reinforcers are probably the most effective and positive as they allow students to participate in preferred activities, usually with other students, which also builds in social reinforcement.

For additional information on positive behavior interventions, functional behavioral assessment as well as related topics, please contact:

PACER Center
PACER.org

Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
pbis.org

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning
http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/

Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI)
http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu/index.htm

Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans. ERIC/OSEP Digest E571.

For some time, researchers and school personnel have been studying the effects of a wide range of problem behaviors on classroom learning. Research funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and other government agencies corroborates educators' concerns that behavior difficulties interfere with the learning of both the student exhibiting the behavior problem and his or her peers.

In light of this research, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 require that understanding the relationship between learning and behavior must be a key ingredient in planning the individualized education program (IEP) for a student with disabilities. Consequently, teams charged with developing IEPs are required to address the children's behavioral as well as learning problems. IEP teams must conduct a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) and implement behavior intervention plans that include positive behavioral interventions and supports.

States are responding to these new requirements speedily. As of June 1998, 35 states and territories have current plans to develop or revise written policies and procedures or guidelines related to FBAs to be consistent with the requirements of IDEA. Some of the IDEA requirements relate to FBAs and the influence of behavior on learning. They include the following:

* IEP teams must explore the need for strategies and supports to address any behavior that may impede the learning of the child with disabilities or the learning of his or her peers.

* IEP teams must meet within 10 days of any disciplinary actions resulting in suspension or expulsion of a student with disabilities. The meeting's purpose is to plan a functional behavior assessment so data will be available for a behavior plan. If such a plan already exists, the IEP team reviews and revises it, as necessary, to ensure that it addresses the student's behavior that precipitated the disciplinary action.

* States must address the in-service needs of education personnel in the area of development and implementation of positive intervention strategies.

WHY CONDUCT A FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT?

The purpose of a functional assessment is to gather information in order to understand a student's problem behavior. However, an FBA goes beyond the "symptom" (the problem behavior) to the student's underlying motivation to "escape," "avoid," or get something. OSEP and other government-sponsored research and educators' and psychologists' experience have demonstrated that behavior intervention plans stemming from the knowledge of why a student misbehaves (i.e., based on a functional behavioral assessment) are extremely useful in addressing a wide range of problems.

Often, the functions of a behavior are not inappropriate, rather, it is the behavior itself that is judged appropriate or inappropriate. If the IEP team determines through an FBA that a student is seeking attention by acting out, they can develop a plan to teach the student more appropriate ways to gain attention, thereby filling the student's need for attention with an alternative or replacement behavior that serves the same function as the inappropriate behavior. At the same time, strategies may be developed to decrease or even eliminate opportunities for the student to engage in inappropriate behavior.

CONDUCTING A FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Identifying the reasons for behavior will take many forms, and while the IDEA advises an FBA approach to determine specific contributors to behavior, it does not require or suggest specific techniques or strategies to use when assessing that behavior. However, several key steps are common to most FBAs:

1. Verify the seriousness of the problem. Many classroom problems can be eliminated by the consistent application of standard and universal discipline strategies of proven effectiveness. Only when these strategies have not resulted in significant improvement on the part of the student should school personnel go forward with an FBA.

2. Define the problem behavior in concrete terms. School personnel need to pinpoint the behavior causing learning or discipline problems and to define that behavior in terms that are simple to measure and record. For example, a problem behavior might be "Trish is aggressive." A concrete description is "Trish hits other students during recess when she does not get her way."

3. Collect data on possible causes of problem behavior. The use of a variety of techniques will lead the IEP team to a better understanding of the student behavior. Key questions include the following: Is the problem behavior linked to a skill deficit? Is there evidence to suggest that the student does not know how to perform the skill? Does the student have the skill but for some reason not perform it consistently? Also, a probing discussion with the student may yield an enhanced understanding of what, in each context, causes problem behavior.

4. Analyze the data. A data triangulation chart is useful in identifying possible stimulus-response patterns, predictors, maintaining consequences, and likely function(s) of the problem behavior. A problem behavior pathway chart can be used to sequentially arrange information on setting antecedents, the behavior itself, and consequences of the behavior that might lead to its maintenance.

5. Formulate and test a hypothesis. After analyzing the data, school personnel can establish a plausible explanation (hypothesis) regarding the function of the behaviors in question. This hypothesis predicts the general conditions under which the behavior is most and least likely to occur as well as the consequences that maintain it. The team can then experimentally manipulate some of the relevant conditions affecting the behavior. If the behavior remains unchanged following this environmental manipulation, the team can reexamine the hypothesis with a view to altering it.

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLANS

The student's behavior intervention plan should include positive strategies, programs or curricular modifications, and supplementary aids and supports required to address the behaviors of concern. It is helpful to use the data collected during the FBA to develop the plan and to determine the discrepancy between the child's actual and expected behavior.

Intervention plans that emphasize skills needed by the student to behave in a more appropriate manner and that provide proper motivation will be more effective than plans that simply control behavior. Interventions based on control often only suppress the behavior, resulting in a child manifesting unaddressed needs in alternative, inappropriate ways. Positive plans for behavioral intervention, on the other hand, will address both the source of the problem and the problem itself and foster the expression of needs in appropriate ways.

EVALUATING THE PLAN

It is good practice for IEP teams to include two evaluation procedures in an intervention plan: one procedure designed to monitor the consistency with which the management plan is implemented, the other designed to measure changes in behavior.

In addition, IEP teams must determine a timeline for implementation and reassessment and specify how much behavior change is required to meet the goal of the intervention. Assessment completion should be within the timelines prescribed by the IDEA. If a student already has a behavior intervention plan, the IEP team may elect to review and modify it or they may determine that more information is necessary and conduct an FBA. The IDEA states that a behavior intervention plan based on an FBA should be considered when developing the IEP if a student's behavior interferes with his or her learning or the learning of classmates. To be meaningful, plans need to be reviewed at least annually and revised as often as needed. However, the plan may be reviewed and reevaluated whenever any member of the child's IEP team feels it is necessary.

SOURCES:

This digest is based on the following sources:

Addressing Student Problem Behavior: AN IEP Team's Introduction to Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans by Mary Magee Quinn, Robert A. Gable, Robert B. Rutherford, Jr., C. Michael Nelson, and Kenneth W. Howell (January 1998). Available from the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, 888-457-1551. E-mail: center@air-dc.org. Web Site: http://www.air-dc.org/cecp/ceep.html.%20

"Addressing Problem Behaviors in Schools: Use of Functional Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans" by Robert A. Gable, Mary Magee Quinn, Robert B. Rutherford, Jr., and Kenneth W. Howell in Preventing School Failure, Spring 1998 (42:3),106-119.

Functional Behavioral Assessment: State Policies and Procedures from Project Forum at NASDSE, June 1998. Available from 703-519-3800 (voice) or 7008 (TDD).

https://www.ericdigests.org/1999-4/plans.htm

The Link between Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) and Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIPs). ERIC Digest E592.

The 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require functional behavioral assessments (FBAs) and behavioral intervention plans (BIPs) to be conducted prior to a change in placement or suspension for more than 10 days based on inappropriate behavior(s) for students with disabilities. When an FBA and a BIP are developed, written, and implemented, both become part of the student's IEP records.

Most research efforts have focused on procedures for conducting an FBA. Fitzsimmons (1998) summarized the typical processes of conducting FBAs, which include five core steps: (1) verify the seriousness of the problem; (2) define the problem behavior in concrete terms; (3) collect data on possible causes of problem behavior; (4) analyze the data; and (5) formulate and test a hypothesis. However, individuals who conduct FBAs do not necessarily incorporate these data into the student's BIP.

LINK BETWEEN ASSESSMENT AND INTERVENTION

Research has demonstrated that FBAs can lead to the development of effective, proactive BIPs (Gable, Hendrickson, & Sasso, 1995). Depending on the hypotheses resulting from the FBA, the BIP might include changing the variables that precede the inappropriate behavior(s), teaching alternative forms of appropriate behavior, and providing reinforcement for appropriate behavior (Flannery, O'Neill, & Horner, 1995). Thus, BIPs tied to the FBA data are child-, behavior-, and setting-specific (Iwata, Vollmer, & Zarcone, 1990; Rutherford & Nelson, 1995) and therefore enhance the likelihood that the expected behavioral change will occur. Also, an FBA can aid in the early identification (Feil, Severson, & Walker, 1995) and understanding future behavior problems (Iwata et al., 1990).

Scott and Nelson (1999) have proposed a ten-step process to help school personnel infuse the FBA data into the BIP:

1. Determine the function of the undesired behavior. Based on data from the FBA, understanding the purpose the behavior serves for the student is requisite to the BIP process. Common functions for school-based behavioral problems include gaining teacher or peer attention, escaping or avoiding specific tasks or persons, or gaining access to specific items.

2. Determine an appropriate replacement behavior. After the inappropriate behavior has been objectively defined and its function has been identified, an alternative, appropriate replacement behavior is selected. A replacement behavior should be readily acceptable to others in the environment (socially valid) and serve the same function as the inappropriate behavior. For example, if a student's inappropriate behavior is reinforced by teacher attention, then the replacement behavior also should result in teacher attention. It is important that school personnel agree on what constitutes an appropriate replacement behavior given the specific data (e.g., persons, settings, conditions) gleaned from the FBA. O'Neill et al. (1997) suggest that in some cases, a primary (i.e., long-term) replacement behavior needs to be identified along with several short-term replacement behaviors. These short-term behaviors are taught, modeled, and reinforced to assist the student in achieving the replacement behavior and the written behavioral goal and objective.

3. Determine when the replacement behavior should occur. Once a replacement behavior is identified, we must teach the student to use the new skill. This is accomplished by determining the conditions under which that behavior will serve the same function. A student who uses a replacement behavior when reinforcement is unavailable is less likely to attempt the replacement behavior again, even when reinforcement is likely. Thus, we must clearly define and teach the specific conditions under which the replacement behavior should be used. The student must be taught to discriminate the conditions in which to use the replacement behavior in order to achieve the desired outcome for it. At the same time, the conditions under which reinforcement is unlikely to occur for the replacement behavior should be identified and taught as non-examples.

4. Design a teaching sequence. As with academic instruction, social and behavioral skills need to be taught through a planned sequence of instruction within ongoing school routines. After steps 1-3 are completed, a plan for teaching the replacement behavior is implemented by providing the student with examples and non-examples of when, where, and with whom to display the replacement behavior, what he/she will gain by exhibiting the new behavior, and the circumstances in which the replacement behavior is not likely to be reinforced. Actually reinforcing the replacement behavior during the examples may make its outcomes clearer.

5. Manipulate the environment to increase the probability of success. Based on the FBA data (e.g., specific settings, people, times, tasks), the student's environment should be arranged so that reinforcing each instance of the replacement behavior is likely. However, reinforcement will not be possible if the student does not use the replacement behavior. This step involves procedures to increase the likelihood that the replacement behavior will be used at the appropriate time so that reinforcement can be delivered. Prompts, cues, and pre-correction strategies may be used to increase the likelihood of replacement behaviors. As a general rule, we should use the least intrusive prompts necessary to predict success.

6. Manipulate the environment to decrease the probability of failure. The environment is also analyzed to identify and remove barriers that might prevent the replacement behavior from being demonstrated under the appropriate conditions. For example, if we know that a student is unlikely to engage in a replacement behavior when seated next to a particular peer, then we also know that reinforcement will be unlikely. We can increase the likelihood of success by removing the predictors of failure. That is, we can separate the student from the peer during initial stages of intervention so that the student can receive reinforcement for appropriate replacement behavior.

7. Determine how positive behavior will be reinforced. The goal of this step is to provide natural (functionally equivalent and naturally occurring) reinforcement for replacement behaviors. Initially, reinforcement must be immediate and consistent. But over time, reinforcement will be delivered on a more natural schedule by the natural environment. A plan is needed to assist school personnel and researchers to naturally reinforce instances of the replacement behavior. At this step, reinforcement for displays of the replacement behavior will vary in terms of type (e.g., verbal or tangible reinforcement) and schedule (e.g., reinforcement every second display of the replacement behavior).

8. Determine consequences for instances of problem behavior. Even the most appropriate BIP will not immediately negate the student's history of reinforcement for prior inappropriate behavior. Therefore, the BIP should include consequences for inappropriate behavior and strategies for their use. This step clearly establishes a distinction between outcomes for the replacement behavior as opposed to the consequences of inappropriate behavior. Such a clear distinction increases the chances that the replacement behavior will be used more often, since the function of that behavior is being reinforced.

9. Develop a data collection system. In order to ascertain whether the replacement behavior has been effective in decreasing the frequency, duration, or intensity of the targeted inappropriate behavior, data must be collected. Data should be collected on the targeted behavior before intervention to provide a baseline and during

intervention. Comparing baseline and intervention data facilitates evaluation of intervention effectiveness. School personnel and researchers should carefully select a data collection method that best matches the settings in which the BIP will be implemented.

10. Develop behavioral goals and objectives. To assess overall effectiveness and positive changes in the student's behavior, school personnel and researchers should write measurable behavioral goals and objectives related to the replacement behavior. These student-specific behavioral goals and objectives provide standards for evaluating whether changes in the frequency, duration, and/or intensity of the target and replacement behaviors have met objective criteria. O'Neill and colleagues (1997) provide examples of measurable and objective behavioral goals.

VIEWING FBAS AND BIPS AS A UNIT

Overall, it may be more appropriate to view the IDEA mandates on FBAs and BIPs as a single, continuous process rather as a separate process and a subsequent product. Such a view may ensure that (a) the FBA is not interpreted to be "an intervention in itself" (Nelson, Roberts, Mathur, & Rutherford, 1999), (b) the FBA does not occur without the intention of developing a BIP, (c) the FBA data are incorporated into an actual BIP, and (d) both the FBA data and the BIP become integral components of the student's IEP (stressing both academic and behavioral instruction and goals). BIPs tied to the function maintaining the student's behavior (as identified through the FBA), which are consistently implemented and continuously monitored, may not only increase the student's repertoire of appropriate behaviors, but also may have positive effects on the student's educational outcomes.

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Scott, T. M., & Nelson, C. M. (1999). Using functional behavioral assessment to develop effective behavioral intervention plans: A ten step process. Submitted for Publication. University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY.

https://www.ericdigests.org/2000-4/bips.htm

Functional Behavior Assessment Summary Sheet

Step 1: Student Information and Support Team Information

Last name:	First name:	Gender:	Age:	Grade:	Date Started:

School:	☐ Student has an IEP ☐ Student is an English Learner	**Does this student receive SPED services?** ☐ Yes ☐ No **If yes, SPED Eligibility Category:**

Team Members: ☐ Parent ☐ General Education Teacher ☐ Special Education Teacher ☐ Related Service Provider
☐ School Psychologist ☐ Licensed Behavior Analyst ☐ Student ☐ Other School Personnel (list:)

Team Lead:	Team Lead Title:

Reason(s) the FBA was conducted (check all that apply):

☐ The student receiving Special Education or Related Services engaged in conduct that resulted in a change of placement and the LEA, the Parent, and relevant IEP team members determined that conduct was a manifestation of the student's disability.

☐ The IEP provides for the use of restraint or isolation.

☐ The student exhibits a pattern of behavior that impedes their learning or that of others.

☐ The student exhibits a pattern of behavior that places the student or others at risk of harm or injury.

☐ The student's IEP team is considering a more restrictive placement as the result of the student's behavior.

☐ The IEP team determined that an FBA was appropriate.

☐ The student receiving Special Education and Related Services is removed from their current placement for more than 10 consecutive school days for behavior *not* determined to be a manifestation of the student's disability.

☐ The student receiving Special Education and Related Services is removed to an interim alternative education setting for up to 45 school days for weapons, drugs, or serious bodily injury, *irrespective* of whether the student's behavior is a manifestation of the student's disability.

Step 2: Data Gathered to Understand Target Behavior				
Item Reviewed	Staff Interview	Family Interview	Student Interview	Record Review
Date Completed	Click or tap to enter a date.	Click or tap to enter a date.	Click or tap to enter a date.	Click or tap to enter a date.

Step 3: Target Behavior(s) (If more than one behavior is included, identify which one is the top priority)
Target Behavior Definition(s):

Step 4: Summary of Interviews and Record Reviews (attach supporting documentation)

Summary of Staff Interview

During insert target routine, insert student name is likely to insert challenging behavior(s), **when s/he** insert details of antecedent conditions that trigger behavior, **and we believe that s/he does this to** insert details of consequence/function. It is more likely to occur when insert details of setting events.

Summary of Record Review

Were any skill deficits identified (e.g., academic, adaptative behavior, speech and language, mobility) that contribute to the target behavior?

When reviewing the student's record, what are documented concerns regarding the student's behavior or previous interventions used to support the student included in the review *(e.g., Office Discipline Referrals, Behavior Intervention Plans, teacher nominations, universal behavior screener scores)?*

If the student has an IEP, does a skill deficit contribute to the target behavior?
☐ *Yes* ☐ *No*
If yes, the IEP must include measurable annual goal(s) to address the skill deficit.

Step 5: Systematic Observation (attach observation forms as documentation)

Date(s) Completed:
Total count of target behaviors observed (this number should match the denominators in the ratios below):

Activity	Antecedent	Consequence
List most frequently occurring activity: Ratio _____/_____	List most frequently occurring antecedent: Ratio _____/_____	List most frequently occurring consequence: Ratio _____/_____

Does the summary of systematic observation match the staff interview summary of behavior (Step 4)?
☐ Yes   ☐ No (if no, conduct another systematic observation or review staff interview(s))

Step 6: Hypothesized Function
Based on all available data (e.g., interviews, record reviews, observations), indicate the hypothesized function(s) of the target behavior below.

Seek/Obtain	Avoid/Escape
☐ Adult Attention ☐ Peer Attention ☐ Activities/Tasks ☐ Items/Materials ☐ Sensory Stimulation	☐ Adult Attention ☐ Peer Attention ☐ Activities/Tasks ☐ Items/Materials ☐ Sensory Stimulation

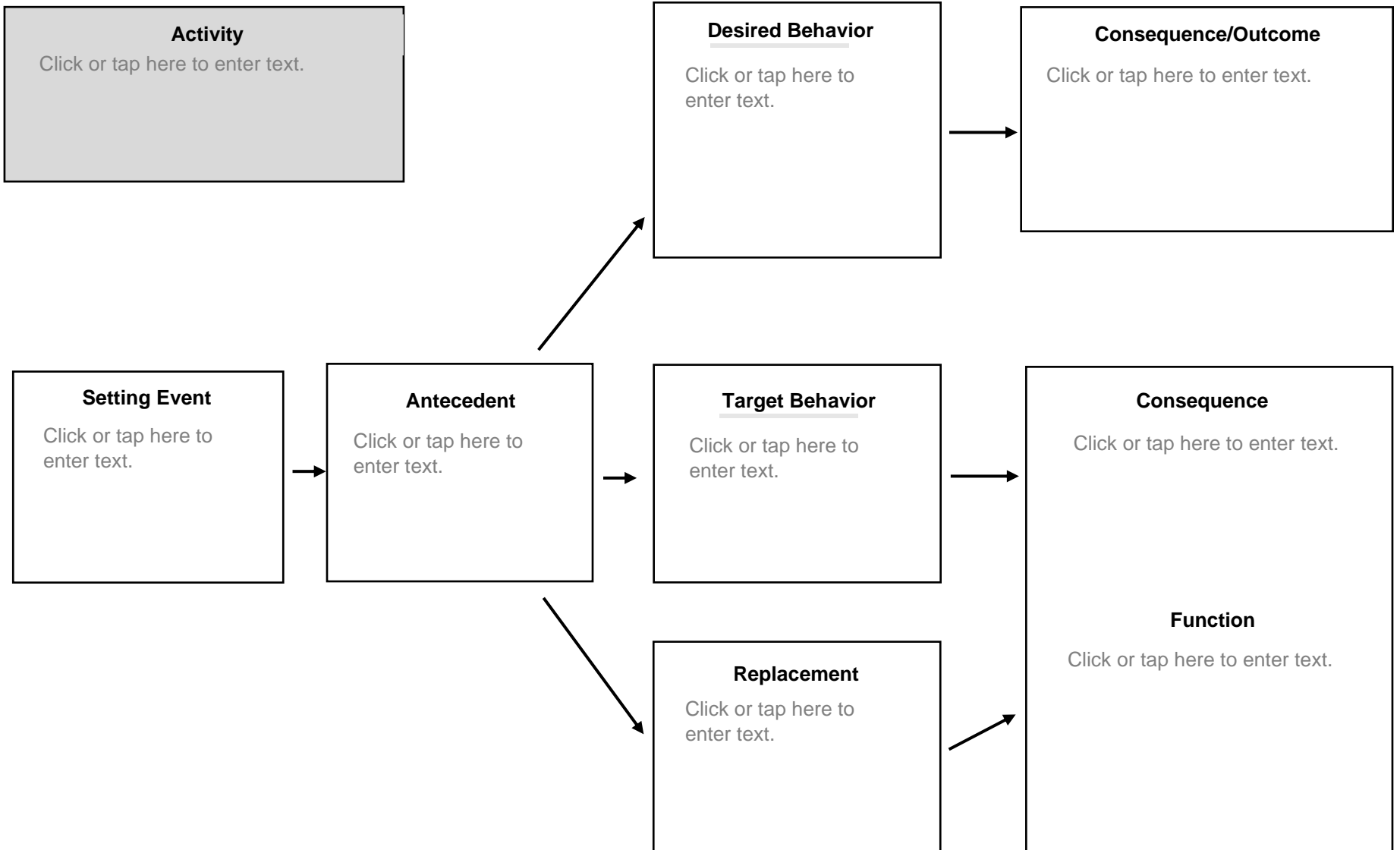| Step 7: Summary of Baseline Data (attach baseline data as documentation)						
Check the type of data collected						
☐ Rate (count/time)	☐ Time Sampling	☐ Duration		☐ Direct Behavior Rating		☐ Trial Based
Enter at least 3 baseline data points into the table below and calculate the baseline average						
Data #1 Date:	Data #2 Date:	Data #3 Date:	Data #4 Date:	Data #5 Date:	Data #6 Date:	Average

Activity

Click or tap here to enter text.

Desired Behavior

Click or tap here to enter text.

Consequence/Outcome

Click or tap here to enter text.

Setting Event

Click or tap here to enter text.

Antecedent

Click or tap here to enter text.

Target Behavior

Click or tap here to enter text.

Consequence

Click or tap here to enter text.

Function

Click or tap here to enter text.

Replacement

Click or tap here to enter text.

The Functional Assessment Checklist for Teachers and Staff (FACTS)
Follow-Up Questions

Instructions for Use: These questions can be used as follow-up questions or clarifying questions when conducting the FACTS Staff Interview. If additional information is needed or questions are not clear to the staff member answering questions, these follow-up questions can be used to help gather additional information or provide further clarity.

Part A

Step Three: Problem Behaviors
Instructions: Mark the problem behavior(s) you are seeing. Circle the one of greatest concern.   *Follow-Up Questions:*   • What is the single-most concerning problem behavior?   Note: If you are having difficulty deciding between two or more behaviors, select the behavior that could potentially cause injury to self or others, or that may impact other students more significantly.
Instructions: Describe the problem behavior.   *Follow-Up Questions:*   • What does it look like?   • What does it sound like?   • Give me examples of the problem behavior.

Step Four: Routine Analysis
Follow-Up Questions: • If the teacher says, "it happens all day," consider asking them to write down their daily schedule and then ask them to rate the likelihood that the problem behavior will happen during that activity.   • If the teacher says all day, every day, consider asking, if you had an outside observer coming to your classroom to watch this student, what time would you recommend them coming?

Step Five: Target Routine for Behavior Support
Follow-Up Questions: If the teacher is having a hard time identifying the routines to focus on, consider asking: • Which routines that you rated a four, five, or six for likelihood create the most disruption to learning?

Step Seven: Problem Behavior Details
Instructions: Describe the problem behavior(s). What does it look like? Provide examples.   *Follow-Up Questions:*   • When does your heart rate go up?   • What are the warning signs that make you feel that way?
Instructions: How often does the problem behavior(s) occur (once per week or day, hourly)?   *Follow-Up Questions:*

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at Vanderbilt University

If they say all day, consider asking:
- Are you most concerned about how many times it happens or how long it happens for?
- How many times during the routine you identified does it happen?
- Are there certain days it always happens? Does it not happen on other days?

Instructions: How long does the problem behavior(s) last when it does occur (minutes, hours)?
Follow-Up Questions:
- Does it start and stop quickly, or does it happen infrequently for a long time? If a long time, on average, how long do you think it lasts?

Instructions: How intense is the problem behavior(s)? Does the behavior cause injury to self? Injury to others?
Follow-Up Questions:
- On a scale of one to 10, if 10 is injury to self or others and one is passively ignoring instructions, where does this problem behavior fall?

Step Eight-A: Antecedents

Instructions: In this activity, what happens most often just before the problem behavior?
Follow-Up Questions:
- In what situations is the problem behavior most likely to occur?
- What seems to trigger or set off the problem behavior?
- Does the problem behavior occur when you change routines or interrupt activities? If so, describe what happens.
- Does the problem behavior occur when it appears that the student won't get his/her way? If so, describe the things the student often attempts to control.
- Is there a time of day the problem behavior always occurs? Is there a time of day the problem behavior never occurs?
- Is the student asked to do something? Participating in a non-preferred activity? Interacting with a certain adult or student? Told 'no'?

Instructions: If you put this trigger in place 10 times, how often would it result in problem behavior?
Follow-Up Questions:
- For example, if you just told me in the question above that the student is told "no" most of the time before problem behavior occurs, then if I said "no" 10 different times, of those 10 times, how many would result in the problem behavior?
- If you put this trigger into place 10 times, would it result in problem behavior sometimes, most of the time, or always?

Instructions: Does the problem behavior ever happen when the trigger is absent? Or when the opposite of the trigger occurs?
Follow-Up Questions:
- For example, if saying "no" is the trigger, would problem behavior still happen if I told the student "yes"? Would problem behavior happen if I just allowed the student everything he/she wanted?
- If you absolutely can't deal with that problem behavior at that moment, what would you do to avoid it?

Part B

Step Eight-B: Antecedents

Definitions for Antecedents:

- **Tasks:** Teacher gives a task, an assignment has been given, or teacher asks the student a question.
- **Unstructured Time:** Student has not been given an activity to engage in. Examples include: free play, recess, lunch time, etc.
- **Reprimands:** Teacher corrects the student's incorrect response or behavior.
- **Structured, nonacademic activities:** Clear teacher expectations are given and an activity is evident. Examples of structured, nonacademic activities include extracurricular activities, class chores, etc.
- **Transitions:** Current activity is changed, or class is moving to a different location.
- **Isolated:** Student is separated from peers and adults (e.g., sitting at desk without adults or students nearby).

Instructions: If tasks (e.g., group work, independent work, small group instruction)…
Follow-Up Questions:
- Is the task too hard? Too easy?
- Does the task take too long?
- Does the student not like working with his/her peers? By themselves?

Instructions: If unstructured time…
Follow-Up Questions:
- Is it during transitions from one activity to another?
- Does it occur during free-time?
- Does it occur when the student has completed schoolwork and the class is still completing the activity?
- Does it happen in the hallway during class transitions?

Instructions: If reprimand…
Follow-Up Questions:
- If you tell the student to stop doing something, what happens?

Instructions: If structured, nonacademic activities…
Follow-Up Questions:
- Does it happen at recess?
- Does it happen in the cafeteria?

Instructions: If transitions…
Follow-Up Questions:
- Does problem behavior happen when transitioning away from an activity or setting the student really likes to an activity/setting the student doesn't like?
- Does the transition(s) the student has difficulty with take a long time?
- Are the transition expectations clear to the students?

Instructions: If isolated…
Follow-Up Questions:
- Are there any other students or teachers involved (this will let you know it is not happening in isolation)?
- Is it in a certain location?
- Are there specific noises, smells present when the behavior occurs?

Step 9: Setting Events

Instructions: Is there something that, when present, makes it more likely that the trigger identified above sets off the behavior?
Follow-Up Questions:
- If the teacher focuses solely on home as a setting event, ask if there are specific things in the home, not just home that can be a setting event (e.g., lack of sleep the night before).

Instructions: If yes, is this event present sometimes and absent others?
Follow-Up Questions:

Instructions: Does the behavior occur only when the event is present?
Follow-Up Questions:

Step 10: Consequences

Instructions: In the activity identified, when the trigger occurs and problem behaviors happen, what occurs next? What do you do? What do other students do? What activities happen or stop happening?
Follow-Up Questions:
- How do you and others react or respond to the problem behavior?
- What do you and others do to calm the student down once he/she is engaged in the problem behavior?
- What do you and others do to distract the student from engaging in the problem behavior?
- Is there anything you could do to get the problem behavior to stop immediately?

Instructions: If adult or peer attention is obtained or avoided
Follow-Up Questions:

Instructions: If an activity or request occurs or is removed
Follow-Up Questions:
- Does the student find a way to put off doing the activity? How long, on average?

Instructions: If tangible items are obtained or removed
Follow-Up Questions:

Instructions: If sensory stimulation possibly occurs or is removed
Follow-Up Questions:
- What is the student supposed to be doing instead?

Behavior Intervention Plan

Step 1: Student Information					
Last name:	**First name:**	**Gender:**	**Age:**	**Grade:**	**Date of Draft:**

School:	☐ **Student has an IEP** ☐ **Student is an English Learner**	**Does this student receive SPED services?** ☐ Yes ☐ No **If yes, SPED Eligibility Category:**

Team Members: ☐ Parent ☐ General Education Teacher ☐ Special Education Teacher ☐ Related Service Provider ☐ School Psychologist ☐ Licensed Behavior Analyst ☐ Student ☐ Other School Personnel (list:)

Date of Most Recent FBA: **Primary Target Behavior(s) Assessed:**
Date(s) of Annual BIP Review(s):

Step 2: Description of Target Behavior(s)
Target Behavior Definition(s) and Frequency:

Step 3: Hypothesized Function(s) of Behavior	
Seek/Obtain	**Avoid/Escape**
☐ Adult Attention ☐ Peer Attention ☐ Activities/Tasks ☐ Items/Materials ☐ Sensory Stimulation	☐ Adult Attention ☐ Peer Attention ☐ Activities/Tasks ☐ Items/Materials ☐ Sensory Stimulation

Step 4: Summary of Baseline Data

Check the type of data collected

☐ Rate (count/time)   ☐ Time Sampling   ☐ Duration   ☐ Direct Behavior Rating   ☐ Trial-based

Enter at least 3 baseline data points into the table below and calculate the baseline average

Data #1 Date:	Data #2 Date:	Data #3 Date:	Data #4 Date:	Data #5 Date:	Data #6 Date:	Average

Attach the most recent graph or summary of target behavior(s) *(required)* and replacement behavior(s) *(optional)*.

Step 5: Replacement Behavior Goals

Description of current replacement behavior performance:

Context/Setting *(Specific, Achievable, Relevant)*	Replacement Behavior *(Specific, Achievable, Relevant)*	Criteria *(Measurable and Time Bound)*

Step 6: Strategies to Teach the Replacement Behavior				
Intervention Description	**Who will implement?**	**When will it occur?** *(e.g., time of day, days of week)*	**When will the intervention begin?**	**Materials Needed**

Step 7: Consequence Strategies to Reinforce Replacement Behavior				
Intervention Description	**Who will implement?**	**When will it occur?** *(e.g., time of day, days of week)*	**When will the intervention begin?**	**Materials Needed**

Step 8: Antecedent (Preventative) Strategies				
Intervention Description	**Who will implement?**	**When will it occur?** *(e.g., time of day, days of week)*	**When will the intervention begin?**	**Materials Needed**

Step 9: Responding to Target Behavior(s)				
Intervention Description	**Who will implement?**	**When will it occur?** *(e.g., time of day, days of week)*	**When will the intervention begin?**	**Materials Needed**

Note: If target behavior occurs at an intensity or duration that requires emergency action, the team should follow their Safety Plan. The Safety Plan should not be considered a component of intervention. Attach the Safety Plan for documentation.

Step 10: Progress Monitoring Plan Attach the most recent graph or summary of target behavior(s) *(required)* and replacement behavior(s) *(optional).* Include documentation of fidelity checks (i.e., data informing whether the intervention is being delivered as planned).				
Assessment Type	**Who will implement?**	**When and how often will it be completed?**	**When will it be reviewed by the team?**	**Materials Needed**
Progress Monitoring *Record progress monitoring tool here*				
Fidelity Checks *Enter fidelity target here*				

Step 11: Training Plan for School Personnel who Regularly Interact with Student Include supporting documentation (e.g., training scripts, handouts, activities) when available.			
Personnel to be Trained	**Plan for Training**	**Date Training will Occur**	**Date Training Occurred**

Step 12: Changes Made to Behavior Intervention Plan
Note any additional interventions, changes to interventions, or removal of interventions on this sheet and explain why the action was taken.

Date	Decision

Note: If a change is made to intervention, make sure to add a phase line to the progress monitoring graph to indicate when the change occurred.

MY ABC DATA QUESTIONS SHEET

MY NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

PLACE BEHAVIOR OCCUREED: _____ **TIME BEHAVIOR OCCURRED:** _____

WHAT WAS THE BEHAVIOR?

- What did I **DO**? _____
- What did I **SAY?** _____

BEFORE I DID THE BEHAVIOR…

- What was the teacher or parent **DOING**? _____
- What was the teacher or parent **SAYING**? _____
- What WAS **EXPECTED OF ME AT THAT TIME?** _____
  AND have I done those things before? (describe) _____
- **WHO** was in the room? _____
- **WHO** was in close to me at the time? _____
- What was **he/she** doing? _____
- What was anyone else present doing? _____
- What was/were **OTHER ADULT(s)** doing? _____

AFTER I DID THE BEHAVIOR…

- What did the teacher or parent **DO**? _____
- What did the teacher or parent **SAY?** _____
- Did the teacher or parent **MOVE**? _____ If so, where? (**CLOSER TO/AWAY FROM** me? _____
- What did others **DO**? _____ What did others **SAY**? _____
- Did they **MOVE**? _____ If so, where? (**CLOSER TO/AWAY FROM** me) _____
- What did other adults **DO**? _____
- What did other adults **SAY**?_____
- Did they **MOVE**? _____ If so, where? (**CLOSER TO/AWAY FROM** me?) _____
- What did I **GET**? _____**AVOID**?_____
- What did I **DO IN RESPONSE**? _____
- Did anyone get **HURT**? _____ Was there any **DAMAGE** to **PROPERTY**? _____
- How **LONG** did the behavior **LAST**? _____
- **HOW** do I FEEL now? _____

ABC DATA PROMPTING QUESTIONS

Student: _____ **Date:** _____ **Time of Occurrence:** _____

Location of Occurrence: _____ **Person Completing Report:** _____

BEHAVIOR PROBLEM?
- What did the student **DO**? _____
- What did the student **SAY?** _____

PRIOR TO THE BEHAVIOR...
- What was I (the teacher) **DOING**? _____
- What was I **SAYING**? _____
- **WHAT** was I teaching? _____
- **HOW** was I teaching it? _____
- What were the **EXPECTATIONS?** _____

    AND have you seen the student reliably perform those expectations before? (please describe)

    _____

- **WHO** was in the room? _____
- **WHO** was in close proximity to the student? _____

    AND what was he/she doing? _____

- What were other **PEERS** doing (PRIOR TO behavior)? _____
- What was/were **OTHER ADULT(s)/ EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT(S)** doing? _____

AFTER THE BEHAVIOR OCCURRED...
- What did I (the teacher) **DO**? _____
- What did I (the teacher) **SAY**? _____
- Did I **MOVE**? _____ If so, closer or away from the student? _____
- What did peers **DO**? _____What did peers **SAY**? _____
- Did they **MOVE**? _____ If so, , closer or away from the student? _____
- What did other adults/educational assistants **DO**? _____
- What did other adults/educational assistants **SAY**? _____
- Did they **MOVE**? _____ If so, closer or away from the student? _____
- What did the student **DO IN RESPONSE**? _____
- Did anyone get **HURT**? _____
- Was there any **DAMAGE** to **PROPERTY**? _____
- How **LONG** did the behavior **LAST**? _____

(COMPLETE ONE SET OF QUESTIONS FOR EACH OCCURRENCE OF PROBLEM BEHAVIOR)

Adapted from The LRE for LIFE Project 1/5/01 for EdPro Development, September, 2009

ABC DATA PROMPTING QUESTIONS

Student: DANNY   **Date:** 9/24/03   **Time of Occurrence:** 10:35

Location of Occurrence: Hallway   **Person Completing Report:** Mrs. Cannon

BEHAVIOR PROBLEM?

- What did the student **DO**? Hit and spit on the student in front of him in line.

- What did the student **SAY?** Get away, Leave me alone!

PRIOR TO THE BEHAVIOR...

- What was I (the teacher) **DOING**? Taking the students to gym class.

- What was I **SAYING**? Let's walk quietly in the hallway.

- **WHAT** was I teaching? Not teaching transitioning. **HOW** was I teaching it? Leading them down the hall.

- What were the **EXPECTATIONS?** For Danny to walk in a line down the hall with his peers.
  AND have you seen the student reliably perform those expectations? (describe) yes – he does regularly.

- **WHO** was in the room? The entire class and other students.

- **WHO** was in close proximity to the student? Steven and Jenny
  AND what was he/she doing? Danny reports Steven was pushing him.

- What were other **PEERS** doing (PRIOR TO behavior)? Walking in the hall.

- What was/were **OTHER ADULT(s)/ EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANT(S)** doing? No others were present.

AFTER THE BEHAVIOR OCCURRED...

- What did I (the teacher) **DO**? Moved Danny and Steven a part.

- What did I (the teacher) **SAY**? Asked Danny to stand by me and tell me why he hit and spit on Steven.

- Did I **MOVE**? Yes   If so, closer or away from the student? Closer

- What did peers **DO**? Moved away from Danny. What did peers **SAY**? Gross

- Did they **MOVE**? Yes   If so, , closer or away from the student? Away

- What did other adults/educational assistants **DO**? None were present.

- What did other adults/educational assistants **SAY**? None were present.

- Did they **MOVE**? None were present. If so, closer or away from the student? None were present.

- What did the student **DO IN RESPONSE**? Moved away from Steven and got out of line.

- Did anyone get **HURT**? No   Was there any **DAMAGE** to **PROPERTY**? No

- How **LONG** did the behavior **LAST**? Less than a minute

(COMPLETE ONE SET OF QUESTIONS FOR EACH OCCURRENCE OF PROBLEM BEHAVIOR)

Adapted from The LRE for LIFE Project 1/5/01 for EdPro Development, September, 2009

ABC DATA PROMPTING QUESTIONS FOR HOME

CHILD'S NAME: _____ Date: _____ Time of Occurrence: _____

Location of Occurrence: _____   Person Completing Report: _____

BEHAVIOR?
- What did the child **DO**?_____
- What did the child **SAY?** _____

PRIOR TO THE BEHAVIOR…
- What was I (the parent) **DOING**? _____
- What was I **SAYING**? _____
- What were the **EXPECTATIONS?** _____

AND have you seen your child reliably perform those expectations? (describe) _____

- **WHO** was in the room? _____
- **WHO** was in close proximity to the child? _____
- What was the **CHILD** doing? _____
- What was anyone else present doing? _____
- What was/were **OTHER ADULT(s)** doing? _____

AFTER THE BEHAVIOR OCCURRED…
- What did I (the parent) **DO**? _____
- What did I (the parent) **SAY**?_____
- Did I **MOVE**? _____ If so, where? (**CLOSER TO/AWAY FROM** the child)_____
- What did others **DO**? _____ What did others **SAY**? _____
- Did they **MOVE**? _____ If so, where? (**CLOSER TO/AWAY FROM** the child) _____
- What did other adults **DO**? _____
- What did other adults **SAY**?_____
- Did they **MOVE**? _____ If so, where? (**CLOSER TO/AWAY FROM** the child) _____
- What did the child **GET**? _____**AVOID**?_____
- What did the child **DO IN RESPONSE**? _____
- Did anyone get **HURT**? _____ Was there any **DAMAGE** to **PROPERTY**? _____
- How **LONG** did the behavior **LAST**? _____

(COMPLETE ONE SET OF QUESTIONS FOR EACH OCCURRENCE OF PROBLEM BEHAVIOR)

How Can I Develop SMART IEP Goals for Behavior Problems?

By Pam Wright   05/19/2008

Debbie writes:

> First, it was a pleasure to attend your Special Ed Law & Advocacy Conference in Bridgewater NJ last month. It was also a pleasure to sit with you two at lunch.
>
> In a nutshell, my son is 7 years old, going into 2nd grade next year. He is diagnosed with Asperger Syndrome, High Functioning Autism, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, ADHD, and Anxiety Separation Disorder. He has been receiving Special Education Services since age four.
>
> His strengths are in Fluency/Comprehension and Spelling. His weaknesses are in the Personal & Social Development area. His placement is in a self-contained/ small class setting for Language Arts Literacy and Mathematics and in mainstream classes with adult support for all other subjects.
>
> I want to learn to create SMART IEP goals for his areas of weakness. I am having a hard time figuring out how to make to make behavior goals SMART – specific, measurable, use action words, realistic, and time-limited. I appreciate suggestions or examples.
>
> In Personal & Social Development, the grading key on his report card is "N" (needs improvement). This year, the school put in place a Behavior Mod program based on "1,2,3 Magic" http://www.parentmagic.com/classroomsolutions-view.cfm
>
> Examples of my son's problem behaviors:
> Does not follow directions
> Does not follow school & classroom rules
> Does not listen attentively
> Does not refrain from calling out
> Does not refrain from excessive talking
> Does not use time constructively
> Does not work cooperatively in groups

(from Pam) Thanks for your note. We enjoyed the folks who attended the Bridgewater program too. The food at Maggiano's was outstanding. I'm afraid some people had trouble staying awake after lunch. <sm>

You put your question under "How to Post a Comment." I'm going to make it a "post" so more people will read it and benefit from it. My answer is longer than I like for the Wrightslaw Way blog, but I can't answer your questions in a few words.

I have a question: You say the school implemented a behavior program based on 1-2-3 Magic. To implement this program in school, the teachers need to be trained. One of the co-authors of 1-2-3 Magic provides professional development. There is research that supports the 1-2-3 Magic training program for parents. I didn't find any research about the program's effectiveness in schools. On the web site is a statement that children with ASD and Aspergers "usually need more intensive and specialized training to help them develop reciprocal social interactions and language skills."

Your question: **How can I develop SMART IEP goals for behavior problems?**

The process is the same for any goal – academic or behavioral. You need to clearly define the target behavior. (Note: the behavior should be described in nonjudgmental terms.) The school needs to gather baseline data on the behavior for the Present Levels of Performance before developing specific measurable goals.

A word about **appropriate goals**: Your child is 7 years old. He has Aspergers Syndrome, High Functioning Autism, Opposite Defiant Disorder, ADHD, and Anxiety Separation Disorder. The behaviors you listed are symptoms of these neurological conditions. At age seven, these behaviors are not under his control. He will need a great deal of help from highly skilled teachers and therapists, parents, and others. Together, these adults will need to teach him how to bring these behaviors under control. This isn't going to happen overnight, or in one or two years.

Remember: SMART IEPs includes an "R." "R" stands for "realistic and relevant." You and the school need to be realistic about behavior goals for a 7 year-old with a myriad of problems based on neuro-behaviorial conditions.

You included a list of problem behaviors. Is this your list or the school's list? All the problems or goals are written in negative terms:

* Does not follow directions
* Does not follow school & classroom rules
* Does not listen attentively
* Does not refrain from calling out
* Does not refrain from excessive talking
* Does not use time constructively
* Does not work cooperatively in groups
* Does not work well independently

As written, several problems listed are not specific or measurable.

For example: "Does not listen attentively." This statement is not measurable. We can't observe if a child "listening attentively." We will have better luck if we rephrase that goal to "paying attention." We can observe how often the child is paying attention in a specific period of time, then develop a series of goals to help him improve in this area. To be measurable, we must be able to observe it or count it.

Take this goal> "Does not use time constructively." Again, the statement is written in negative terms. How can we tell that a child is not using time "constructively"? We can't. But if the goal is changed to "Increase the # of minutes (or other unit of time) that he is on task," you can get baseline information for the Present Levels by observing the amount of time he is on and off task.

You make behavior measurable by defining the factors surrounding the behavior. These factors include:

* Precipitating events (i.e., "when asked to work independently")
* Environmental factors (i.e., "when dealing with female authority figures")
* Other observable patterns (i.e., after lunch, "always on the playground," "in math class")

You can also make behavior measurable by defining the results of the behavior (i.e., "removal from the classroom increases the negative behavior.")

To learn more about SMART IEPs, read Chapter 12, SMART IEPs, in "From Emotions to Advocacy" (pages 115-130). If you don't have the book, you can download that chapter for free:

http://www.wrightslaw.com/bks/feta2/ch12.ieps.pdf

Also, read "IEPs for Children with Behavior Problems" by Pat Howey:

http://www.wrightslaw.com/howey/iep.special.factors.htm

Since you attended the Bridgewater program, you may remember that many of these statements were made in Pete's elementary school report cards – he doesn't pay attention, talks too much, wastes time, is fussy and too free with his fists, etc. That was in the early 50's. I think teachers, especially special education teachers, are more knowledgeable about these issues today, but there are always exceptions.