



Exceptional Student Education (Special Education)

Behavior Supports - Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and Positive Behavior Intervention Plans (PBIP)

What is a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)?

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is a process that school staff, together with parents, can use to better understand behavior that may be interfering with a student's ability to learn, socialization with peers and adults, or successful participation in school or extracurricular activities. More specifically, FBA helps identify 1) factors that "set-off" (trigger) or occur before challenging behavior and 2) factors that cause the problem behavior to continue occurring.

During the assessment FBA, the school's team will review records, talk with teachers and parents, and observe the student.

What is a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan (PBIP)?

The FBA process provides important information needed to create a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan (PBIP) that is tailored to the specific needs of your child. A few common examples of behaviors that may be helped by using a FBA and PBIP include disruptive noise making during class, fighting with classmates, and arguing with adults.

An important part of the PBIP addresses "replacement" behaviors that can be taught or increased to replace the problem behavior. Replacement behaviors are more likely to result in academic and social success. For example, rather than blurting out when he is frustrated with difficult work, a student may be taught and rewarded for using an early signal to alert the teacher that he or she needs help.

The PBIP may include methods to modify the environment to increase the chances that replacement behaviors will occur and methods to prevent problem behaviors. For example, the team may plan how to make the replacement behavior easier to perform than the problem behavior. And, reminders to use replacement behaviors may be added to the environment.

The PBIP also may include interventions to reduce the problem behavior by reducing or stopping access to events, items or other types of "reinforcers" that may previously have caused the problem behavior to continue occurring.

In the PBIP, the team describes how the teacher will measure the student's progress to decide if the plan is working. When the student's behavior is improving, the plan continues or may be faded. If the student's behavior is not improving, the plan is changed.

When might a school suggest an FBA & PBIP for a student?

Usually a FBA is requested when a student's behavior is more severe and frequent than normal classroom misbehaviors. Examples of such behaviors could include hitting, yelling, cursing, or leaving the classroom without permission.

Who is involved in the FBA & PBIP process?

For both the FBA and development of a PBIP, the team typically includes parent(s), teacher(s), administrator, guidance counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, and sometimes the school nurse. Depending on the situation, other individuals may be part of the team.

What is the parent's role in the FBA & PBIP process?

Parents play an important role including active participation in meetings, responding to interview questions, and development of the PBIP. Parents, of course, know more about the student than anyone else and are especially important when medical/physical conditions are suspected or known. Parents may also assist with interventions. Examples may include providing snacks, alerting school staff to changes in routine/schedule, or reviewing and signing daily home notes. Parents also may praise student use of replacement behavior and possibly provide special rewards at home for behavioral improvement.

Once the FBA & PBIP are complete, another FBA and/or PBIP ever be needed?

FBA & PBIP are often ongoing processes. It is likely that revisions to the PBIP may be made without needing another FBA. However, there are times when a new FBA is helpful; for example, when moving to a different environment, working with new staff, or to address different behavior(s).

What should I expect the outcomes of FBA & PBIP to be?

Outcomes may vary across students due to the type and severity of the behavior, the reason the problem behavior occurs, the effectiveness of the selected interventions, and other factors. In general, the goal is to increase the use of appropriate behaviors and decrease use of the problem behaviors. Overall, the student should gain more access to reinforcement and have the opportunity to remain in less restrictive environments, as well as increase their quality of life (ultimate outcomes).