

# Appendix 6: Functional Behavioral Assessment

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The goal of a functional behavior assessment (FBA) is to identify those environmental factors that influence the display of appropriate and challenging behaviors. FBA can also identify the purpose or reinforcers that maintain behaviors by using systematic methods and empirical procedures. The information gleaned from this process is used to develop an effective intervention plan to increase the frequency of more desirable behaviors and decrease the frequency of undesirable behaviors.

When a functional behavioral assessment is necessary in school, the IEP team must take part in completion of the assessment. One member of the team must be a professional, trained and experienced in FBA and the development, implementation, and evaluation of behavior intervention plans.

The FBA typically involves interviews with service providers or others knowledgeable about the individual, completion of forms and checklists, and observing the individual in his or her natural environment. This information helps the team develop hypotheses as to the function(s) of the behavior of concern and the role of environmental factors that are influencing the behavior.

[Note: A more specialized and objective procedure can also be used. A functional behavioral analysis is the systematic manipulation of environmental antecedent variables and consequences to directly test hypotheses and establish a causal relationship between a behavior and factors that initiate, influence and maintain the behavior.]

The following problem-solving model was drawn largely from the *Ohio Model Policies and Procedures for the Education of Children With Disabilities (2000), Appendix F: Technical Assistance for Implementation of the Behavior Intervention*. It can be used to develop and evaluate the appropriateness of a behavior intervention plan.

## **Step 1: Discuss the vision or future planning for the individual.**

- ◆ What is the long-term vision for the individual?
- ◆ What are the behavior barriers interfering with reaching or progressing toward the vision?

## **Step 2: Discuss present levels of performance.**

- ◆ What strengths does the individual have?
- ◆ Where is the behavior most or least likely to occur?
- ◆ How often does the behavior occur?
- ◆ How long does the behavior (event) last?
- ◆ How long a period of time typically exists between a request and when the individual begins to respond?

- ◆ How extreme is the behavior?
- ◆ For each occurrence, with whom is the behavior most/least likely to occur?
- ◆ What is the general response of others to the behavior?
- ◆ How does the individual react to others' responses?

**Step 3: Write a statement clearly describing the behavior of concern, taking into account information obtained in Step 2.**

**Step 4: Collect additional data to fully and completely understand the nature and cause of the behavior of concern.**

- ◆ What usually happens in the individual's environment, instruction, and relationships just before and just after the behavior of concern occurs?
- ◆ What other information is relevant to the behavior of concern (e.g., medication, medical condition, sleep pattern, diet, schedule, relationships)?
- ◆ How does the individual typically communicate wants and needs?
- ◆ What is the individual's behavior history?
- ◆ What interventions and modifications have been found to be successful and unsuccessful with regard to the behavior of concern?
- ◆ What are the academic, curricular, self-care, and social skills that make up the individual's profile?
- ◆ For what purpose(s) does the individual use the behavior of concern (e.g., power, control, avoidance/escape, attention)?
- ◆ What is the individual trying to communicate with the behavior?

**Step 5: Identify and prioritize the needs of the individual for the IEP (or for the behavior plan if the individual does not have an IEP) by considering the following:**

- ◆ Which behaviors are likely to cause harm to the individual or others?
- ◆ Which behaviors impede the learning of the individual or others?
- ◆ Which behaviors occur most frequently?
- ◆ Which behaviors are most intense?
- ◆ Which behaviors, when effectively addressed, will have a positive impact on other behaviors of concern?

**Step 6: Identify measurable goals, objectives, and assessment procedures**

- ◆ What behavior could replace and serve as a more acceptable alternative to the behavior of concern?
- ◆ Does the replacement behavior serve the same function to the individual as the behavior of concern?
- ◆ Will mastery of the goals/objectives enable the individual to more fully participate in the general education curriculum?
- ◆ Have positive intervention strategies been demonstrated to be ineffective prior to the proposed use of more restrictive intervention procedures?

- ◆ Are the goals/objectives stated in terms that the individual understands?
- ◆ Do the goals/objectives help build confidence and competence, promote independence and self-advocacy, and help develop personal responsibility?
- ◆ Were cultural differences taken into account when the goals/objectives were developed?
- ◆ Can the goals/objectives in the behavior plan be generalized to other settings?

***Step 7: Identify measurable goals, objectives, and assessment procedures***

- ◆ Have criteria been established for each goal/objective for measuring success in relationship to baseline data?
- ◆ What methods will be used to evaluate whether there is an increase in the use of replacement behavior and decreased use of the behavior of concern?
- ◆ Has the IEP team considered how frequently it will evaluate progress based on the frequency, intensity, and severity of the behavior of concern?

***Step 8: Identify needed services***

- ◆ What environmental changes need to be considered?
- ◆ What accommodations, intervention techniques, and supports are needed for the individual to learn and use the replacement behavior?
- ◆ Do the interventions rely on logical consequences instead of punishments?
- ◆ If necessary, have several interventions been designed to meet the diverse and unique needs of the individual?
- ◆ Does research support using the selected interventions with the behavior of concern?
- ◆ How will stakeholders (including family members) be trained and supported in implementing the behavior intervention plan?
- ◆ Can the plan be held up to ethical standards?

***Step 9: Determine the least restrictive environment***

- ◆ Are the replacement behaviors outlined in the intervention plan appropriate for the environments in which the plan will be implemented?
- ◆ If the IEP team has determined that the individual will be removed, have strategies been included in the behavior intervention plan for re-introducing the individual to the regular educational environment?
- ◆ Has the IEP team considered interventions that will increase the likelihood that the individual educational environment? Will be educated with non-disabled peers?
- ◆ Have interventions been tried and documented prior to placement in a more restrictive environment?

**Step 10: Periodically evaluate outcomes, taking into account the following questions**

- ◆ Was the plan effective in increasing the use of the replacement behavior and decreasing the behavior of concern?
- ◆ Were the interventions appropriately applied and documented?
- ◆ Is the behavior intervention plan being implemented as designed?
- ◆ Were adjustments made as needed during the implementation phase of the plan?
- ◆ Were parents, staff, the individual, and outside agencies involved in the review and revision of the behavior intervention plan?
- ◆ Has the intervention plan been implemented for a sufficient length of time?
- ◆ Has the intervention plan been continued, revised, or eliminated as a result of the periodic review?