



DISCIPLINE

Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavioral Intervention Plans

What are functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans?

A functional behavioral assessment (FBA) is a process of gathering information that is used to help understand a child's behavior(s). It should be based on data collected in a variety of settings, observations by an impartial observer and discussion with team members. A behavior intervention plan (BIP) is a written plan based on the Functional Behavioral Assessment that outlines how the behavior will be addressed and acceptable behavior(s) to be taught to replace the undesired ones.

When is a FBA or BIP necessary?

- When developing the IEP, the IEP team must consider whether a student with a disability has behaviors that interfere with his/her learning or that of others
- When a student with a disability is suspended or removed for more than 10 school days (consecutive or cumulative) in a school year.
- When a student exhibits behaviors that interfere with his/her learning or that of others.

How is a FBA done?

An observation of the child in both a structured setting (like math or reading class) and an unstructured setting (like lunch or gym) should be done. The observation should also be done by someone other than the child's regular classroom teacher such as the school psychologist. The child's files and evaluations should be reviewed and it should include input from the student's parents and teachers. The FBA should:

- Answer key questions regarding when the behavior is most (and least) likely to occur;
- Identify the antecedent - what is the situation that leads up to the behavior, who is near the student, what is going on at the time the behavior occurs, when and where are they likely to occur and least likely to occur;
- Define the behavior in specific, concrete terms, labeled according to its seriousness (disruptive, distracting) how long per episode, how often;
- Identify the consequences – what happens as a result of the behavior, both in terms of punishment and potential benefits for the child;

How is the FBA used?

The FBA is used to develop a guess or theory about the purpose that the behavior serves. Is this behavior an attempt to get out of or avoid something, to help the child gain something (maybe attention or social acceptance or as an attempt to control a situation? This information is then used to develop a behavior intervention plan.

What kinds of things should be included in a behavior intervention plan?

A BIP should include strategies that will prevent the behavior from reoccurring. The FBA must include positive interventions and strategies to:

- Address and prevent or alter environments or events that typically occur before the behavior (antecedents);
- Teach the child an appropriate replacement behavior;
- Positively reinforce the appropriate replacement behavior (consequences); and
- Assist personnel to respond to occurrences positively and consistently in different settings.

CITATION: 34 CFR 300 Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities, Sec.300.530 – 300.537 & COMAR 13A.08.03 & 13A.08.06 & Goss v. Lopez, 419 U.S. 565 (1975)

RESOURCES

- Maryland State Department of Education
www.marylandpublicschools.org
- Maryland Disability Law Center (MDLC) 1-800-233-7201
www.mdldbaltimore.org