

# Functional Behavior Assessment



## All behavior tells us something. What is your child trying to say?

If your child struggles with behavior, schools may use a process to try to figure out what your child is saying through their behavior and come up with possible solutions. The idea is to prevent and teach rather than just wait and punish. This process is called **functional behavioral assessment (FBA)**.

## Background on Functional Behavior Assessment

<b>What is an FBA?</b>	It is an evaluation focused on social and emotional behaviors with the end goal of figuring out the unmet need(s) for your child and make changes accordingly.
<b>Who can conduct an FBA?</b>	It can be done by the IEP team, by an expert such as a Board Certified Behavioral Analyst (BCBA), the school psychologist, or an outside expert.
<b>Where did the FBA come from?</b>	<p>The term Functional Behavior Assessment came from the positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) framework.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ PBIS uses a “<i>function-based approach</i>” to prevent difficult, disruptive, or inappropriate behaviors. A function-based approach is also used to make changes in the classroom and to teach and encourage positive skills. (See Example below)</li> </ul>



**Example:** Every day during math class Juanita asks to go to the bathroom, to sharpen her pencil, starts talking to another student, or making loud noises.

As a result, the Teacher needs to stand next to Juanita, redirect her to the work and go over the instructions again to be sure Juanita knows what she is expected to do.

The function of the behavior is that Juanita is asking for help in understanding the assignment. The Teacher now stands next to Juanita when giving the instruction, and after she gives instructions to the entire class, she repeats to Juanita. Over time they will work on Juanita raising her hand to ask for help.

## What role does the Functional Behavior Assessment play in the IEP?

<b>What does this have to do with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team?</b>	<p>It is the law! Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is specifically named in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).</p> <p>IDEA says that the IEP team needs to consider PBIS, and other strategies, when a student has behavior needs that get in the way of their learning or the learning of other children.</p>
<b>An FBA usually comes into play when a student is disciplined and does not attend school due to discipline issues, BUT you do not have to wait until disciplinary action is taken in order to conduct an FBA.</b>	<p>When a student is disciplined and they do not attend school for what adds up to more than 10 days, or your child is sent to attend a different classroom or school because of their behaviors, a <i>manifest determination</i> must be held within 10 days to determine:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> if the behavior was related to your child’s disability or;</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> if there was a failure to follow your child’s IEP.</li> </ul> <p>If the behavior was related, the IEP team is required to conduct a <b>functional behavior assessment</b> and implement a behavior intervention plan.</p>

**Bottomline**, your child's IEP should meet both academics and behavioral needs. If behavior is getting in the way of their learning, or disrupting others, it may be time to ask for the IEP team to come together (with the parents) and consider if they need to evaluate and include specific behavioral goals. *You do not have to wait until disciplinary action is taken in order to conduct an FBA.*

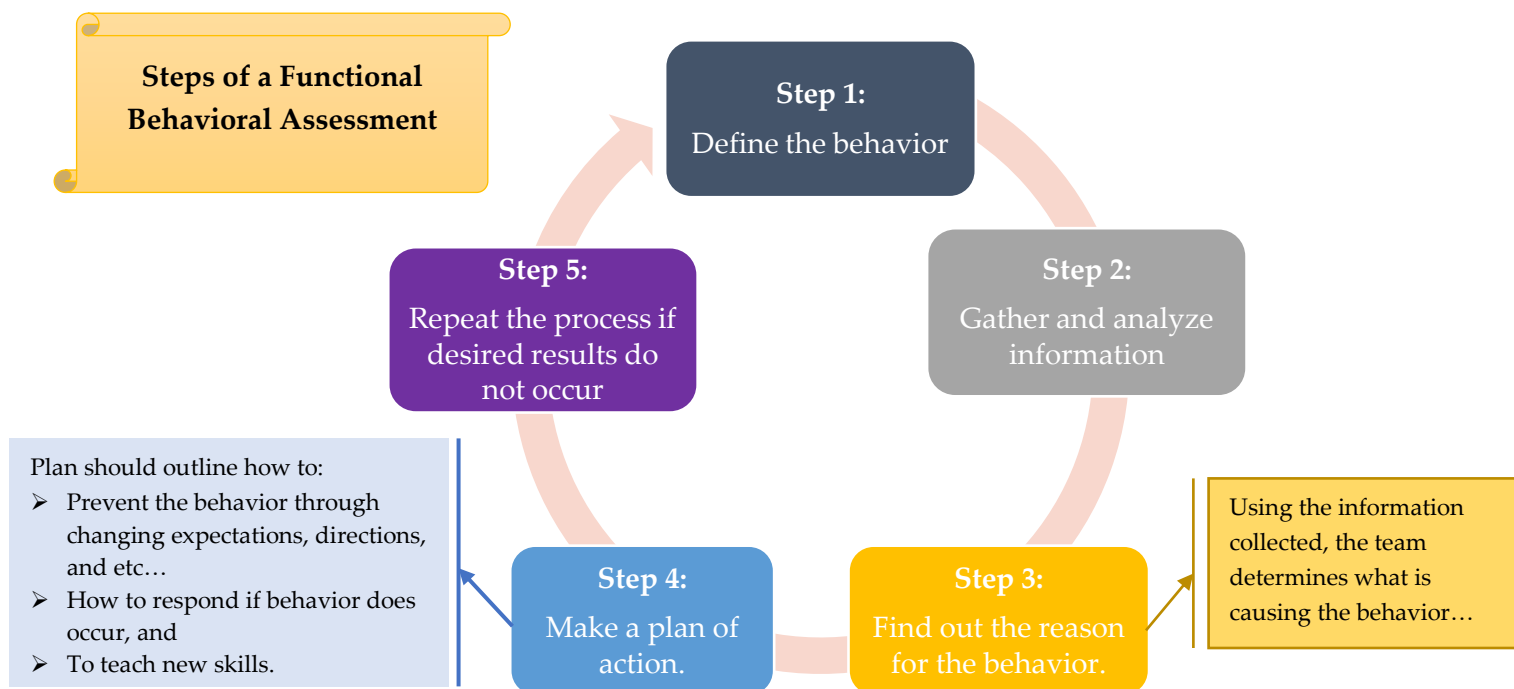
[Click here](#) to access a model letter for requesting a Functional Behavior Assessment.

## What are the critical features of an effective FBA?

An effective FBA collects information from a variety of different sources, and through multiple methods, to figure out when behaviors occur, how long they last and what function the behavior serves.

Note that it is not guess-work or one-person's opinion! An FBA is based on *observable facts*. An effective FBA includes the following critical features related to process and outcomes as shown below.

FBA Process	FBA Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇓ Review your child's <b>records</b> to determine patterns, or history of behavior</li> <li>⇓ Include experiences of the student, family member(s), and educator(s) through <b>interviews</b></li> <li>⇓ Document behaviors through <b>direct observations</b></li> <li>⇓ <b>Summarize</b> information and data to inform FBA outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⇓ Define and document the <b>behavior(s) of concern</b></li> <li>⇓ Document things that happen in the classroom or school that are likely to cause behavior (<b>antecedent</b>) and maintain (reinforcing <b>consequence</b>) behavior</li> <li>⇓ Identify <b>function</b> (i.e., get/obtain or escape/avoid specific situations or expectations; receive attention (what kind?))</li> </ul>



### Sources

[Function Based Support – An Overview: PBIS Center \(2019\)](#)

[What Is Functional Behavioral Assessment \(FBA\)? | Understood - For learning and thinking differences](#)

[39 Behavior Goals for an IEP | Printable | Work/Task Completion | A Day in our Shoes](#)