

Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans

The educational model focuses on developing an effective learning environment for students. The Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) process and the development of the Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) assist school teams in analyzing the student's environment and constructing positive supports to promote appropriate behaviors conducive to learning. The FBA/BIP process can be used for any student exhibiting behavioral problems, from the pre-referral stage to the more intensive levels of need.

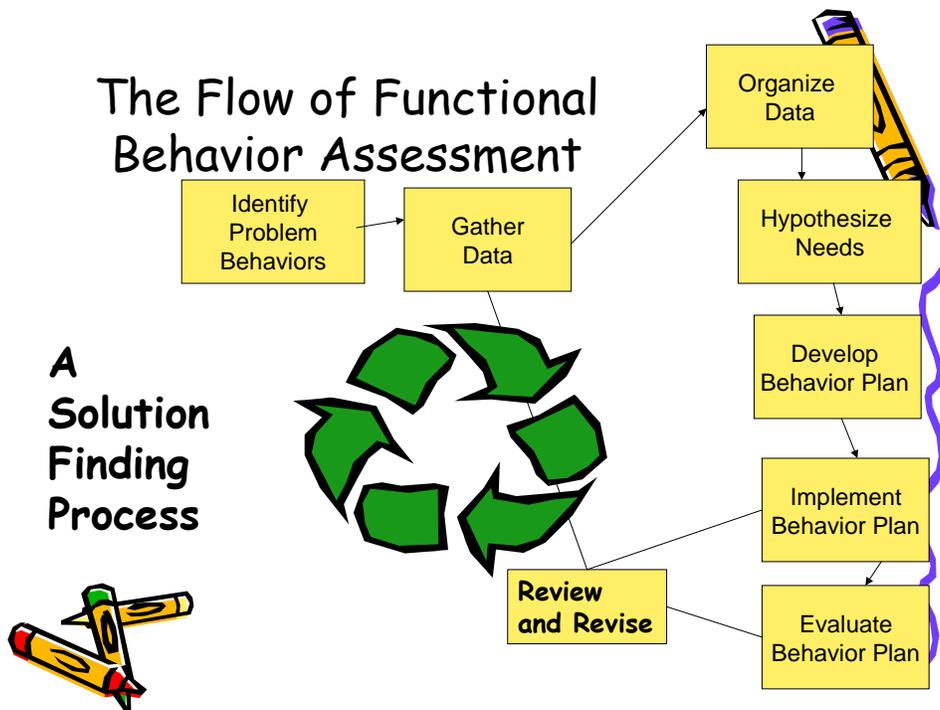
Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is a Process that:

- ✓ Gathers global and specific information
- ✓ Involves a group interview technique using people who know the student well; the teacher is essential in the process
- ✓ Looks carefully at the context as well as the behavior
- ✓ Helps us to understand the student and his/her behaviors
- ✓ Leads to hypothesis statements about the behavioral function and related needs
- ✓ Shifts ownership of assessment and intervention to team – educators and family
- ✓ Leads to the development of a behavior support plan
- ✓ Incorporates ongoing review and revision as needed

NOTE: The FBA process may often be completed through informal means, unless a formal FBA evaluation is required due to a Manifestation Determination Review concluding that a student's misbehavior was the a result of his/her disability.

A Good Behavior Support Plan Has the Following:

- ✓ Identification of the function(s) of the behavior
- ✓ Strategies to reduce the effect of setting events (slow triggers)
- ✓ Strategies to reduce the effect of antecedents (fast triggers)
- ✓ Appropriate replacement behavior to be taught that will serve the same function for the student
- ✓ Positive consequences for appropriate behavior
- ✓ Reductive consequences for inappropriate behavior
- ✓ A way to measure success or failure of the plan



THE FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

- Identify Target Behavior
- Gather Data
- Organize Data
- Hypothesize Need
- Design Behavior Plan
- Implement Behavior Plan
- Evaluate Behavior Plan

When students have challenging behavior that interferes with their ability to learn or interrupts their classmates' learning, schools may complete an informal or formal Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) for gathering information about both the student and his/her behavior. This information gathering is the first part of the process of providing positive behavioral support to the student. Once the purpose (what the student "gets" or "avoids") of a challenging behavior is determined, then a behavior support plan may be designed that includes instructional supports and strategies that help the student get what he/she needs in a more socially acceptable way.

How does the team figure out what is behind a behavior and what might be done to intervene?

IDENTIFY TARGET BEHAVIOR

Behaviors that are targeted tend to be those that have not responded to standard strategies that teachers or parents have used before. In describing the behavior, it is important to be as specific as possible. For example, a person would say, "Peter talks

out loud to his classmates in math class and argues with his teacher," rather than "Peter is disruptive in class."

GATHER AND ORGANIZE DATA

- ✓ **Student Strengths/Skills**
Note how the student learns best, what he does well, and with whom he has positive relationships. Use these skills in designing a behavior plan.
- ✓ **Fast Triggers**
A fast trigger is what comes just before the challenging behavior. It includes where the behavior occurs, with whom, and during what activity.
- ✓ **Slow Triggers**
Slow triggers look at the bigger picture to find factors which may be influencing the student's behavior. Learning difficulties and communication challenges may add to a student's frustration. Things like environmental triggers (heat, noise, crowds, etc.) or physical factors (illness, hunger, fatigue, side effects of medication, over-stimulation, etc.) may "set up" an episode of negative behavior. Family and social forces may play a part, too.
- ✓ **Consequences**
Consequences are what happen immediately after the behavior occurs. Did other classmates laugh? Was the student sent to the office? Did he get out of doing the work?

❖ **Sample FBA**

Strengths of the Student: Jimmy likes school and has many friends. His favorite subjects are English and math. Jimmy has a great relationship with his dad, who he gets to see every other weekend.

Slow Triggers (Setting Events)	Fast Triggers (Antecedents)	Target Behavior	Perceived Function	Actual Consequences
Mondays after he sees Dad, headaches, too little sleep, didn't do homework	Asked to do multiplication & long division problems, sitting next to Harry	Talking in class, arguing with Mr. Soft (math teacher)	Attention from Mr. Soft and Mr. Wong, gets out of doing math problems	Gets sent to the principal's (Mr. Wong's) office

HYPOTHESIZE NEEDS

Once the above questions have been answered, the team may build a hypothesis statement, a summary of why they believe the behavior is occurring and what purpose it serves. Most behavior, good or bad, is motivated by a need to get something (attention, a desired object, etc) or to avoid something (hard work, embarrassment, discomfort, etc.). Challenging behaviors may serve more than one function.

✓ **Most Common Functions of Behavior**

To obtain:

- attention
- desired activities/objects
- internal stimulation

To escape/avoid:

- interaction
- tasks or activities
- physical discomfort

✓ **Perceived Function**

The hypothesis that the team builds becomes the foundation for developing a Behavior Intervention Plan for the student. Ideally, the plan includes strategies that line up with the four pieces of the FBA --slow trigger strategies, fast trigger strategies, alternative behaviors, and consequence strategies.

❖ **Sample Hypothesis**

SLOW TRIGGER	FAST TRIGGER	PROBLEM BEHAVIOR	MAINTAINING CONSEQUENCE
Given the circumstances.. When Jeff is tired or comes to school without his homework after weekends with Dad . . .	when this occurs . . and Mr. Soft asks students to complete a difficult math assignment . . .	the student does . . Jimmy talks loudly and argues with Mr. Soft about the assignment. . . .	in order to . . . get attention from male role models and get out of doing hard work.

DEVELOP A BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN

✓ **Behavioral Goals**

The first step in putting together a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is to define behavioral goals for the student. The team identifies alternative, desired behaviors to replace the target problem behaviors. These include long-term goals (the preferred behavior) and short-term objectives (what would be an acceptable replacement behavior while working toward the preferred behavior).

These replacement behaviors need to serve the same function as the problem behavior and get the student's desired results at least as:

- QUICKLY
- OFTEN
- EASILY
- INTENSELY

- ✓ **Strategies**
Once the behavior goals are defined, the team identifies strategies that reduce the likelihood of the problem behavior and increase the likelihood of the desired replacement behavior.

These strategies fall into the four categories that match up to the informal assessment or formal FBA:

- *Slow trigger* (setting event) strategies
- *Fast trigger* strategies
- *Strategies for teaching skills* required for the desired replacement/alternative behaviors
- *Consequence strategies* (either reward strategies for desired behavior or consequences for undesired behavior)

In some cases, it might be necessary to also develop a crisis/emergency plan to address a dangerous or serious situation. Examples might be threat of injury to self or others, destruction of property, or a major disturbance of the teaching process.

IMPLEMENT THE BIP

The BIP needs to contain clear directions for implementing the strategies including

- ✓ **when** and **where** the strategies will be carried out and by whom
- ✓ **who** will have the overall responsibility for making sure the plan is implemented
- ✓ **how** the team will know if the plan is working
- ✓ a **schedule for assessing progress** and a **plan for training staff** (and parents) on strategies if necessary

EVALUATE THE BIP

The evaluation should monitor how well the plan is being followed and, more importantly, how effective it is in changing the student's behavior. To be able to measure progress, the BIP team should have baseline data, or a description of what the behavior looked like before any intervention. Then team members must make periodic progress checks to see what impact the plan is having.

If a problem behavior proves resistant to change, it may be necessary to move back into the assessment phase, so that more data may be gathered and a new hypothesis developed. Providing positive behavior support to students is an ongoing process that must be flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the student and his/her environment.

Regularly:

- ✓ **Monitor**
- ✓ **Measure progress**
- ✓ **Review and revise**