



Positive Interventions for Students with Disabilities

When students with disabilities have inappropriate behaviors that interfere with their learning or the learning of other students and/or their behavior gets them suspended or removed from class, schools should develop a plan to prevent misbehavior and help students improve their behavior, as required by law. This information sheet explains how schools create and use Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs) to develop Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs).

What is a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)?

An FBA is a process for gathering and reporting information to figure out what causes a child's challenging behavior. An FBA should include a written report of the following information collected over time:

- **Direct student observation** in different settings throughout a school day over more than one day;
- **Interviews** with parents, teachers, related service providers, and the student; and
- **A review of other relevant information**, such as the student's evaluations, academic record, and discipline record.

How does an FBA work?

The people who know your child's behavior best should participate in the FBA, including parents, guardians, the student, teachers, counselors, and other school professionals. The FBA must:

- **Identify and define the behavioral challenges** that need to be addressed, including the location(s), time(s), frequency, and severity of the behavior;
- **Identify the possible factors that cause the behavior**, including internal factors, such as learning problems or hyperactivity, and external factors, such as the time of day, type of activity, or presence of other students;
- **Collect and review information to determine what can lead to and trigger a student's challenging behavior** and the conditions that promote positive behavior (for example, an FBA may show that misbehavior occurs at certain times of day or around certain people or in connection with particular instruction or activities); and
- **Make an educated guess from the information collected** about why the behavior happens and any triggers for the behavior (for example, John misbehaves when asked to read for more than ten minutes).

What is a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)?

Once the FBA describes **WHY** a behavior happens, the team must use the FBA to create a BIP to **PREVENT** and **ADDRESS** the behavior and promote positive behavior. The BIP should include:

- **Baseline information** about how often the behavior occurs and the behavior's severity;
- **Specific steps the school will take to prevent the behavior** from occurring, such as changes to class activities, school schedule, etc., prevention of the triggers for the behavior;
- **Strategies the school will use to support the student** and build the short-term skills your child needs to manage his or her behavior;
- **Precise details about how the school staff will respond** to the triggers for the behavior and the behavior if it occurs, including de-escalating or reducing the severity of the behavior and any consequences they will impose for the behavior; and
- **A schedule to measure the BIP's effectiveness** at reducing the problem behavior, report back to the student's parent or guardian on the student's progress under the BIP, and change the BIP if the student is not progressing under the BIP.

Still have more questions?

Please call the Jill Chaifetz Education Helpline
Monday through Thursday, 10 am to 4 pm
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