



# FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENTS & BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLANS

Many students with disabilities exhibit inappropriate behaviors that interfere with learning. Some behaviors can cause harm to the student or others. There are many reasons why a student might exhibit problem behaviors. All behaviors, even inappropriate ones, serve a purpose. Some behaviors are a part of their disability. Some are behaviors they cannot control. And other behaviors can be changed or replaced with more acceptable ones. Functional behavioral assessments and behavior intervention plans can be used by families and professionals to understand the reason for the behavior and to manage or change the behaviors.

## **What is a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)?**

A functional behavior assessment involves gathering information in order to determine the cause or function of a behavior. In most circumstances, an FBA should be conducted before developing a behavior intervention plan. There are many different tools that could be used for an FBA. Tools should be selected on a case-by-case basis for each individual student. The information that is collected in an FBA is used to help understand why and in what conditions problem behaviors occur. The information will help the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team develop a behavior intervention plan. FBAs and BIPs may be developed for any behaviors that affect learning or violate a student code of conduct. An FBA can be requested by a parent or a school at any time, or as part of an evaluation or reevaluation process.

## **What Should an FBA Include?**

- A definition of the behavior that you want to change: What is the student doing that is interfering with learning or causing harm to the student or others? What is the behavior we want to change? This behavior must be observable and measurable.
- Measurement of the behavior: When does it happen? Where does it happen? How often does it happen? How long does the behavior last? Who is present when it happens? What happens before the behavior is exhibited (antecedent)? What happens after the behavior is exhibited (consequence)? Does it happen only at certain times of the day?
- Data collection and assessment: This can include parent, student, and teacher interviews whenever possible. It may include record reviews. It may include completing checklists or questionnaires. It may include observations of the student in different settings.
- A summary (hypothesis): This means that the team uses the information collected to try to understand the function or purpose of the behavior (why the student is exhibiting the behavior).

## **What is a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)?**

A behavior intervention plan includes positive interventions, strategies, and supports to address the target behavior. The BIP is created by a team of school staff and parents. The BIP is used to teach or encourage new behavior. A BIP should address the problem behaviors identified in the FBA. If the team is presented with enough data and knowledge about the causes and circumstances of your child's behavior, an FBA may not have to be completed. The BIP should be modified as the student's behavior changes.

## **What Should a BIP Include?**

- Information from the FBA: This includes the target behavior, the data that was collected, and the best ideas about the purpose or function of the behavior.
- New skills to replace the target behavior: These can include communication skills, social skills, self-management skills, choice-making, etc.
- Ways to teach the new behaviors: These may include modeling, practice, social stories, prompts, direct instruction, etc.
- Dates when the plan will be implemented. Names of people who will implement the plan.
- Materials, training, and support for persons implementing the plan.
- Collecting and reviewing data.
- Timelines for team meetings, reviewing the data, and monitoring the plan.