

The Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan

The Functional Behavior Assessment “FBA”

The FBA Purpose

The FBA is an assessment process for gathering information for use in developing positive behavioral interventions. It incorporates a variety of data collection techniques used to assist in identifying possible causes and likely interventions intended to address problem behaviors.

Which students must have a FBA?

- Any student who is eligible for special education services whose behavior impedes his/her learning or the learning of others
- A student who is subject to expulsion or a suspension that, in the aggregate, exceeds 10 school days in one school year

Simply put.....

The student must exhibit “targeted” behaviors - these behaviors are an impediment to learning

These are not just behaviors that are annoying

These are behaviors that **make a difference** in the classroom

The FBA is used for serious, recurring problem behaviors that do not respond to typical discipline strategies.

What Does the FBA Do?

The FBA takes data on the frequency and duration of the behavior so that you have enough information from which to develop a hypothesis

Think in terms of the scientific method:
hypothesis – experiment – proof – new hypothesis

If our premise is that:

Students learn to behave or misbehave in ways that satisfy a need or result in a desired outcome,

Then the FBA is the tool to help us understand what the needs are that drive that behavior.

The FBA Team

- Several individuals over several days and under various conditions
- Members should be knowledgeable of how to conduct a FBA and use behavior intervention techniques. They should have good interpersonal skills.
- They should be versed in collaboration, active listening, conflict resolution, time management

Elements of the FBA

- Target behavior(s)
- Setting
- Intensity
- Frequency/duration
- Environmental variables
- Student strengths
- Communicative and functional intent of the behavior
- Functional alternatives (replacement behaviors)

Sample situation

Tim rocks back in his chair. This behavior is disruptive to other students because the chairs squeak, Tim frequently falls backward, and the constant motion detracts from instruction. In some classes, Tim is sent to the principal's office for failure to follow the directive to stop.

What are the possible needs that stem from this behavior?

What types of data will need to be collected?

What are some hypotheses that might be valid?

Method for Performing a FBA

1. Describe and verify the seriousness of the problem behavior
2. Refine the definition of the behavior
3. Collect information/data on the possible functions of the behavior
4. Analyze the information
5. Generate a hypothesis statement regarding the probable function of the behavior
6. Test the hypothesis statement

1. Describe and verify the seriousness of the problem behavior

- Define in concrete terms using a description of the behavior
- Observe in the classroom to establish the seriousness of the behavior/discrepancy of acceptable behavior
- Assess teacher expectations (academic and behavioral)
- Consider cultural differences

Judging the Significance of a Behavior

- Is the student's behavior significantly different from his/her classmates?
- Does the behavior lessen the possibility of learning for himself or others?
- Have past efforts to address the behavior using standard interventions been unsuccessful?
- Does the behavior represent a behavioral deficit rather than a cultural difference?
- Is the behavior serious, persistent, chronic, or a threat to the safety of the student or others?
- If the behavior persists, is it likely to result in disciplinary action?

2. Refine the Definition of the Behavior

- Identify specific characteristics of the behavior that are interfering with learning
- Avoid vague descriptors, e.g., “John has a bad attitude”

Observe Students in a Variety of Settings

- Times the behavior occurs
- Location
- Conditions where the behavior occurs
- Individuals present
- Events that occur after the behavior

Examples of Well Defined Behaviors

- Aggression

“Bob hits, kicks, and verbally threatens others when he does not get his way”

- Verbal Off Task Behavior

“Sara makes comments of a sexual nature during physical education class”.

3. Collect information/data on the possible functions of the behavior

- Review of records
- Samples of student work
- Observation
- Interviews with parents, staff and student

The Function of Behavior

The function is not usually
inappropriate, the behavior is

Examples of Functions

- The function is to get social reinforcement.
- The function is to get staff attention.
- The function is to avoid or escape a task.
- The function is to avoid or escape a situation.
- The function is to meet a sensory need.

Data Collection

Direct Assessment

Observation

ABC Chart

Frequency Log

Duration Log

Scatter plot – identifies patterns of behavior related to specific conditions

Indirect Assessment

Interviews

Review of records

Rating Disruptive Behavior

- Confined to the observed student
- Disrupts others in the student's immediate area
- Disrupts the entire class
- Disrupts other classrooms
- Causes or threatens to cause physical harm to self or others

4. Analyze the Information

- Complete columns of information such as setting, antecedents, behavior, duration, frequency, consequences, etc.
- Provides a visual comparison across settings and sources
- Identifies patterns, possible triggers, consequences
- Helps to formulate a hypothesis for why the behavior occurs

5. Develop a Hypothesis for the Function of the Behavior

- Use data to determine the possible function
- Predict the social/environmental conditions where the behavior occurs
- You can only establish effective behavior interventions when you understand the function of the behavior

Sample Hypothesis

Tim rocks back in his chair when he is given an academic task that he thinks is too difficult for him but he stops when staff give him assistance.

6. Test the Hypothesis

- Experimentally manipulate variables to determine if the hypothesis is correct
- Be aware that behaviors are likely to spike
- Be patient

The Behavior Intervention Plan

A written behavioral plan developed as a part of the IEP to address a serious behavioral problem. It is based on the FBA and describes the interventions to be used, method of evaluation, and provisions for coordinating with the home.

When is a BIP Completed?

- As a pre-referral strategy
- Whenever a special education student's behavior impedes his learning or that of other students
- Before or not later than 10 business days after first removing a child from his placement for 10 cumulative days in a year or commencing a removal that constitutes a change in placement
- Manifestation determination meeting

Who Completes the BIP?

Generally , the people who conduct and review the FBA in conjunction with the student's parents at an IEP conference

The FBA Team

BIP Components

- Summarize the FBA
- Student's strengths
- Summarize prior interventions
- Describe positive behavioral interventions to be used
- Describe restrictive interventions to be use
- Identify data collection procedures and methods for monitoring interventions
- Identify a schedule for review
- List provisions for coordination with home

BIP Best Practices

- Introduce/teach a replacement behavior that services the same function as the inappropriate behavior
- Manipulate antecedents, consequences, curriculum
- Provide interventions that offer reinforcement for appropriate behavior

7. Develop and Implement a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan

- Identify strategies based on the function of the student's behavior
- Select positive interventions
- Reinforce appropriate behavior

Guidelines for Selecting Interventions

The intervention:

- Is aligned with the function of the behavior
- Is appropriate given the student's PLOP
- Directly teaches the target behavior
- Is the "least intrusive" intervention likely to produce positive changes
- Is acceptable to the targeted student
- Promotes a replacement behavior that will occur and be reinforced in the natural environment

Reinforce Appropriate Behavior

- Consider student's preferences and strengths
- Forced choice reinforcement menu
- Be consistent in the frequency of delivery
- Vary reinforcers
- Consider the amount of reinforcement given the amount of effort
- Successive approximations (gradual change)
- Fading (gradually replacing with intrinsic rewards)

8. Monitor the faithfulness of the implementation

- Develop a list/written scripts that detail the responsibilities of each individual participating in the implementation of the BIP
- Monitor the consistency and accuracy with which the BIP is implemented

9. Evaluate the Effectiveness of the BIP

- Measure changes in behavior per the evaluation procedure
- Check progress related to the baseline data
- Evaluate effectiveness of each intervention
- Assess positive, negative or no changes in behavior

10. Modify the BIP

- Review the plan according the evaluation schedule outlined in the BIP
- Modify it whenever the IEP team feels it is necessary

Modify if:

- Goals achieved
- Change in placement
- Interventions not effective