

Functional Behavior Assessment

(FBA)



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What is a Functional Behavior Assessment?

A **F**unctional **B**ehavior **A**ssessment (FBA) is a way to help you and the school understand why your child is showing problem behavior. There are different ways to help you and your child's teachers understand the reason behind the behavior, which is often referred to as the function of the behavior. It is important to determine why behavior may be occurring as it may be impacting your child's ability to learn. An FBA looks at the antecedents (A), behavior (B), consequences (C), and setting. More information on these terms can be found in this brochure.

Your child's behavior may be the way they communicate a need or want. The behavior of concern may be the result of your child wanting to gain something (such as attention from others or a preferred item or activity). Understanding the reason behind your child's behavior can help you and the school find ways to change the inappropriate behavior so your child can be successful.

Example: A child has a hard time showing his work on math problems. In math class, he gets angry, crumples up the paper, and is disruptive. He is sent to the principal's office.

The behavior isn't appropriate, but it served its purpose. The child managed to avoid doing the work that was frustrating him. He may not know that was his goal, but he found a way to deal with the math that was causing him stress. (Example taken from Understood.org)

What is the family's role in the FBA?

Your role in the FBA process is critical! It is important for you to share information about behavior you see at home. This will allow the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, of which you are a member, to look for similarities and differences between your child's behavior at home and at school. By working together, you and the school will be able to make plans to help your child improve behavior which will allow more time to learn. You are an important partner in your child's success!



One of the most important parts of an FBA is figuring out what triggers inappropriate behaviors, whether these are happening at home, at school, or with your child's friends.

The FBA tells us why the behavior occurs (the function of the behavior). The team can use this information to develop a **B**ehavior **I**ntervention **P**lan (BIP). This plan will outline ways to:

- Prevent the behavior from happening
- Teach the student replacement behaviors (other ways to get their needs met)
- Determine how adults will respond to the student

The “ABCs” of an FBA

Identifying the ABCs of a behavior help the IEP team to develop a successful plan.

Antecedents (A)

Antecedents occur immediately before the behavior and may “trigger” the behavior. Examples of antecedents are:

- Being given a direction
- Being ignored
- Being told to stop an activity they enjoy (preferred activity)

Behavior (B)

This is the behavior(s) that the IEP team is concerned about and is trying to change.

Consequences (C)

Consequences happen right after the behavior and help us understand why the behavior is happening. The FBA looks at the consequences to understand what might be causing the behavior to be repeated, increased, or decreased over time.

Examples of consequences include:

- Getting adult/peer interaction (Attention)
- Avoiding or delaying a task/activity (Escape)
- Getting a favorite toy/activity (Tangible)

Setting

The setting is important to help create a successful plan. The setting includes such things as:

- Location (classrooms, recess, the bus)
- People (adults and peers)
- Materials (toys, work, visual supports)
- Activities (waiting in line, free time, transition time)

An FBA tells us how to change the antecedents, consequences, and/or setting to prevent or stop the inappropriate behaviors and to teach appropriate behaviors to occur in their place. The data that is gathered during an FBA will be used to develop a BIP for your child.

Note: A separate brochure is available for information on the BIP.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is my child engaging in a behavior on purpose?

Behavior is often a form of communication. There is usually a purpose to behavior, though your child may not be able to describe it for us. The problem behavior may be the child's way of getting their needs or wants met. An FBA may show a child gets attention from the teacher when they are off-task. The goal of the child isn't to be off-task; the goal is to get the teacher's attention.

Does the FBA take my child's diagnoses into consideration?

Yes. Diagnoses are one piece of data that should be taken into consideration, similar to medical concerns, academic or learning skills, social and emotional skills, and language skills. The primary focus of the FBA is to determine the function of the behavior. Children with the same diagnoses may engage in problem behaviors for different reasons.

What should I expect in the FBA summary?

- Behaviors of concern clearly defined
- Factual information about the behavior(s)
 - What or how often the behavior(s) occur
 - How long the behavior(s) last
 - What made the behavior(s) stop
- Description of how facts were found
 - Interviews and/or review of teachers' data
 - Observations in school
 - Various assessments
- Statement about the function of (reason for) the behavior