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FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT FAQ

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When must we do a functional behavioral assessment?

IDEA 97 tells us that we must do a functional behavioral assessment when a child with a disability has been removed from his/her current educational placement for more than 10 days. However, for students at-risk of suspension or those suspended for less than 10 days, school districts should complete a functional behavioral assessment and develop a behavior support plan to prevent future suspensions. A functional behavioral assessment provides the IEP team with critical information including 1) those interventions, which have been tried, and their effects, 2) possible motivation(s) underlying the student's behavior, and 3) whether instructional and behavioral supports being provided to the student are appropriate.

Do all students with identified behavior concerns need a functional behavioral assessment behavior plan?

IDEA, section 614(d)(3)(B)(i) states that "in the case of a child whose behavior impedes his or her learning or that of others, consider where appropriate, strategies, including positive behavior interventions, strategies and supports to address the behavior". A functional behavioral assessment provides critical information to identify the most appropriate and relevant positive behavior interventions. Additionally, the development and implementation of a behavior plan can provide consistency and communication about the interventions. The Colorado Department of Education has taken the position that all students with significant behavioral needs should have a behavior plan developed to address those needs.

Is a functional behavioral assessment the same as functional behavioral analysis?

No! These terms are often used synonymously but they are not the same. A functional behavioral assessment gathers broad and specific information in order to better understand the precise reasons for a student's problem behavior. A component of the functional behavioral assessment is an analysis of information that has been gathered that results in predictions or hypotheses of what maintains the behavior (See pages 7-9).

Functional behavioral analysis, which may also be called applied behavior analysis, takes functional behavioral assessment a step further. This is a decision-making process that involves testing hypotheses regarding variables or events most strongly related to the occurrence of problem behaviors.

What assessments do I have to do when I am completing a functional behavioral assessment?

The tools and strategies that you need to include in a functional behavioral assessment depend on information you already have related to the what, when, where, who and why of the behavior. Remember that a functional behavioral assessment is a way to gain an understanding of the behavior and what behavior is reinforcing for the student. With this information appropriate interventions and strategies can be effectively implemented. The depth and breadth of these assessments will vary (See pages 7-

Who is responsible for completing a functional behavioral assessment?

All members of the IEP team are responsible for insuring that the functional behavioral assessment is completed. Since a variety of instruments and data collection tools may be used, persons collecting information will vary; however, a person trained in the interpretation of each instrument and/or tool is essential.

What are positive behavior interventions/supports?

Positive behavior supports include multiple approaches such as changing systems, altering environments, teaching skills, and appreciating positive behavior. A functional behavioral assessment provides information regarding the student's motivation. The IEP team can then use this information to develop appropriate positive behavior supports. The goal of positive behavior supports is to understand the underlying motivation behind a behavior so that students can be taught to use more pro-social behavior (Carr et al, 1994).

When do I begin to develop positive behavior interventions?

When an educator or parent expresses a concern about a child's behavior, the process of developing positive behavior interventions should begin. This is an appropriate time to refer a student to a team or assistance team. Interventions and supports utilized should be documented so there is a record of what interventions have been tried and their results.

What is the role of the student in developing positive behavior supports and in the assessment process?

The student should be an active participant in the development of the positive behavior support plan during the assessment process whenever possible and appropriate.

Who is responsible for implementing the behavior support plan?

Anyone who has contact with an individual student may be involved in implementing the behavior support plan. A case manager should be assigned to insure consistency and that the appropriate personnel are implementing the identified interventions and providing the necessary supports.

How often do I need to review the behavior plan?

The IEP team and the case manager should determine the frequency of the review with the goal of ensuring its effectiveness. Data should be collected to confirm and document the effectiveness of the intervention. If it is determined that an intervention is not achieving the expected results, the behavior plan should be revised.

Is a behavior contract or remedial discipline plan (required by Colorado legislation) the same as a behavior support plan?

A behavior contract is often used as a remedial discipline plan. A behavior contract typically states that the student agrees to do or not to do with a consequence for those actions and often requires the

student's signature in much the same manner as any contract. A behavior support plan, which is instructional in nature, is a more desirable alternative to a remedial discipline plan and may be used in place. A behavior support plan should include the following: a description of the behavior of concern, behavioral goals, a plan for providing positive proactive instruction and supporting the new behavior, a crisis management plan, a description of success, follow-up activities, and timelines for review and evaluation.

Is the behavior plan a part of (attached to) the IEP?

The behavioral needs and goals of a student must be addressed in his/her IEP and on the behavior plan. LEAs need to develop policies that address whether or not the behavior plan is a part of, or attached to, the IEP. Although the law requires the development of a behavior plan, it does not specifically state that the behavior plan must be attached to the IEP. District policies need to ensure that, if a student leaves a school, the behavior plan follows the student to the new school.

Functional Behavioral Assessment Tools and Purposes and Uses

Tool	Type	Purpose/Outcome	Data Collection And Interpretation	When To Use	Publications
Antecedent Behavior Consequence (ABC)	Direct observation recording tool Specific event analysis Can be analyzed from a videotape segment	Determines what happens before a behavior occurs, what the behavior looks like during an event, and what happens after the behavior occurs, including environmental conditions, interactions, etc.	Persons trained in observation and recording techniques	When analyzing specific conditions that may be triggering or maintaining behavior.	Cooper 1987 Multiple forms available
Functional Assessment Observation Form	Direct observation tool Multiple event recording log	Provides information regarding predictor events, consequences, frequency, perception about how the function of the behavior is maintained, the time the behavior occurs, and patterns of behavioral occurrences.	Persons who are in direct contact with the individual and who are trained in the use of the form and interpretation by persons trained in behavioral assessment.	When behaviors occur at a moderate to high frequency (25 times per day). Can be used for lower frequency behaviors (<25 occurrences) when used as a time sampling tool (e.g., 15 minutes out of each hour).	O'Neil 1997
Functional Assessment Interview	Informant Interview tool	Provides information about events that influence problem behavior.	Individual that has trained in interview techniques	When identifying settings, events and activities	O'Neil 1997

Motivational Assessment Scale	Informant tool - Analysis of specific behavior which can be used for multiple events	Determine desired outcome or function behavior serves	Any individual who is involved with the student.	When developing hypotheses about behavior.	Durand Crimm Mono Assoc Topel Kans 785/2 5501
Outcome Analysis	Observation /informant tool - multiple event analysis	Determine desired outcome or function behavior serves, interactions that are occurring, behavior patterns	Person trained in use of the form and interpretation by educational team and trained persons who know the student	When behavior of concern occurs at a lower frequency	Instru Differ Progr (Cess (CDE
Scatterplot Analysis	Direct environment observation recording tool	Charts baseline information about the occurrence of the behavior within specific time increments and activities	Persons trained in observation and recording techniques	When determining when the behavior does and does not occur	Touch MacD & Lan 1985
Information Gathering Tool for Developing a Comprehensive Behavior Support Plan and the Comprehensive Behavior Support Plan	Informant/Ecological interview tool	Provide groundwork for the construction of a comprehensive behavior support plan. In depth process that examines multiple environments and motivations.	Person should be trained in the use of behavior support processes.	When a student is transitioning from one environment to another (e.g., center based to more inclusive) or when the behaviors are complex and less formal processes have not been successful.	In De a Beh Supp A Mar Teach Behav Speci By Ja and L Availa from I Parer Cente Color Spring 719/5 9400
The Instructional Environmental System II (TIES II)	Informant/Ecological observation tool multiple checklists and interview formats Emphasis on general education classroom environment and curriculum.	Provides parent, teacher, and student perceptions about learning environment interactions, and expectations. Additionally provides a direct observation format for collecting academic and behavioral data.	Can be filled out by any person who knows the child and the instrument. Observes and/or interviews classroom teacher, parent/guardian and student. Should be interpreted by persons with training in behavioral assessment.	When there is a need to understand the multiple influences on a student's performance.	J. Yss Soprit 1140 Ave., Longr CO 80 303/6 2829

Screening for Understanding of Student Problem Behavior	Informant - interview of student-centered team	To systematically determine the functions of a given behavior and the factors associated with the (non) occurrence of that behavior	Any person can facilitate the process	When both broad and specific information need to be gathered	Instru Suppr Syste Penn: and th Penn: Depar of Edu 717/7 6913
Anecdotal Logs	Continuous written data recordings	Provides an ongoing qualitative event recording of the behavior, antecedents and consequences	Can be written by any person who works with or observes the student. Should be interpreted by persons with training in behavioral assessment.	When determining what the behavior looks like, frequency of occurrence and the specific environmental conditions surrounding the behavior's occurrence.	Wright



-NOTES-

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Last Updated: Tuesday, Ma