

A PEATC

Do You Know....



Factsheet for Virginia's Parents

Addressing Challenging Behavior: Functional Behavioral Assessments

What is a Functional Behavioral Assessment?

A **Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)** is an evaluation that helps an **IEP team determine the cause of unwanted behavior** that negatively affects the student's learning or the learning of the student's peers. An FBA typically includes **observations of the child in different settings, over a period of time** to identify where the behavior occurs, what happens before it occurs (**A**ntecedent), what happens during the incident (the **B**ehavior), and what happens afterward (**C**onsequence). These are often referred to as the **ABCs of behavior**.

Why Would My Child Need an FBA?

If your child displays unwanted behaviors, he may need extra support in order to be successful, academically and socially. **Behavior serves a purpose**. When a child exhibits unwanted behavior, he is trying to communicate something (e.g. wants something, trying to avoid a hard assignment, trying to get attention, etc.). Often, the cause (function) of the behavior is not easily known, and more information is needed in order to develop a plan to address the behavior.

If your child has a disability and has an **Individualized Education Program (IEP)**, an FBA must be considered if the student is suspended **or** sent home more than 10 days in a school year **or** is expelled.

School divisions **must conduct an FBA** and implement a **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)** when a **student has been subject to disciplinary action and the behavior is found to be a directly related to his disability**. Your consent is needed in order for the school to conduct an FBA.

Who conducts an FBA?

An **FBA team** may include a school psychologist or behavior specialist, teachers, administrators, therapists, you and your child. The FBA is created by the team, and you and your child are important members of the team. Your child, depending on his age and ability, may be able to provide important information that will help guide the evaluation and the resulting behavior plan.

Resources on Functional Behavioral Assessments

Virginia Department of Education

www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_conduct/fba_guidelines.pdf

www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/regulations/state/regs_speced_disability_va.pdf

Functional Assessment: What it is and How it Works

<https://u.org/3aSQJ5B>

Association for Positive Behavior Support

<https://bit.ly/2wZ8hhJ>

ADA In Your Shoes

<https://adayinourshoes.com/behavior-iep-special-education>

Contact Us:

800-869-6782 / 703-923-0010

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What are the Key Steps of an FBA?

1. The FBA team should **identify the behavior in very specific terms** (i.e., Tammy stomps her feet during math class which disrupts learning for her and her peers instead of a statement like Tammy is disruptive).
2. Collect and analyze data.
 - a. **Where and when** is the behavior happening?
 - b. Where and when **does it not happen**?
 - c. **How often** does the behavior occur?
 - d. **Who is there** when the behavior occurs?
 - e. **What happens right before** the behavior (antecedent)?
 - f. **What happens after** the behavior (consequence)?
3. An FBA is not a quick or simple process. An **informal FBA** may include records review and interviews with key team members. An **indirect review** may include the above as well as some direct observation. A **formal, or complex FBA**, typically conducted for more severe behavioral challenges or when a less formal review has not worked, includes all of the above, plus extensive observations, data collection and analysis.
4. Once all of the information has been gathered, the team will work together to **identify the function of the behavior** (e.g., Tammy stomps her feet when word problems are being reviewed because she is having trouble reading the problems and that is her way of getting out of doing that work).
5. The team will then develop a **Positive Behavior Intervention plan (BIP)** to address the unwanted behavior (see Fact Sheet on BIPs). In this case for example, the problems may be read aloud to Tammy and/or she may receive extra reading help outside of math class. She will also be taught to raise her hand for help.
6. **Sometimes the FBA will not be correct.** If this happens, the strategies in the BIP will not work, and the team will need to determine if a new FBA is needed.

Parent Role and Rights

- You have the right to **request an FBA. Make the request in writing.** Don't hesitate to do so if your child has been involved in disciplinary referrals/actions.
- **You can provide information about behavior you observe** and any circumstances in the home that may be contributing to the behavior (e.g., a parent was recently deployed overseas). You may want to keep a log to track behavior at home.
- **If you disagree with the results of the FBA,** you have the right to request an **Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)** at the school's expense. You can also ask for an IEE if you feel that the **evaluator was not qualified** to conduct the FBA.

PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.

For more information about us, please contact:

800-869-6782 / 703-923-0010

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