
Introduction

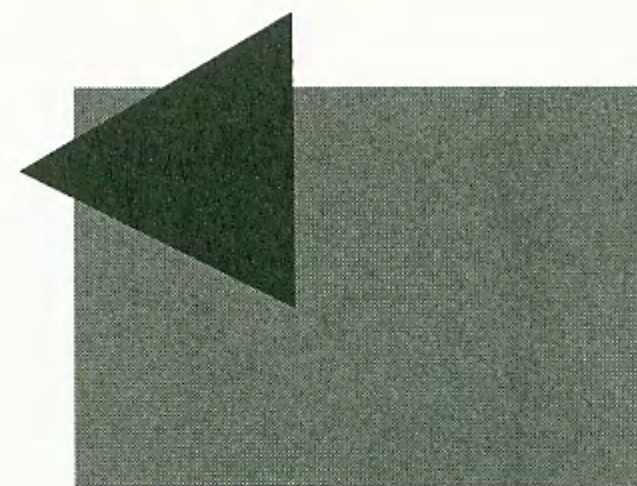
Teachers, administrators, and other school personnel are currently faced with a multitude of issues in schools, one of the most challenging of which involves students whose behaviors significantly interfere with ongoing classroom activities and ultimately with the learning that occurs therein. The interfering behaviors may vary substantially in terms of how they look, how often they occur, or how long they last, but some will inevitably lead to school-regulated disciplinary action. Students with serious behavioral issues and the behaviors these students demonstrate create a major challenge to the instructional goals of teachers.

Many students with behavioral problems are referred to special education professionals and may receive services in either special education or general classes. It does not matter, however, where these students receive their education; if their behaviors create problems, then intervention is required. As McConnell (2001) aptly stated, “to be successful in school-based settings, some students may require behavior interventions, modifications, curriculum changes, and strategies development” (p. 1).

A key assumption in the development and use of the BIP-3 is that, to truly make significant changes to problem behaviors, one must *understand* the behavior. This means that teachers and other professionals involved in changing behavior must identify the underlying causes and functions of a behavior and analyze the existing contexts that contribute to the behaviors that are of concern. Unfortunately, most general education and special education teachers are not prepared to undertake the systematic analysis of behavior that is necessary to effect the long-lasting changes that are desired.

In addition to instructional and classroom-based considerations of why certain interfering behaviors occur, the 1997 and 2004 reauthorizations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have emphasized the provision of protections for students with disabilities. These IDEA protections are most notable when students are subjected to a potential change of placement in conjunction with school disciplinary action resulting from a violation of the code of student conduct. Moreover, IDEA emphasizes the use of positive behavioral interventions to address the needs of students who demonstrated interfering behaviors.

To address a wide range of significant issues related to student behavior, school-based personnel need to conduct an effective and efficient Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and develop an appropriate Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP) for students whose behavior interferes with their own learning, interferes with the learning of others, or violates school disciplinary codes.



What Is a Functional Behavioral Assessment and a Behavioral Intervention Plan?

A Functional Behavioral Assessment is primarily a systematic procedure for attempting to explain why a behavior occurs by analyzing that behavior and generating hypotheses about its purpose or intended function. Ultimately, these hypotheses should assist school personnel in identifying interventions that change the student's undesirable behavior. The proposed interventions should then be documented in a plan that is shared with everyone with whom the student has contact. This document is typically referred to in IDEA as a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP). For students who have been determined eligible for special education, the BIP becomes part of their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Repp and Horner (1999) described functional behavioral assessment in the following way:

It seeks to explain the function of the presenting problem . . . in terms of present and past environments, and then to change the environments so that appropriate behavior produces the same function, generally more efficiently and effectively, as the problem behavior had been producing. (p. 2)

The FBA and BIP process is and should be considered as a problem-solving, team-based process (McConnell, 2001). A number of individuals must contribute to conducting an FBA systematically and developing a BIP effectively. A teacher cannot successfully complete the process without assistance from other school-based personnel, parents or guardians, and, sometimes, professionals outside of school.

O'Neill et al. (1997) identified five key outcomes that should be considered when conducting an FBA:

- A clear description of the problem behavior(s).
 - Identification of the events, times, and situations that predict when the problem behavior will and will not occur across the full range of typical daily routines.
 - Identification of the consequences that maintain the problem behavior.
 - Development of one or more summary statements or hypotheses that describe specific behaviors, a specific type of situation in which they occur, and the outcomes or reinforcers maintaining them in the situation.
 - Collection of direct observation data that support the hypotheses that have been developed.
- (p. 3)

The BIP-3 includes components and procedures that address all five of these highlighted features.

O'Neill et al. (1997) also suggested that three techniques can be used for collecting functional behavioral assessment information. The three techniques include *informant methods* (i.e., talking with the student or others who know the student well); *direct observation* (i.e., real-time observation of the student in various contextual situations over an extended period of time); *functional analysis manipulations* (i.e., the systematic manipulation of potentially controlling variables). In reality, the first two techniques are more likely to be used in school settings than the third. When collecting functional behavioral assessment information, the following guidelines should be considered:

-
- During interviews, it is essential that the respondent be truly knowledgeable about the behavior in question.
 - If possible, interviews should be conducted by individuals who share the student's cultural and ethnic background.
 - When conducting a direct observation, it is important to use different types of observation forms, based on the type of behavior being targeted (e.g., frequency data vs. duration data).

A number of key features of the BIP should also be identified. Some of the more salient features are provided in the following list:

- The BIP should include positive interventions. IDEA does not preclude the use of punitive interventions, but the law specifies that a BIP must include positive interventions. The BIP provides a way to document positive interventions that have been identified and plans for implementation that have been generated.
- The format of the BIP should be organized so that teachers and other school-based personnel can use it easily. IDEA does not specify a format for a BIP, but goals, interventions, and methods of evaluating the effectiveness of the interventions should be clearly presented.
- Interventions will often include techniques that result in the replacement of inappropriate behaviors with appropriate behaviors; however, interventions may also include the manipulations of curriculum and environments (Hoover & Patton, 2006).
- The BIP must be shared with all school-based personnel with whom the student has contact. Adhering to this guideline is both a legal and a common sense issue; consistent application of the BIP will be impossible if this guideline is not followed.

Why and When Are FBAs and BIPs Necessary?

Subsequent to the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142), the rights of all students with recognized disabilities were clearly affirmed by the federal government for the first time. Under P.L. 94-142 and relevant state statutes—and later under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA)—students with disabilities were protected from arbitrary suspension or expulsion from school in instances in which their behavioral difficulty was determined to be related to their disability (i.e., the behavior was determined to be a manifestation of the disability). This provision was promoted as a major victory for the rights of students with disabilities because it clearly decreased the likelihood that such students could be denied a free, appropriate public education. The unforeseen result was that the protection of rights of the individual was perceived as a potential threat to school discipline in general—and to the safety and security of other students, teachers, and staff—by creating a two-tiered system of discipline.

How to administratively handle students with disabilities who demonstrate serious behavioral problems has been a controversial issue for many years. It is clear, however, that a distinct minority of students with disabilities present troublesome behaviors that challenge a school's ability to effectively educate all children and youth. As a result, when possible amendments to the IDEA were discussed beginning in the mid-1990s, a key issue was determining the appropriate balance between the rights of students with disabilities and the need for an orderly learning environment in the schools.

The legal resolution of this debate was the incorporation of a requirement for specific practices within the law. Foremost among these practices were the establishment of (a) clearer guidelines for the removal of students with disabilities from the regular school setting, (b) the need for an FBA, and (c) a requirement for the development of a BIP for individual students who present challenging behaviors within the school setting. The reauthorizations of IDEA in 1997 and 2004 reaffirmed and clarified the use of these procedures.

When IDEA was reauthorized in 1997, the quick response to the new requirements for conducting FBAs and BIPs focused on the issues of disciplinary action and change-of-placement implications for students with disabilities. Eventually it became more apparent that, although the issue of disciplinary action was indeed important and certain protections were necessary, problem behaviors of students had impacts far beyond those instances in which disciplinary action was invoked. In both the 1997 and 2004 reauthorizations of IDEA, the section of the regulations dealing with the consideration of special factors associated with the "development, review, and revision of the IEP" includes regulations that state, "in the case of a child whose behavior impedes the child's learning or that of others, consider the use of positive behavior interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address that behavior" (§ 300.324(a)(2)(i)). Obviously, addressing behaviors that impede the learning of a student or the learning of others is a far reaching and ambitious endeavor. Students who interfere with their own or others' learning are clearly more prevalent than students who face disciplinary action because of serious behavioral infractions.

We do not want to understate the importance of the procedural requirements of IDEA for conducting an FBA, determining whether the behavior in question is related to the disability, and generating a BIP when disciplinary action is invoked. We address this need in the procedural aspects of the BIP-3 and provide the regulations governing these procedures in Appendix G of this manual. However, the need to systematically analyze the functions of problematic behavior and to develop appropriate plans for intervention using positive interventions and supports is required by a large number of students in schools today. Regardless of whether the student with a behavior problem is in special education and faces disciplinary action, the use of FBAs and BIPs is warranted whenever a serious behavioral problem exists.

In our opinion, school-based or district teams should use the procedures contained in the BIP-3 in any or all of the following situations:

- As part of the prereferral intervention process

-
- When writing behavior plans for students served under Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973
 - To positively support students whose behavior impedes his or her learning
 - To positively support students whose behavior impedes others' learning
 - When required by IDEA 2004, because of long-term removal, including an Interim Alternative Educational Setting (IAES)
 - When required by IDEA 2004, to conduct a Manifestation Determination
-

Overview of the BIP-3 Materials

Purpose

The purpose of *Behavioral Intervention Planning—Third Edition* is to outline appropriate responses to challenging behavior by suggesting how to conduct a thorough behavioral intervention planning process. To accomplish this task, forms are provided that will facilitate the process of documenting behavioral patterns and responses, evaluating the effects of previous efforts, summarizing assessment data, outlining plans, and providing a structure for evaluation. As a complement to the IEP process, these forms document the participants in the process and parental approval. By providing a framework for the behavioral intervention planning process, this material assists in effective planning, parental communication, compliance with the intents of federal regulations, and evaluation as a basis for subsequent decision making.

Specifically, the BIP-3 can be used as a framework for the following:

- Deciding when and how to intervene when students demonstrate behavior problems
- Identifying the specific reasons for conducting the behavioral intervention process
- Gathering background information that can be used to conduct an FBA
- Reviewing a prior BIP
- Conducting an FBA, including direct observation of the student, summarizing observation data, and hypothesizing about the function of the behavior
- Writing a new or modified BIP that includes effective positive interventions and supports
- Conducting a manifestation determination
- Documenting participation and consensus during the entire process

Key Components

BIP-3 is composed of two major components: this manual and four 2-page forms provided on pads. The primary function of the manual is to provide instructions for how to

conduct behavioral intervention planning by using the accompanying forms and reviewing the case-study example. In addition to the background information already presented in this section, the manual offers information on the following topics:

- Descriptions of intervention strategies (see Appendix B)
- Descriptions of evaluation methods (see Appendix C)
- Sample observation forms that can be used when conducting direct observations of students (see Appendix D)
- A summary form to record disciplinary referrals that remove a student from his or her educational placement and may result in a pattern of removal (see Appendix E)
- A parent contact information form (see Appendix D)
- An administrative summary form (see Appendix E)
- An assessment and instructional resources section that can be extremely helpful in conducting this process (see Appendix F)

The forms that accompany the manual allow one to document the entire sequential process of conducting behavioral intervention planning, as described in the manual. A brief description of each form follows.

Reasons and Review

The Reasons and Review form allows school-based personnel to state the reasons why this process is being initiated. The format is easy to follow and documents essential background information.

This form provides a structured format for identifying and describing all sources of information that contribute to effective behavioral planning. The need to gather information from a variety of sources is emphasized. This information can be presented in an orderly and clear manner in this section. When completed appropriately, this section assures that proper documentation is in place.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

The purpose of a Functional Behavioral Assessment is to provide a contextual view of the nature of specific behaviors and behavioral patterns. As such, the FBA requires professionals to understand and evaluate a behavior within the broad context of the student's home and school environments. The FBA format in the form provides a structured way to analyze the contextual aspects of a behavior by asking for an exact description of the behavior in question along with information regarding precipitating conditions, consequences that follow the behavior, and a hypothesis about the purpose or purposes the behavior serves. The form provides a link to the specific assessment techniques used to analyze the behavior as specified in the Reasons and Review form. The FBA form also allows professionals to add other qualitative information (e.g., academic, social/peer, family) that might be a factor in the demonstration of a behavior. This type of data is often overlooked in most Functional Behavioral Assessments. FBA forms designed specifically for use in the home and community are provided in Appendix D.

Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)

The IDEA statute and regulations similarly provide limited direction regarding the format of a BIP. Appropriate practice suggests that BIPs should include the overall goals to be achieved, interventions intended to change the student's behavior, the persons responsible for implementing the proposed interventions, and evaluation methods and timelines to be followed. The format provided in BIP form includes all of these features. To help you complete this part of the document, recommended interventions and evaluation methods are provided in Appendix B and Appendix C.

Manifestation Determination

The primary function of the Manifestation Determination form is to help to determine whether the behavior or behaviors in question are related to the student's disability. This activity is referred to in federal regulations as the "Manifestation Determination" and can be a critical aspect of the planning process. The format used in this form provides both structure and flexibility to school-based personnel. Because a Manifestation Determination is only required in very specific situations and in a limited range of circumstances, it will be helpful to review the flow chart in Appendix E to determine whether the Manifestation Determination is necessary. If the process is required, the form includes steps for conducting the Manifestation Determination and allows for documentation of that process.

The next part of the manual provides specific step-by-step procedures for completing the behavioral intervention planning forms.

References

- Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*
- Hoover, J. J., & Patton, J. R. (2006). *Study skills instruction for students with learning and behavior problems* (2nd ed.). Austin, TX: PRO-ED.
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, 20 U.S.C. § 1401 (26) *et seq.*
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*
- McConnell, M. E. (2001). *Functional behavioral assessment: A systematic process for assessment and intervention in general and special education classrooms*. Denver: Love.
- O'Neill, R. E., Horner, R. H., Albin, R. W., Sprague, J. R., Storey, K., & Neweton, J. S. (1997). *Functional assessment and program development for problem behavior: A practical handbook*. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Repp, A. C., & Horner, R. H. (1999). *Functional analysis of behavior: From effective assessment to effective support*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.