



Behaviors at School

Requesting a Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan

Does your student have behaviors at school that get in the way of his learning or the learning of others?

Does your student get suspended, sent home, or repeatedly put in “time out” because of behaviors at school? Is he missing instructional time because of this? Has the school contacted you about classroom issues? Are school bus behaviors a problem?

If so, the school should conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) and write a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) to support your student. The FBA should be done across several settings. It determines the triggers, the problem behaviors, and what the student gains from the behavior. The FBA should also reveal if there are any patterns for the behavior, such as time of day, transitions, etc. A BIP is a customized plan that ensures each behavior is dealt with *consistently by all school personnel*. If your child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the BIP becomes a legal part of the IEP and should be carefully designed by the Case Conference Committee, which includes you, the caregiver. All school personnel who interact with your child should be trained on the use of the BIP. An effective FBA/BIP can improve student behaviors if used consistently.

How do I get a FBA/BIP for my student?

You can request an FBA from your school at any time. The request must be in writing. Explain what behaviors are concerning you. Some schools are using Response to Intervention (RTI), which is for any student, for behaviors. If your child has an IEP, you will also have an opportunity at the Annual Case Review to answer the question, “Does the student’s behavior impede his learning or the learning of others?” If the answer is “yes,” this prompts the FBA/BIP process to begin.

What does a BIP look like?

A BIP is proactive – it can contain steps that:

- avoid the triggers for the behavior, if possible.
- teach socially appropriate replacement behaviors.
- include other interventions or strategies for behaviors. Note: If you do not want the school to call and have you pick up your student when there are negative behaviors (which may be exactly what the student wants), do not allow this to be written into the BIP.
- reward the student for behaving appropriately, even when experiencing normal, unavoidable, emotions like anger, boredom, or frustration.
- ensure the student stays the entire instructional day, if desired.
- effectively avoid or limit the use of seclusion or “time-out.”
- keep the student at school as opposed to homebound services, which is supposed to be a temporary measure designed for students recuperating from surgery, etc.
- help the student behave better at school, home, in the community, and at a job in the future.

What if my student already has a BIP?

Data should be collected to see if progress is being made with the BIP in place. If your student with a BIP continues to miss instructional time or is suspended, the BIP needs to be adjusted.

How can I get help implementing BIP strategies at home for my child with an IEP?

The BIP is in place to curb behaviors that are interfering with learning, so a student can benefit from special education. An essential part of a BIP is consistent use, so it is helpful if the same strategies are used at home. If parent training in behavior (or anything else) is required for a student to benefit from special education, the school must provide this as a Related Service. [Article 7, Rule 43, Section 1-c-(8)]

What if my school resists doing a FBA/BIP for my child with a disability?

The United States Department of Education (US DOE) uses a document called a “Dear Colleague letter” to express its expectations of public schools in a variety of areas. On August 1, 2016, the US DOE published a “Dear Colleague letter” about the need for schools to include behavioral interventions when needed. It outlines in great detail the reasons why behavioral interventions are required by federal special education law. If your school resists taking these steps, it may be effective to print out this Dear Colleague letter and tactfully present it at a Case Conference. The letter can be found here:

[United States Department of Education – Dear Colleague Letter](#)

For more resources, including sample BIPs:

[Behavior Intervention Plans: What you Need to Know](#) – Understood.org

[Behavior Intervention and Crisis Plans](#) – Pacer.org

[Sample Behavior Plan](#) and other examples of positive behavior supports – IncredibleYears.org

If you want guidance with BIPs and other school issues:

[IN*Source](#) 800-332-4433 www.insource.org

These advocacy organizations can also help:

[About Special Kids](#) 800-964-4746 www.aboutspecialkids.org

[Autism Society of Indiana](#) 800-609-8449 www.autismsocietyofindiana.org

[Family Voices Indiana](#) 844-F2F-INFO www.fvindiana.org

[The Arc of Indiana](#) 800-382-9100 www.arcind.org