

INDIRECT FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT PROCESS

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What is a Functional Behavior Assessment?

A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is a process that identifies specific target behavior, the purpose of the behavior, and what factors maintain the behavior that is interfering with the student's educational progress. A target behavior may be "Johnny is off task 80% of the time during seat work." This target behavior may include several "off task" actions (e.g. Johnny talks to other students, leaves his desk, and drums his pencil on his desk instead of following directions). This process leads to development of intervention plans to teach acceptable alternative behavior. The resulting intervention plan focuses on teaching new behavior and social skills but usually also requires modification of the school or classroom environment and activities, adaptation of curriculum and instructional delivery, and changes in the teacher/student relationship that maintain the undesirable behavior.

When to do a Functional Behavior Assessment?

An FBA should be used for students with behavioral or emotional problems that are interfering with their educational progress or the progress of other students. The FBA can be a part of the SAT process, be used to develop an Individual Education Plan, or provide information for verification of a disability. However, any student who is exhibiting challenging behaviors that are not responding to typical school interventions may benefit from a functional assessment. Conducting a functional assessment before a behavior escalates into a disciplinary action allows both the teachers and parents to focus on positive outcomes and can help build a positive relationship between the teacher and the student and family.

What Happens During the FBA?

There are two distinct types of FBA processes, the **Indirect** and the **Direct** process. Both processes include 5 assessment and intervention development steps. The key is that there is a direct and natural link between the target behavior, the collection of unbiased and observable data about the behavior, and the intervention plan to change the behavior.

The Indirect FBA Process

The Indirect FBA includes the 5 steps of the assessment process in a condensed format. The Indirect FBA is most appropriate when the behavior incident requires immediate action, for behavior that is less serious and/or occurs infrequently, or as part of early intervention using the SAT process. The Indirect FBA is helpful when only a small group of individuals are involved (i.e. teacher, student, administrator). The Indirect FBA focuses on using simple verbal or written interviews with teachers, the student, and others involved in the target behavior. In the interview process, the target behavior, the circumstances that support the behavior, and the function of the behavior are identified. Based on this information, a hypothesis can be developed and a written plan can be formulated by the team. Follow up interviews or other data (e.g. disciplinary referrals, attendance record etc.) can be used to determine the success of the intervention or if the more comprehensive Direct FBA needs to occur.