



## Information About

### Functional Behavioral Assessments

#### What is a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)?

A student's behaviors can affect his or her ability to learn and can affect other students, too. An FBA is the tool used to find out what these behaviors are and why they happen.

#### Why is an FBA important?

An FBA is important because it helps define a student's problem behaviors. It finds out when and where the behaviors happen and why. This allows the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to come up with positive ways to deal with, reduce, or eliminate them. Doing this helps the student focus on learning. It helps the student stay in the least restrictive environment.

#### When Does a Student Have the Right to an FBA?

A student has the right to an FBA if he or she has had a series of short suspensions that total ten or more school days. He or she also has the right to an FBA if the student is suspended for ten or more school days at one time. In these situations, a school district or local education agency (LEA) is **required** to conduct an FBA.

There are other times when a student **may** have a right to an FBA. These are during the special education eligibility process, and once the student is found eligible for special education services. Here a group of the same individuals that make up an IEP team decides if the student needs an FBA. If the parent does not agree with the group's decision, he or she can request a due process hearing.

#### Who Can Perform an FBA?

More than one type of person can perform an FBA. A person trained in the specific type of data collection and analysis should conduct the interviews and observations. Examples of people who can do an FBA are school psychologists, special education teachers, assistant principals, and principals.

#### What Should Be in an FBA?

Federal and state laws let local school districts decide how to do an FBA. A number of psychologists and behavioral analysts suggest that an FBA should have the following:

- **Information Collected**  
The evaluator doing the FBA should interview the child, parents, teachers, and others who know about the behaviors. They should look at records from the school and information from the parent about behavior problems.
- **Observations**  
They should observe the child in a variety of settings. This helps to identify where the behavior occurs, what causes it, and what happens as a result.

- **Suggested Solutions**

Using a variety of settings and situations, the evaluator should suggest methods to reduce or eliminate the problem behavior.

A good FBA is the foundation for a good Behavioral Intervention Plan.

### **What is a Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP)?**

To create a BIP, the team must clearly list the student's behaviors and their causes. A student must have an FBA before the team can create a BIP.

A BIP is a plan for a student with a disability receiving special education and related services. It uses positive interventions and supports to deal with a behavior or behaviors that interfere with the student's learning or the learning of others. It is also used to deal with behaviors that require corrective action.

### **What if the School Does Not Do an FBA?**

If the school does not do an FBA, a parent can request a Due Process Hearing, make a complaint to the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), or request mediation if he or she believes a violation has happened.

### **What if You Disagree with the FBA?**

The IEP team may have suggested or applied poor strategies for addressing the student's behavior. The procedures may have been too restrictive or may have failed to address the causes of the problem behavior. This could lead to continued or worsened behaviors.

If you disagree with how the school did the FBA or its results, you may have the right to request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE). An IEE is an evaluation at public expense. If the school refuses to grant an IEE, it must request a hearing. It then has to show that its evaluation is correct.

### **How Can VOPA Help?**

VOPA can provide information, technical assistance and, in some cases, legal representation.

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1910 Byrd Avenue, Suite 5  
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