

# Arc Guide

## Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)



A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) “means a process for gathering information to maximize the efficiency of behavioral supports. A FBA includes a description of the problem behaviors and identification of events, times, and situations that predict the occurrence and non occurrence of the behavior. An FBA also identifies the antecedents, consequences and re-enforcers that maintain the behavior, the possible functions of the behavior and possible positive alternative behaviors. An FBA includes a variety of data collection methods and sources that facilitate the development of hypotheses and summary statements regarding behavior patterns.” (Minnesota Rule 3525.0210, Subp. 22)

### ABC’s of Behavior

We, as individuals, are constantly behaving one way or other. Everything we do is a behavior. A FBA is a strategic approach to understand why a behavior is occurring. Through a FBA, the team of individuals attempts to determine what a student is trying to communicate and the function, or use, or purpose of the behavior. The team also looks at what is causing the behavior of concern. It is done based on an examination process called the ABC’s of behavior.

- **A**ntecedents - what happens before the behavior occurs
- **B**ehavior – what is the specific behavior that is occurring
- **C**onsequences – what happens after the behavior occurs

### The IEP team decides to do a FBA

As with any assessment, the IEP team should meet to discuss the FBA. At the end of the meeting or shortly thereafter, the parent will be given prior written notice. The prior written notice will describe the FBA including the area(s) being assessed, the name of the any test(s) being done and who will be administering the test(s). The notice typically gives the parent three options: the parent can give the school permission to proceed, the parent can request further information or the parent can deny permission. In each event, the parent has 14 calendar days to sign and return the form. If the parent does not sign and return the form within 14 calendar days for the initial evaluation, the district cannot proceed. After the initial evaluation (for re-evaluations), the district can proceed with the evaluation if the parent does not return the form.

### A FBA should identify:

- The specific behavior(s) that is a problem
- Where the behavior occurs and does not occur, in what situations or environments it occurs
- When the behavior occurs
- With whom the behavior is occurring and with whom it is not occurring
- What happened before the behavior started – what is the history, has anything different been happening
- If a pattern of behavior exists
- What the student is getting out of the behavior and/or what the student is trying to avoid by doing the behavior, speculation as to why the student may be doing it and benefiting from it

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- What factors maintain or worsen the behavior
- Are there any other factors that could be causing the behavior – how the student is feeling, physical concerns, new stressors, any changes that have occurred in the student's life
- Things that can change the behavior, any interventions
- Replacement behaviors which can be taught to the student. This should include alternative behaviors. A focus should be on skill acquisition.
- Possible hypothesis or theory of the cause of the behavior

Information for a FBA can be gathered in a variety of ways including questionnaires, tests and checklists. Observations and interviews should be done. Interviews should be conducted with school staff, the parent(s) and possibly, the student.

Data from the assessment should be used to develop a Behavior Support Plan that involves positive interventions and supports that focus on replacement behaviors. This information is then included into the IEP and/or a behavior support plan.

#### FBA and discipline issues

A behavior is a manifestation of the child's disability if the behavior in question is caused by or had a direct and substantial relationship to the disability or if the school's failure to follow the IEP directly resulted in the behavior in question. (Answering these questions is called the manifestation determination process.)

If the behavior is a manifestation (that is, if either or both questions above is answered 'yes'), a functional behavior assessment must be completed and a behavior plan must be implemented. If a behavior plan has already been completed, the IEP team must review it and modify it as necessary. The IEP team may decide that a new FBA should be completed.

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