

Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA) Tip Sheet

What is an FBA?

A Functional Behaviour Assessment is a valuable problem solving tool. It supports an approach to addressing behaviour problems that looks at both the likely causes and at the characteristics or symptoms of behaviour. It is based on the premise that the functions of behaviour (what needs are driving it?) should not usually be considered inappropriate; rather, it is the resulting behaviour of the student in attempting to meet these needs that is often problematic.

An FBA is Not a

- Specific test
- One-time event
- Record of consequences

What is Its Purpose?

- To answer questions: Why is this person engaging in this behaviour, in this setting, at this time (to escape, avoid or get something?)

- To identify the biological, social, affective, and environmental factors that initiate, sustain or end the behaviour
- To identify patterns, rather than individual occurrences

Why Use an FBA?

It allows us to determine what need or needs the behaviour serves and to support the student with appropriate alternatives.

Who Conducts an FBA?

- Ideally, a team rather than a single person - more than one perspective
- Persons from a variety of environments in which the student interacts
- Problem-solvers who enjoy collaboration

How to Conduct an FBA

- Review all available information (IEP, SP, parent input, assessments, etc.)
- Identify all behaviours of concern
 - ❖ Physical aggression
 - ❖ Verbal aggression
 - ❖ Self-abuse
 - ❖ Running away

- Define each behaviour in measurable/observable terms
 - ❖ David pokes other student with his ruler/pencil/etc. 2-3 times a day
- If a behaviour occurs as part of a chain, identify all behaviours
 - ❖ David says “you’re stupid”, then pokes the student, then laughs
- Track behaviours (at least one week, preferably two) to identify:
 - ❖ Antecedents - What happened before the behaviour occurred?
 - Slow triggers - am or pm, particular day, missed meal, changes in schedule, etc.
 - Fast triggers - specific request, specific people, specific task, behaviour of others
 - Indicators - the specific physical signs/indicators that signal this student is about to become verbally/physically aggressive (clenched fist, muscles in neck tense, approaches very close)
 - ❖ Behaviour - What did the student do?
 - Define behaviour and determine:
 - Frequency
 - Duration
 - Intensity
 - ❖ Consequences - What happened after the behaviour?
 - What did the student achieve (escape or avoid)?
 - How did the student and others react?
 - What is the student trying to get out of the behaviour?

An FBA Will Tell Me:

- When and where the behaviour occurs
- If the behaviour occurs in all settings
- Whether the behaviour has improved or deteriorated
- Which strategies have been effective/ineffective
- When the student does well
- Whether or not varied instructional approaches used in various settings
- If there are specific staff who are more/less successful with the student
- What purpose the behaviour serves
- About any home, medical, or other external/internal factors

Use FBA Data to:

- Develop IEP's and safety plans
- Identify antecedents that you can change
- Identify most serious behaviours to intervene with first
- Teach alternative behaviours to meet same function
- Adjust consequences to behaviour

Notes

Recommended Website

<http://cecp.air.org/fba/default.asp>

(Provides an overview of functional behaviour assessments – includes more detail on - How To)

References

Modified from the TDSB Safe Schools Procedure Manual: Students with special needs, Appendix K (2005)

See the appendix for a good example of an FBA.