Functional Assessment of Behavior

Steps for Assessment
1. Information gathering
2. Hypothesis development
3. Hypothesis testing (functional analysis) optional
4. Intervention
5. Ongoing assessment and revision of support plan

Strategies for Assessment
- Simple observation
- Data collection, systematic direct observation
- Surveys and structured interviews
- Direct manipulation
- Record reviews

Contextual Variables
1. What are the environmental conditions/circumstances that are consistently associated with positive behavior? What are the contexts when the behaviors are not occurring?
2. What are the environmental conditions/circumstances that are consistently associated with a high probability of problem behavior?

Problem behavior is functional!
- Function/purpose is much more important than what the behavior looks like.
- Form does not say anything about the function (purpose) of the behavior.
- One form of behavior can have different functions in different contexts.
- Different forms of behavior can have the same function.

Functional assessment of behavior is a process for identifying clear, predictive relationships between events in the child’s environment and the occurrences of a target behavior.

Why do it?
If we do not, we are apt to fail in finding a suitable intervention.

Functional relationships are an understanding of the place which behavior occupies in the child’s life.