



Functional Behavior Assessment



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WHAT IS IT?

A Functional Behavior Assessment or FBA is listed as an effective intervention in the Missouri Guidelines Initiative (MAGI) publication, *Autism Spectrum Disorders: Guide to Evidence-based Interventions*. This is an assessment procedure involving data collected over time to determine the function or purpose of a behavior. Effective behavioral support plans based on the findings of an FBA are an important piece of the overall programming for a learner with challenging behaviors.

An FBA is required when long or multiple suspensions are given, but best practice is proactive assessment, so learners do not get to the point suspensions are considered.

WHAT HAPPENS DURING AN FBA?

Typically, the challenging behavior is identified and many questions are considered. What does the behavior look like? When does it occur? When does it not occur? What happens before and after the behavior? With whom does the behavior occur? The list could go on and on. File reviews are completed and interviews with parents, teachers, para-educators, and others who have pertinent information take place. Most important is structured observation of the learner and his behavior.

THE “A” IN ABC OBSERVATION

The A stands for antecedent, and the events preceding the behavior are documented. These events may be divided into two sections called setting events and stimulus events. Setting events might be something like the child has been sick, the bus was late, or medications have been changed. Stimulus events might include an unexpected change in the schedule, a demand to do a non-preferred task, or a loud noise. The point of identifying antecedents is we can do something about them! If a challenging behavior is the result of a loud noise, we can do what we can to eliminate loud noises, or we can encourage the child to wear a headset. If schedule changes are difficult, we can provide a visual schedule to help our learner deal with last minute changes. According to information from the Institute of Applied Behavior Analysis (IABA), 75% of what we provide in terms of behavior support should happen before the behavior. Prevention is always the best!



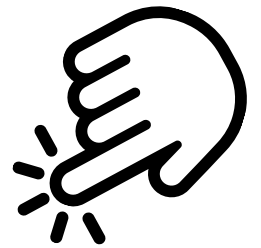
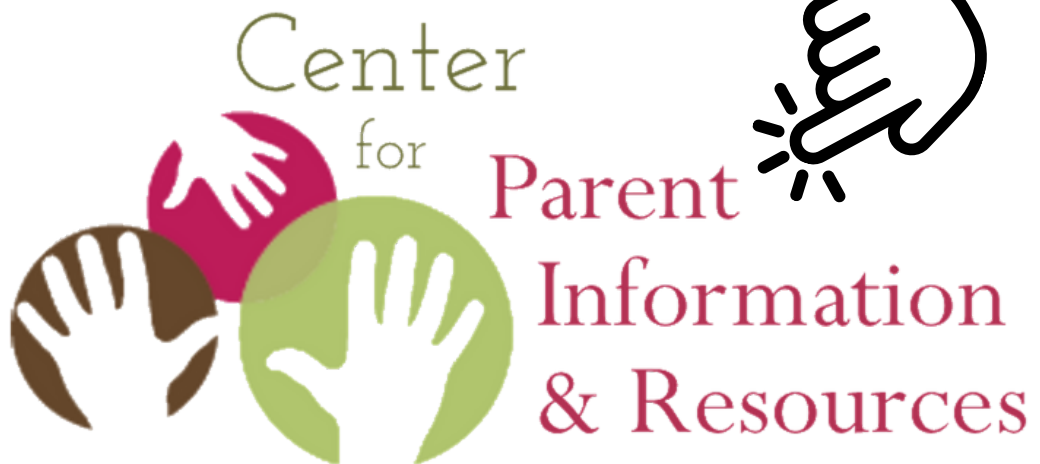
THE “B” IN ABC OBSERVATION

The B stands for behavior, and here we want a good clear description of the behavior, so multiple people can take data on the same thing. Our information won't mean much if the description of the behavior is inaccurate or too broad.

THE “C” IN ABC OBSERVATION

Finally, the C stands for consequences. What happens after the occurrence of a behavior? Consequences maintain behavior. If a child is acting silly in class, and his friends laugh, the child is more likely to continue acting silly. The consequence is reinforcing. If a behavior is consistently ignored (no reinforcement), it is likely to extinguish or go away. (This is hard to accomplish, by the way. We usually add other procedures, such as reinforcing an alternate behavior when working on extinction.) Sometimes, the consequence becomes the antecedent for challenging behavior, and this must be considered.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



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