

## Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) ---Step-by-Step Guide---



This practice guide outlines how to plan for, use, and monitor the practice of functional behavioral assessment.

Keep in mind that FBA can be used to decrease inappropriate behaviors and increase appropriate behaviors.

### BEFORE YOU START...

Each of the following points is important to address so that you can be sure the selected EBP is likely to address the learning needs of your student.

Have you found out more information about. . . ?

- ☐ Identified the behavior...
- ☐ Collected baseline data through direct observation...
- ☐ Established a goal or outcome that clearly states when the behavior will occur, what the target skill is, and how the team will know when the skill is mastered...

If the answer to any of these is “no,” review the process of how to select an EBP.

For more information visit:  
[www.afirm.fpg.unc.edu](http://www.afirm.fpg.unc.edu)



# Now you are ready to start...

## Step 1: FBA Planning

The planning step explains initial steps and considerations involved to prepare for and develop an FBA for a learner. Identify one person as the FBA coordinator who will coordinate and manage data collection, answer questions from other team members, and make sure that the FBA is implemented as intended.

### 1.1 Establish a multidisciplinary team

Planning should begin with forming a multidisciplinary team that includes all individuals who have observed the learner exhibiting the interfering behavior.

### 1.2 Identify and define interfering behavior

Together, the team identifies the interfering behavior that is most problematic for the learner. Any behaviors that create safety concerns for the learner or others should be addressed first.

### 1.3 Review records of learner

In order to understand the selected interfering behavior, records should be reviewed (medical records, psychological evaluations, educational testing, Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP), incident reports, anecdotal notes, etc.)

### 1.4 Select assessment procedures

Team members will gather information concerning the behavior from formal/informal interviews and standardized behavior rating scales.

### 1.5 Develop plan for collecting data

Data will need to be collected during times and settings where the interfering behavior occurs most often. Also, it is important to sample in other locations or at other times where the behavior might not occur. Data collection should be for a sufficient period of time to identify consistencies in the behavior.



*Use the **FBA Planning Sheet** as a companion for completing the planning step.*

## Step 2: Using FBA

This section describes the process of implementing the FBA plan that was developed.

### 2.1 Collect data using selected assessment procedures

During the planning stage, the team selected several assessment tools and/or interviews. These will need to be administered and data collected.

### 2.2 Collect data on the occurrence of interfering behavior

Following the developed plan, the team collects data on the interfering behavior using direct observation methods. Using A-B-C data charts will help team members determine what happens right before the behavior (the antecedent), when the behavior that occurs (behavior), and what happens directly after the behavior (the consequence). Also, data tables (commonly referred to as scatterplots in the FBA literature) can be used for data collection in order to help team members determine when the behavior is occurring, the possible functions of the behavior, and times of the day when an intervention might be implemented to reduce the interfering behavior.



Use the **ABC Data Chart** to understand the antecedent, behavior, and consequence.



Use the **FBA Data Table and Anecdotal Note form** to identify patterns.

### 2.3 Analyze collected data

Analyze collected data to determine the function of the behavior. Behaviors typically fall into two categories of function: 1) to get or obtain something desired or 2) to escape or avoid.

### 2.4 Develop a hypothesis statement

Based upon the information gathered through assessments, interviews, and direct observations, the team develops a hypothesis statement. Be sure the hypothesis statement developed includes:

- 1) the setting events, immediate antecedents, and immediate consequences that surround the interfering behavior,
- 2) a restatement and refinement of the description of the interfering behavior that is occurring, and
- 3) the function the behavior serves (i.e., get/obtain, escape/avoid).



Use the **FBA Analysis and Hypothesis Form** to develop a hypothesis statement.

### 2.5 Test the hypothesis to ensure it is correct

To test the developed hypothesis, modify the setting/activity to **increase** the probability that the behavior occurs. Testing can occur over several days or weeks to confirm the cause of the interfering behavior.

## Step 2: Using FBA (continued)

### 2.6 Identify appropriate EBPs to address the interfering behavior

When team members understand the function of the behavior, evidence-based practices can be implemented to reduce the occurrence of the identified interfering behavior while increasing appropriate behaviors.

### 2.7 Develop behavior intervention plan

After an EBP is identified, the team develops a behavior intervention plan. The BIP should include strategies for the following:

- 1) preventing the occurrence of the interfering behavior,
- 2) teaching or increasing the replacement behavior, and
- 3) increasing learning opportunities and social engagement.



Use the ***Guide to Planning Behavior Intervention Plan*** develop the BIP

## Step 3: Monitoring FBA

The following process describes how the use of FBA can be monitored and how the plan might need to be adjusted based on the data.

### 3.1 Collect and analyze data on interfering behavior

Team members need to collect data that focus on:

- 1) the frequency, or how often, the behavior occurs using time sampling or event sampling,
- 2) how long (duration) the interfering behavior lasts when it occurs, and
- 3) frequency of use of replacement behavior(s) including how often the learner uses the replaced behavior(s).



Use the **FBA Time Sampling Form** to monitor the frequency of the behavior.



Use the **FBA Event Sampling Form** to monitor the frequency of behaviors that are low frequency.



Use the **FBA Duration Behavior Form** to monitor how long a behavior lasts.



Use the **Replacement Behavior Form** to monitor strategies and interventions.

### 3.2 Determine next steps based on learner progress

Collecting data will help team members determine if a learner is making progress and reducing the use of the interfering behavior and increasing use of appropriate behaviors. If a learner is making progress based upon data collected, team members should continue to use the selected strategies and evidence-based practices.

If the learner with ASD is not showing progress with the selected strategies and evidence-based practices, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the behavior well defined?
- Is the behavior measurable and observable?
- Are the selected evidence-based practices used with fidelity based upon the implementation checklists?
- Are all team members and staff members consistently using the identified strategies and responses to behavior?

If these issues have been addressed and the learner continues to exhibit high rates of the interfering behavior, consider selecting a different EBP or strategy to use with the learner.