



HIGHLIGHTS

STAFF

Internal Communique • Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled

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Functional Behavioral Assessment

Article provided by Behaviour Management Systems, www.bmst-fsgc.com/

What is an FBA?

A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) is a valuable problem-solving tool. It supports an approach to addressing behavior problems that looks at both the likely causes and characteristics or symptoms of behavior. It is based on the premise that the functions of behavior (and what needs are driving it) should not usually be considered inappropriate; rather, it is the resulting behavior 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 the purpose of an FBA?

- To answer questions: Why is this person engaging in this behavior, 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 behavior
- To identify patterns, rather than individual occurrences

Why use an FBA?

- An FBA can help determine what need or needs the behavior serves and support the student with appropriate alternatives

Who conducts an FBA?

- Ideally, a team rather than a single person – to gain more than one perspective

- People from a variety of environments in which the student interacts
- Problem-solvers who enjoy collaboration

How should an FBA be conducted?

- Review all available information (IEP, parent input, assessments, etc.)
- Identify all behaviors of concern
 - Physical aggression
 - Verbal aggression
 - Self-abuse
 - Running away
- Define each behavior in measurable/observable terms
Example: David pokes other students with his ruler/pencil/etc. two to three times a day
- If a behavior occurs as part of a chain, identify all behaviors
Example: David says, "You're stupid," pokes the student, then laughs
- Track behaviors (at least one week, preferably two) to identify:
 - **Antecedents** (what happened before the behavior occurred)
Examples:
 - *Slow triggers: morning or afternoon, particular day, missed meal, changes in schedule, etc.*
 - *Fast triggers: specific request, specific people, specific task, behavior of others*
 - *Indicators: the specific physical signs/indicators that this student is about to become verbally/physically aggressive (clenched fist, muscles in neck tense, approaches very close)*

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Mapaville Students Create Earth Day Project

By Debbie Sanderson, Primary Class Teacher, Mapaville School

Students at Mapaville School submitted a school-wide project to the Project Earth 2012 Earth Day contest in the Recycling and Waste Management, Education and Awareness categories. The school won second place in the K-5 competition.

Students and staff decided to create a project that focused on recycling. The project involved making a papier-mâché earth with nonperishable materials attached to represent how trash will destroy the earth. The local community participated in the project by bringing in nonperishable items that could be recycled. Also, the students picked up trash from around the school premises.

For this project, the students were able to perform the steps with as much independence as possible and assistance as needed. The safety of the students was considered at all times in all aspects of this project.

The first step was to shred paper to make a model of the earth. After

the papier-mâché earth was formed, the students painted it white, blue and green to represent the water and land. Black balls representing a dying planet were made from the shredded paper and attached to kebab sticks. These sticks were then placed in the earth, and the students chose pieces of trash to glue to the balls.

A banner was created by the students using recycled magazines to cut out letters. The banner, along with the papier-mâché earth, was hung in the foyer of the school for all staff, students and visitors to see. The trash that did not get glued to the earth was placed in the recycle bin.



Students at the Mapaville School created a project focused on recycling for the Project Earth 2012 Earth Day contest.

During the activity period, students were read stories about the earth, recycling and waste management.

Congratulations to the Mapaville School students and staff on their award!

Functional Behavior Assessment *(From page 1)*

- **Behavior** (what the student did)
 - Define behavior and determine:
 - Frequency
 - Duration
 - Intensity
- **Consequences** (what happened after the behavior)
 - 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 behavior

An FBA will indicate:

- When and where the behavior occurs
- If the behavior occurs in all settings
- Whether the behavior 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 behavior serves

- Any home, medical or other external/internal factors

Use FBA data to:

- Develop IEPs and safety plans
- Identify antecedents that you can change
- Identify most serious behaviors to intervene with first
- Teach alternative behaviors to meet same function
- Adjust consequences to behavior

Recommended website:

<http://cecp.air.org/fba/default.asp>
(Provides an overview of functional behavioral assessments)

Using an ABC Chart

By Merv Blunt, Central Office

The purpose of an Antecedents-Behavior-Consequences (ABC) Chart is to organize information over several observation sessions by recording the types of behaviors observed and the events that precede and follow the behavior. Observing and recording ABC data assists the team in forming a hypothesis statement and gathering evidence that the function maintaining a problem behavior has been identified. By recording the behaviors in an ABC Chart, you will be able to more accurately focus on the origin of undesirable behaviors. ABC data should be collected until a pattern is identifiable, typically with no fewer than 10 to 12 separate instances.

Antecedents

When identifying antecedents, consider these questions:

- Where does the behavior happen?
- With whom does the behavior occur?
- When does the behavior happen?
- What activity is the behavior occurring during?
- What are other students doing when the behavior begins?
- What are other teachers/adults doing when the behavior begins?

It is also helpful to consider possible contributing factors, such as:

- Specific staff
- Proximity of others
- Noise level in the classroom
- Number of individuals in the area
- Other environmental conditions: lighting, open/closed doors, noise in hallway, etc.

Additionally, it is valuable to take into account distant setting events such as:

- Medication changes
- Family/home variables (e.g. visiting family members, divorce, birth of a sibling, etc.)
- Current health status of the student

Behavior

Even though you should have a clearly defined target behavior, it is important to record as much information about the behavior of concern during your observations. Rather than writing “aggressed,” your notes should be enhanced by more detail, such as “kicked peer,” “hit teacher with fist” or “pinched peer’s arm.”

Consequences

When identifying consequences, it may not be as clear as “time out,” “reprimand” or “ignore.” Oftentimes when observing behavior one may find that multiple events will follow the behavior of concern. All behavior should be recorded and evaluated for its influence on the target behavior.

Some ABC charts have added another section to the chart for the possible function of the behavior. Thus, based on the ABC chart, a person is to identify what they think the function of the behavior is. Although this can sound daunting, there are only two primary functions of behavior: access or avoidance. There are only three areas where children are trying to access or avoid:

1. Attention (from teachers, parents, peers or anyone)
2. Tangibles or activities
3. Sensory (such as noise or physical contact)

Based on the possible function or functions of the behavior, the staff would then develop a behavioral support plan (BSP) for the student. Information about how to complete a behavioral support plan will be provided in the Fall 2012 edition of *Staff Highlights*.

Results of the Teacher Needs Assessment

By Merv Blunt, Central Office

A needs assessment for professional development was sent out in February to all Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled for teachers to complete and return to Central Office. There was an 86 percent return rate on the needs assessment. The needs assessment had 12 possible topics for professional development, and teachers had to indicate their top five choices.

The top five responses from the returned needs assessments are:

1. Dealing with students when a BSP is not needed
2. Integrated therapy
3. Organizing your classroom
4. Basics in AAC
5. Learning centers

We will try to incorporate the requested professional development topics into the required professional development training and professional development opportunities (PDOs) for the 2012-13 school year.

New Teacher Training – Effective Instructional Design

By Merv Blunt, Central Office

Some of you may remember from several years ago the Effective Instructional Design (EID) trainings for new teachers. Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled has decided to revive this training concept for new teachers hired, starting in the 2012-13 school year.

Six training days will be scheduled monthly from September through February. New teachers will meet at a designated school in each area for the EID training. The Supervisors for Instruction (SFI) for the areas will be the instructors for the training.

The training will consist of two sessions each day. Each session will last approximately two and a half hours and have eight to 10 members. The sessions will start with a pre-test of the material to be covered and end with a post-test.

If there are not enough new teachers in the area to fill a session, teachers who were newly hired in recent years will be assigned to attend the EID training.

A tentative schedule of session topics include:

- September:
 - Effective IEP meetings
 - Authentic learning
- October:
 - Organizing the classroom
 - Visual schedules
- November
 - Behavior
 - Preventative, de-escalation strategies
- December
 - Instructional strategies
 - AAC/language development
- January
 - Sensory integration
- February
 - Transition Part I
 - Transition Part II