

# BEHAVIORAL PLANNING MEETINGS

## Information for Families

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice

### HOW CAN PARENTS AND SCHOOLS WORK TOGETHER TO DEVELOP GOOD BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION PLANS?

*Jeff has been getting into trouble in school lately. He received in-school suspension twice last month and numerous discipline referrals. His teachers are getting frustrated with his repeated behavioral problem. His parents are getting frustrated with the school. Jeff usually gets into trouble in the hallway between classes. This has been going on for about two months. Everyone seems to be trying to get Jeff to understand that his behavior needs to improve, but nobody has been able to clearly define what is happening and what is expected of Jeff. His parents have been to the school to discuss the behavior, but he is still having problems following the rules in the hallway.*

### WHAT IS A POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL PLAN?

After collecting and analyzing enough information to identify the likely function of a student's behavior, the IEP team, of which parents are extremely important members, must develop a *positive behavioral intervention plan*. The behavioral plan will include, when appropriate, (1) strategies, including positive behavioral interventions and supports; (2) program modifications; and (3) supplementary aids and services that may be required to address the problem behavior.

When danger signals arise — for example, a child receives in-school suspensions, is sent out of the classroom frequently because of behaviors, or runs the risk of being punished in school — the student's behavior should be addressed with an in-depth behavioral assessment, known as a *functional behavioral assessment (FBA)*. The FBA should yield a number of recommendations for the IEP team to study and act on. From this assessment, the team determines, on a very individual basis, when the behaviors happen, what triggers the behaviors, how to reduce the triggers, and what strategies will be used to help the student use more productive behaviors. This plan is the *behavioral intervention plan (BIP)*.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act makes it clear that serious behavioral issues for students with disabilities require a behavioral assessment. All interventions must be documented, including which ones worked and which were not successful. This approach pinpoints common problems and starts a child on the road to behavioral competency. By documenting and systematically addressing behavioral issues, the IEP team can develop a relevant and useful plan to help the student achieve more competence with behaviors.

### WHAT SHOULD BE DONE PRIOR TO A BEHAVIORAL PLANNING MEETING?

All members of the IEP team should be aware of the current state of the student's behavior, the specific problems with the behavior, and the issues the meeting will address. The reasons for the discipline referrals should be presented in objective terms before possible interventions are discussed. Parents are often shocked to find the number and magnitude of their child's problems.

### WHAT SHOULD HAPPEN IN A BEHAVIORAL PLANNING MEETING?

During the behavioral planning meeting, team members should share information gathered from observations and from the functional behavioral assessment. Parents play an important role on the IEP team during this process. Parents know their child and can offer invaluable information as the team develops the intervention plans.

During the behavioral planning meeting, the IEP team should consider the student's behavioral strengths and deficits. This meeting is not designed to blame the student. Rather, it is an opportunity for all team members to take responsibility for designing a remediation plan. Parents and educators should bring to this planning meeting as much information about the student as possible, including his or her likes and dislikes and any other information that will help the team design a plan that will support the student in choosing more appropriate behaviors.

During the meeting, the team should address the setting events or antecedents. These are the things that happen before the behavior occurs. For example, the problem behavior may occur only in the hallways but not in other places in the school. In addition, the IEP team should determine the consequences that are maintaining the problem behaviors and the possible reasons for (functions of) the behavior. After sharing

this information, the team makes a “best guess” about what the function of the behavior is.

After identifying the reason for the behavior, the team should develop a plan to intervene. This plan should include positive supports to encourage the student to use more appropriate behaviors to meet the same need. For example, if the student is having problems only in the hallways and the team has determined that the reason for this behavior is an attempt to get attention from a certain teacher, then the intervention plan may include providing some of that teacher’s time when the student displays appropriate behaviors. Team members must develop a very specific definition of the behaviors they want the student to perform and what the specific consequences are for the performance of these behaviors.

Team members need to keep in mind that a behavioral planning meeting is designed to implement supports to reduce the negative behaviors, not to place blame. Educators and parents should discuss the behaviors that have been observed, such as yelling or running in the hallways, in objective terms. That is, how often or how long does the behavior occur and in what context? The expected behaviors should be defined in clear and precise terms. Phrases such as “has to learn responsibility” or “does not act responsibly” do not describe behavior. Descriptions such as “turns in homework every morning” and “walks quietly in the halls without coming in contact with others” are more appropriate terms to use when discussing behaviors.

The team members should share all the information gathered and use that information to develop a plan. Each component of the plan should be discussed in detail, along with such questions as “what happens if he walks without touching others but is still yelling?” The plan should be very clear about what supports are offered to the student, what exactly is expected of the student and adults, and who is responsible for implementing the plan. This will ensure that all members of the team understand the expectations and the appropriate responses.

The functional behavioral assessment and the development of behavioral intervention plans involve a systematic problem-solving process that can be used at home or school. Sometimes the process is simple and quickly leads to a solution. At other times, the process is more involved, and developing a plan that works takes longer. The idea behind a behavioral intervention plan is to support the student by examining the reasons for his or her behaviors and supporting the student in choosing more appropriate behaviors. This responsibility falls to all members of

the IEP team. A well thought out plan includes teaching new behaviors and positively reinforcing appropriate behaviors and other similar supports.

## **WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS?**

Contact the Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports at [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)

*Addressing Student Problem Behavior: An IEP Team’s Introduction to Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plans*

*Addressing Student Problem Behavior Part II: Conducting a Functional Behavior Assessment*

*Addressing Student Problem Behavior-Part III: Creating Positive Behavioral Intervention Plans and Supports*

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