

PBS Practice

The purpose of the series on PBS Practices is to provide information about important elements of positive behavior support. PBS Practices are not specific recommendations for implementation, and they should always be considered within the larger context of planning, assessment and comprehensive support.

Methods of Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

Functional (behavioral) assessment (FBA) is a systematic process for gathering information in order to determine the relationships between a person's problem behavior and aspects of their environment. Through FBA, it is possible to identify specific events that predict and maintain behavior and design a support plan that effectively addresses those variables. FBA methods can, and should, vary across circumstances, but typically include record reviews, interviews, and direct observation.

Method	Sample Sources/Tools	Examples/Products
Record Reviews	Diagnostic/medical records, psychological reports, assessments from therapies, developmental profiles, social histories, previous behavior management plans, IEPs, ISPs, anecdotal records, incident reports, discipline referrals	Sammy's records contained: History of allergies and asthma Some effective educational strategies used in the past Patterns of discipline referrals
Structured Interviews	People who know the individual well and represent a range of environments (the person, family members, teachers, friends, direct service providers, etc.) may be interviewed. Some interview tools: <i>Functional Assessment Interview, Student-Directed Functional Assessment Interview (O'Neill et al., 1997)</i> <i>Motivational Assessment Scale (Durand & Crimmins, 1988)</i>	Interviews of Delores's family, friends, and job coach addressed her preferences for 'low key' settings, difficulty with dramatic changes in routine, and beliefs that she is motivated to avoid demanding social circumstances
Direct Observation	Observations should be conducted across a variety of times and circumstances. Some observation tools: <i>ABC (Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence) Recording</i> <i>Scatterplot (Touchette, MacDonald, & Langer, 1985)</i> <i>Frequency measures across conditions</i>	Scatterplot data indicates that Ben's biting is most likely when he is getting ready to leave in the morning and immediately after lunch

FBA methods range from highly precise and systematic to relatively informal. Particular tools and strategies should be selected based on the circumstances, individuals involved, and goals of intervention. The goal of FBA, regardless of which methods are used, is to answer certain questions:

- 1) Under what circumstances is the behavior most/least likely to occur (e.g., when, where, with whom)?
- 2) What outcomes does the behavior produce (i.e., what does the person get or avoid through his or her behavior)?

To answer these questions, the information gathered must be analyzed and summarized. Hypothesis (or summary) statements describe the specific patterns identified through the FBA and, if supported by the data, provide a foundation for intervention. A hypothesis statement must describe the behavior and

surrounding conditions, and be clear, comprehensive, and unbiased to be useful. Example: "When Steven finishes his work early, he makes noises and destroys his materials. His behavior prompts his supervisor to initiate an alternative activity."

Frequently-Asked Questions

1. *When and why should a functional behavioral assessment be completed?* An FBA may be initiated when a person's behavior interferes with performance, progress, and/or participation within typical daily routines and environments. It is completed for the purpose of designing an effective intervention that will allow the person with challenging behavior to be successful across all circumstances.
2. *Who should do a functional behavioral assessment (e.g., what qualifications are needed)?* It is important to have individuals who are experienced and skilled in FBA, competent in promoting collaboration, and proficient in designing effective positive behavioral support strategies involved in the process. Such individuals may come from varying backgrounds (e.g., applied behavior analysis, school psychology).
3. *Are there shortcuts (e.g., one page forms) for conducting FBAs?* Yes and no. A variety of tools are available for data collection and synthesis. In many cases, an informal or abbreviated approach can lead to reasonable interventions. However, in other circumstances, a more comprehensive and systematic process is required. An appropriate FBA is one that is matched to the circumstances and leads to an effective behavioral support plan.
4. *What is the difference between functional behavioral assessment and functional analysis?* Functional behavioral assessment is a broad term referring to the information gathering and hypothesis development process. It can involve a variety of methods, including functional analysis. Functional analysis is a rigorous experimental procedure in which hypotheses are tested by manipulating antecedents and consequences to see what impact they have on behavior. Whereas functional analysis may be useful in some circumstances, it is not always necessary or appropriate.

Other Resources

Demchak, M & Bossert, K.W. (1996). Assessing problem behaviors. Innovations (No. 4). Washington, D.C.: American Association on Mental Retardation.

Foster-Johnson, L. & Dunlap, G. (1993). Using functional assessment to develop effective, individualized interventions for challenging behaviors. Teaching Exceptional Children, 25, 44-50.

O'Neill, R.E., Horner, R.H., Albin, R.W., Sprague, J.R., Storey, K., Newton, J.S. (1997). Functional assessment and program development for problem behavior: A practical handbook. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Repp, A.C. & Horner, R.H. (Eds). (1999). Functional analysis of problem behavior: From effective assessment to effective support. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Methods of Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

**Functional Behavioral Assessment Behavior Support Plan (F-BSP) Protocol
Functional Behavioral Assessment Interview –Teachers/Staff**

Student Name: Michael Age: 9 Grade: 4 Date: 12/9/09

Person (s) interviewed: Ms. Andrews (Guidance), Mr. Varney (Teacher), Ms. Lucas (Music,

Interviewer _____

Student Profile: What is the student good at or what are some strengths that the student brings to school?
Comes to school every day. Strong aptitude for music and athletics. Does well academically when he puts he puts his mind to it

STEP 1: INTERVIEW TEACHER/STAFF/PARENT

Description of the Behavior

What does the problem behavior(s) look like? *Argues with peers when working with groups or playing games during recess. Arguing often leads to threats and sometimes pushing and hitting. Also argues with teacher and refuses to do work.*

How often does the problem behavior(s) occur? *Arguing with peers occurs almost every day. Refusing to do work occurs daily, sometimes multiple times in a day. Pushing and hitting happens approximately once per week.*

How long does the problem behavior(s) last when it does occur? *Arguments with peers last until an adult intervenes. He never gives in. Refusal to work often last until there is a change of activity. Arguing with teachers is brief, but often reoccurs.*

How disruptive or dangerous is the problem behavior(s)? *Pushing and hitting is dangerous. Hitting has resulted in cuts and bruises. Refusal to do work impedes academic progress.*

Description of the Antecedent

When, where, and with whom are problem behaviors most likely?

Schedule (Times)	Activity	Specific Problem Behavior	Likelihood of Problem Behavior	With Whom does Problem Occur
8:20-9:15	Science	Arguing w/peers	Low High 1 2 3 4 5 6	
9:20-10:15	Math	Arguing w/ \peers Work Refusal	1 2 3 4 5 6	
10:20-11:15	Music	Arguing w/peers	1 2 3 4 5 6	
11:20-12:15	Reading/LA	Arguing w/peers Work Refusal	1 2 3 4 5 6	
12:15-1:00	Lunch/Recess	Fighting	1 2 3 4 5 6	
1:00-2:00	Social Studies	Arguing w/peers Work Refusal	1 2 3 4 5 6	
2:00-2:45	Physical Education		1 2 3 4 5 6	

Summarize Antecedent (and Setting Events)

What situations seem to set off the problem behavior? (difficult tasks, transitions, structured activities, small group settings, teacher's request, particular individuals, etc.) *Arguing with peers occurs during group activities, especially with certain students. Work refusal occurs most often when he is asked to complete tasks that involve writing or working independently on challenging tasks. Fighting typically occurs during disagreements while playing games with other students.*

When is the problem behavior most likely to occur? (times of day and days of the week) Time does not appear to be a factor. Mondays, especially after a vacation or long weekend are particularly difficult.

When is the problem behavior least likely to occur? (times of day and days of the week) Fighting does not occur in school. He is less likely to argue with peers during group work if he is not in the same group with the three students he does not get along with.

Setting Events: Are there specific conditions, events, or activities that make the problem behavior worse? (missed medication, history of academic failure, conflict at home, missed meals, lack of sleep, history or problems with peers, etc.) *Arguing and fighting occurs primarily with three students with whom he has never gotten along, although he sometimes argues with other students as well. Being out at recess with reduced supervision.*

Description of the Consequence

What usually happens after the behavior occurs? (what is the teacher's reaction, how do other student's react, is the student sent to the office, does the student get out of doing work, does the student get in a power struggle, etc.) *Arguing during group work often results in other students backing down. Refusing to work results in work on getting done. Arguing with teacher results in prolonged arguing and eventually he is warned of potential punishments. Fighting results in an office referral and he is often sent home.*

----- End of Interview -----

STEP 2: PROPOSE A TESTABLE EXPLANATION

Setting Event	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
Playing game in area with minimal supervision.	Disagreement with peer.	1. Fighting	Peers back down Sent to office Sent home
Refusal to do work and arguing with teacher.	Independent assignments. Challenging tasks.	2. Arguing and refusal to engage in work	Teacher argues with him. He does not do work. Warned of potential punishment (trip to office, note to parents, detention).

Function of the Behavior

For each ABC sequence listed above, why do you think the behavior is occurring? (to get teacher attention, to get peer attention, gets desired object/activity, escapes undesirable activity, escapes demand, escapes particular people, etc.)

1. *Michael pushes or hits peers to win the argument or get what he wants in the given situation.*
2. *Michael refuses to do his work and argues with the teacher to avoid having to complete assignments.*

How confident are you that your testable explanation is accurate?

Very sure		So-so		Not at all	
6	5	4	3	2	1

Summarize Antecedent (and Setting Events)

What kind of things make it more likely that you will have this problem? (difficult tasks, transitions, structured activities, small group settings, teacher's request, particular individuals, etc.)

When and where is the problem most likely to happen? (days of week, specific classes, hallways, bathrooms)

When is the problem behavior least likely to occur? (days of week, specific classes, hallways, bathrooms)

Setting Events: Is there anything that happens before or after school or in-between classes that make it more likely that you'll have a problem? (missed medication, history of academic failure, conflict at home, missed meals, lack of sleep, history or problems with peers, etc.)

Description of the Consequence

What usually happens after the problem occurs? (what is the teacher's reaction, how do other student's react, is the student sent to the office, does the student get out of doing work, does the student get in a power struggle, etc.)

----- End of Interview -----

STEP 2: DEVELOP A TESTABLE EXPLANATION

Setting Event	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
		1.	
		2.	
		3.	

Function of the Behavior

For each ABC sequence listed above, why do you think the behavior is occurring? (to get teacher attention, to get peer attention, gets desired object/activity, escapes undesirable activity, escapes demand, escapes particular people, etc.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STEP 3: RATE YOUR CONFIDENCE IN THE TESTABLE EXPLANATION

If you completed both interviews, was there agreement on these parts? (Y/N) (a) Setting Events ___ (b) Antecedents ___ (c) Behaviors ___ (d) Consequences ___ (e) Function ___						
How confident are you that your testable explanation is accurate?						
Very sure			So-so			Not at all
6	5	4	3	2	1	

STEP 4: CONDUCT OBSERVATIONS (IF NECESSARY)

- If student has an identified disability and is at risk of suspension, expulsion, or change in placement you must conduct an observation of student
- If student does not meet above criteria, but confidence rating is 1, 2, 3, or 4 you should conduct observations to better understand when, where, and why the problem behavior is occurring.
- If student does not meet above criteria, and confidence rating is 5 or 6, you may go directly to Step 6

Summarize Observation Data

Setting Event	Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
		1.	
		2.	
		3.	

Function of the Behavior

For each ABC sequence listed above, why do you think the behavior is occurring? (to get teacher attention, to get peer attention, gets desired object/activity, escapes undesirable activity, escapes demand, escapes particular people, etc.)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

STEP 5: CONFIRM/MODIFY TESTABLE EXPLANATION

Was there agreement between the Teacher Interview and the Observation? Y/N

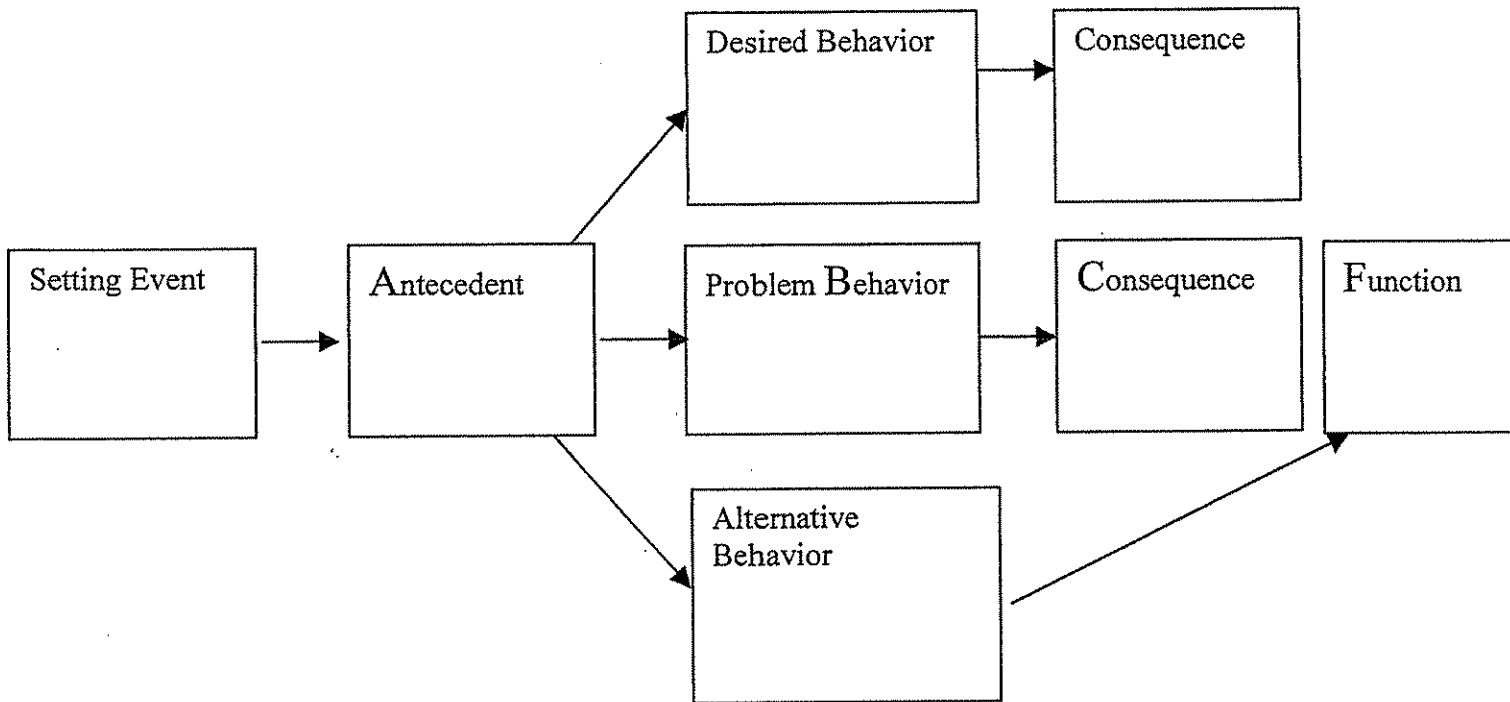
a) Setting Events ___ (b) Antecedents ___ (c) Behaviors ___ (d) Consequences ___ (e) Function ___

Was there agreement between the Student Interview and the Observation? Y/N

a) Setting Events ___ (b) Antecedents ___ (c) Behaviors ___ (d) Consequences ___ (e) Function ___

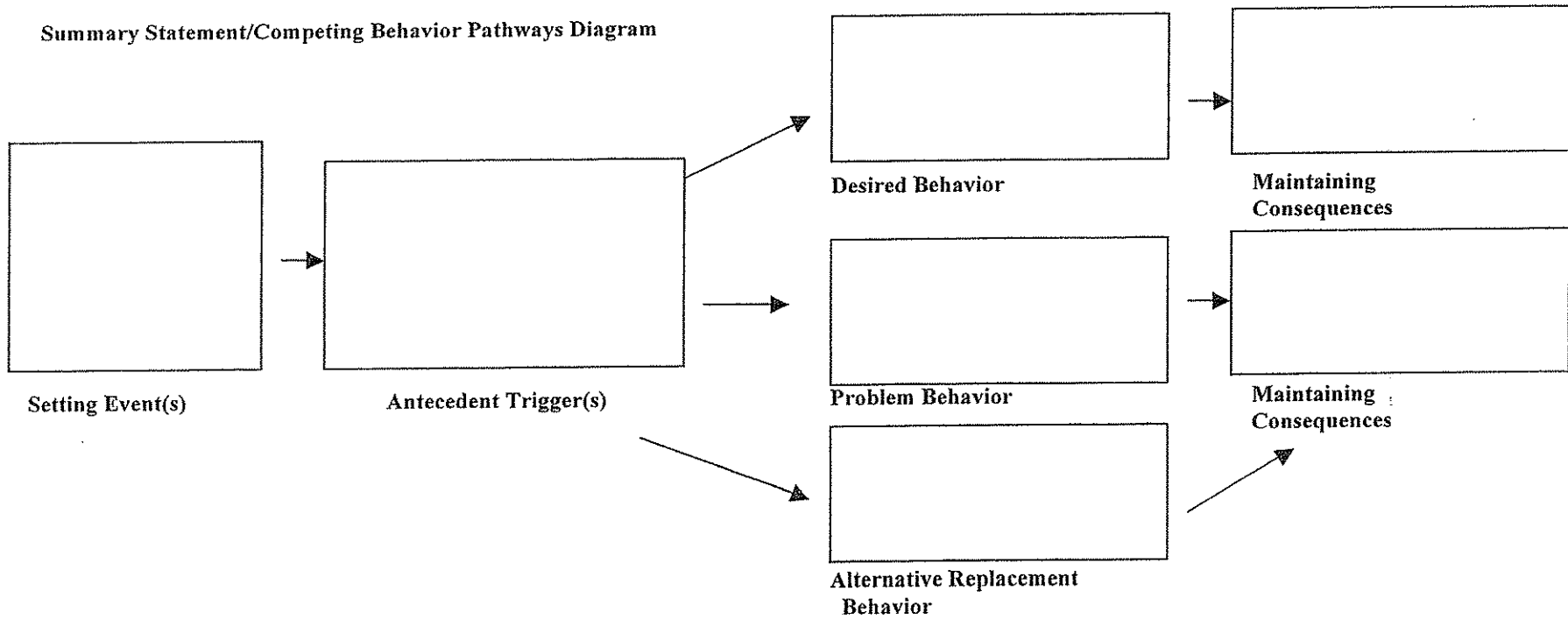
Based on the interviews and observations, what is your working testable explanation for why the problem behavior occurs?

STEP 6: BUILD A COMPETING BEHAVIOR PATHWAY



Setting Event Strategies	Antecedent Strategies	Behavior Teaching Strategies	Consequence Strategies

BUILDING A SUPPORT PLAN



Positive Behavior Support Plan Outline

Strategies that Make Problem Behaviors irrelevant, ineffective, and inefficient

Setting Event Strategies	Preventive Strategies	Teaching Strategies	Consequence Strategies	
What are ways to change the context to make the problem behavior unnecessary?	What are ways to <u>prevent</u> the problem behavior?	What can be done to increase expected behaviors or to teach a replacement behavior?	What should happen when a problem behavior occurs?	What should happen when desired replacement behavior occurs?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Clarify rules and expected behavior for whole class <input type="checkbox"/> Written contract with the students <input type="checkbox"/> Student self-manipulator sheet <input type="checkbox"/> Change seating arrangements <input type="checkbox"/> Change schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reminders about behavior when problem is likely <input type="checkbox"/> Provide extra assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Modify assignments to match student skills <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Practice expected behavior in class <input type="checkbox"/> Self-management program <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reward/punishment program <input type="checkbox"/> Contact with parents <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced privileges <input type="checkbox"/> Time out <input type="checkbox"/> Office referral <input type="checkbox"/> Reprimand in class <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reward program? <input type="checkbox"/> Praise from teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

<p>For Challenging Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extinction: Make problem behavior ineffective - minimize unintended reinforcement for challenging behavior. • Correction: Redirect, teach, reinforce. • Punishment: Discourage challenging behavior (used as a secondary approach for serious behaviors and always combined with correction and reinforcement). <p>Emergency or Safety Procedures: For potentially dangerous situations.</p>				
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*If emergency behavior management procedures are necessary, attach crisis plan as separate sheet.

STEP 8: EVALUATE PLAN

Behavioral Goal (Use specific, observable, measurable descriptions of goal)

<p>What is the short-term behavioral goal?</p> 	<p>_____ Expected date</p>
<p>What is the long-term behavioral goal?</p> 	<p>_____ Expected date</p>

Evaluation Procedures

Data to be Collected	Procedures for Data Collection	Person Responsible	Timeline
<p>Fidelity</p> <p>Outcomes</p>			

Plan review date: _____

We agree to the conditions of this plan:

Student (date)

Parent or guardian (date)

Teacher (date)

Teacher (date)

Action Team member (date)

Action Team member (date)