



How can a Positive Behavioral Support Plan help my child?

Overview:

In the broadest sense, all behavior is ultimately a form of communication, and it often arises in order to escape or to gain something. Student behavior in general is often managed through school-wide [Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports \(PBIS\)](#).

For students whose behavior requires more individualized strategies, a Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) can be developed. In order to determine if a student needs a PBSP, the school and family should discuss doing a [Functional Behavioral Assessment \(FBA\)](#). An FBA includes a specific process for observing and collecting data, with special attention to antecedents/ circumstances that are correlated with the onset of a behavior.

The process to get a PBSP:

If appropriate, the development of an [FBA](#) can happen as part of the Special Education process: the parent and school should meet to discuss evaluating the student, determine what types of assessments are needed, and include a list of those assessments on a Permission to Evaluate/Re-evaluate (PTE or PTR) consent form.

It is important to discuss whether there are any factors related to a student's diagnosis that could be contributing to the behavior. For example, does the student have difficulty following multi-step directions due to an [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder \(ADHD\)](#) diagnosis?

Is there a [Sensory Processing Disorder](#) that may be contributing to a student's reactions (e.g. being so hypersensitive to noise, such that the student hides under their desk during recess)?

Does the student have a mental health diagnosis such as anxiety, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), or Bipolar disorder?

Any factor that may be contributing to behavioral concerns should be assessed during the evaluation process.

Once the parent signs the PTE/ PTR consent form and returns it to the school, the 60-day timeline will begin, after which an Evaluation/ Re-evaluation Report (ER/ RR) will be issued. If the report recommends a PBSP, then the team will meet to develop one as part of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), or a Section 504 Service agreement if the student has a disability, but does not qualify for an IEP ([What Is a 504 Plan](#)).

Within the IEP, the behavioral data will be documented in:

Section I. Special Considerations, and Section II. Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance, including a description of the behaviors of concern, and a hypothesis as to when and why the behavior is occurring.

An IEP goal will also be developed to teach the student replacement behaviors.

Under the Specially Designed Instruction for the PBSP, the team will discuss the ABC form, an acronym which stands for Antecedents, replacement Behavior, and Consequences (both positive reinforcements, as well as steps to follow if a negative behavior occurs).

For the antecedents, it is helpful to brainstorm as a team to determine what circumstances precede a behavior, and how the team can mitigate those factors in real time (e.g. If a student is overwhelmed with noise and chaos in unstructured settings like recess and lunch, the team could consider offering a “Lunch Bunch” with a few friends in the guidance counselor’s office once a week; or if a student struggles with anxiety, then what supports can be used in anxiety provoking situations?

If a non-verbal student habitually throws his glasses every time he feels frustrated, what can the team do to predict his triggers and teach him more effective ways to communicate?). Other strategies can be discussed, such as behavior charts, and using a token economy to earn rewards. If the behavior is being impacted by a diagnosis (e.g. difficulty focusing due to ADHD, or experiencing OCD triggers), then the team needs to determine how to address it, consistent with that diagnosis.

If the team needs training or specific information about a diagnosis and/ or consultations with a specialist on appropriate strategies, the IEP can include these under Section VI.C. Supports for Personnel.

If there is an escalation of behavior, an IEP meeting can always be called. An IEP meeting must be held if the student is suspended. According to the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Training and Technical Assistance Network (PaTTAN), an FBA must be conducted when:

- An IEP team determines that a student’s behavior is interfering with their learning or the learning of others, and requires additional information to provide appropriate educational programming
- A behavior violates a ‘code of student conduct’ resulting in a change in placement and is determined by the IEP team to be a manifestation of the student’s disability
- The school refers the student to law enforcement
- A student is removed from the current placement as a result of weapon possession, illegal drug possession, and/or serious bodily injury.

Source: [PaTTAN- FBA](#)

Remember: Know your rights, don’t feel pressured to sign anything you don’t understand.

Useful resources

[Discipline & Behavior Problems - FAQs, Articles, Law, Cases, Free Publications & Resources from Wrightslaw](#)

[School Discipline in Pennsylvania](#)

PaTTAN- [FBA Videos](#)

[Oppositional Defiant Disorder: Symptoms & Treatment Options](#)

[Understood.org- Behavioral Intervention Plans](#)

[Understood.org - Types of Behavior Assessments](#)

Achieva disability advocates provide information, technical assistance and individual advocacy on issues that impact children and adults with intellectual disabilities and autism and their families. We also work with state and federal legislators and policy makers to ensure that the human, civil and legal rights of people with disabilities are protected and that they are afforded services to assist them to be included in their communities. We will provide guidance, information and technical assistance to the best of our ability. Achieva advocates are available to answer questions specific to your situation. Please contact us at 412.995.5000 x486, 888.272.7229 x 486 (Toll-Free) or log onto www.achieva.info/contact-advocacy.