



Functional Behavior Assessments and Intervention Plans

Competency

Educators understand when and how to use Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) to support students' behavior and learning.

Key Method

The educator uses their district process to develop a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) by identifying chronic or dangerous behavior, the possible function of the behavior, and high-quality interventions as part of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). This process isn't exclusive to exceptional student populations. Every student deserves a learning environment where their behavior is understood and they are supported to succeed. This micro-credential is designed for educators across grade levels and content areas.

Method Components

Understanding Student Behavior

Behavioral challenges in the classroom can hinder academic progress, strain peer relationships, and lead to decreased student engagement and motivation. For teachers, these challenges—combined with under-resourcing and large class sizes—can result in increased stress, frustration, and even burnout. Addressing these behaviors by understanding root causes and implementing appropriate strategies is crucial for a positive, productive learning environment. Many educators say that behavior is communication. By understanding what a student is trying to communicate, educators can develop behavior support plans with their students and families. This understanding begins with an FBA.

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Functional Behavior Assessments

Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) are used to understand why a student engages in a specific behavior. Students don't need an IEP or a 504 plan to benefit from an FBA. Students often use behavior to gain or avoid something. An FBA can provide support in creating a plan that addresses the root cause of a behavior, rather than a symptom.

There are three key elements to gather during observations:

1. Antecedents (A): What happens before the behavior?
2. Behavior (B): What the student actually does
3. Consequences (C): What happens after the behavior?

This is often referred to as the ABC model.

This process helps educators understand the motivation behind the behavior. Some of the most challenging behaviors serve one or more of these purposes:

- Gain attention from either peers or adults.
- Gain something such as objects, or privileges.
- Gain sensory needs-self-regulation or calming.
- Avoid work, overstimulation, or a particular location.

When educators identify the underlying cause of a student's behavior, they can respond with strategies that address the student's needs, not just the behavior. This understanding helps educators teach students to become more self-aware of their actions and to develop skills that improve their ability to regulate and adjust behavior. Using FBAs instead of relying on exclusionary discipline is especially important given how students of color and students with disabilities are often disciplined more harshly for similar behaviors.

Identify Chronic or Dangerous Behaviors

By identifying chronic or dangerous behaviors, educators can better support student learning, social-emotional development, and pro-social behaviors.

In tandem with this goal, when observing and analyzing student behavior, educators should account for the developmental stage of children. Educators should also be aware of bias and overidentification of students—particularly in Black, Latino, Native, and other marginalized communities—as displaying chronic or dangerous behaviors. When educators work with families and communities across race and background to understand behavior in context, they can interrupt these patterns and better support all students.

Collect Information to Identify the Function of the Behavior

Before considering appropriate, high-quality student interventions, the educator must collect information through formal and/or informal assessment over time.

Educators can use one or both of the following approaches:

- Direct assessment (observation of behavior and environment).

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- Indirect assessment (interviews with parents, teachers, the student, or others).

Hypothesis

A hypothesis is a statement describing why the behavior occurs and what purpose it serves the student. Educators should analyze the assessment data and think about the following areas to develop this statement.

- Why is the student demonstrating the identified chronic or disruptive behavior **(What is the function of the behavior)?**
- What is the student's current academic level **(Is there a skill deficit)?**
- What is the student's motivation level **(Is there a performance issue)?**

Ensure your hypothesis reflects data, not assumptions about a student's race, language, disability, or family background.

Building a Behavior Intervention Plan

Once these questions are answered, the next step is for educators to create a BIP that includes specific interventions to try. A BIP provides clear instructions for implementation and monitoring of interventions and outlines how the plan will be used across the student's day and with other stakeholders.

Evaluate the Effectiveness of the Interventions

Monitor and track the effectiveness of the BIP over time, usually four to six weeks with fidelity to interventions, to determine if and when adjustments need to be made, modified, or discontinued. When possible, students can participate in the creation of their plan by setting goals, identifying their motivations and rewards, and reflecting on their actions.

Supporting Rationale and Research

Iovannone R, Duple Moore T, Williams JM, Sanchez S, Kauk N. Are We on Course Yet? Functional Behavior Assessment and Behavior Intervention Plan Technical Adequacy in Schools. Behav Sci (Basel). 2024 May 30;14(6):466. doi: [10.3390/bs14060466](https://doi.org/10.3390/bs14060466). PMID: 38920798; PMCID: PMC11200863.

McIntosh, K., & Av-Gay, H. (2007). Implications of current research on the use of Functional Behavior Assessment and behavior support planning in school systems. International Journal of Behavioral Consultation and Therapy, 3(1), 38–52. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0100176>

Merlo G, Chiazzeze G, Taibi D, Chifari A. Development and Validation of a Functional Behavioural Assessment Ontology to Support Behavioural Health Interventions JMIR Med Inform 2018; 6(2):e37 [doi: 10.2196/medinform.7799](https://doi.org/10.2196/medinform.7799)

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Resources

The following resources provide templates, examples, and guidance to support implementation of FBAs and BIPs.

Creating a Functional Behavior Plan

[How to Do a Functional Behavior Assessment in ABA: A Comprehensive Guide](#)

[Checklist for identifying target behavior](#)

[Description and example of ABC form](#)

[Blank template of ABC form](#)

[Functional Behavior Assessment Packet](#)

[Developing a hypothesis and choosing interventions](#)

[Information on functions of behavior](#)

[Behavior Strategies to Support Intensifying Interventions | National Center on Intensive Intervention](#)

[How to Conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment | Behavior Analysis Basics & Writing a Behavior Plan](#)

[Forms for creating a FBA](#)

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3 and receive a “Proficient” for all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

250 - 500 words

Answer the following contextual questions to help assessors understand your current situation. *Don't include information that could identify you, your school, or specific students to reviewers.*

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1. Describe your learning goal related to the FBA-BIP process: What do you hope to learn or improve by completing this micro-credential?
2. Describe your current knowledge or experience with FBAs: What experience do you have identifying why a student's behavior is occurring?
3. What student needs do you hope to address by completing this micro-credential?

Passing: All questions are answered completely and clearly describe the educator's goal for earning the micro-credential and how it will support their professional practice.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following **two artifacts** as evidence of your learning. *Please don't include any information that identifies you or your students to reviewers.*

Artifact 1: Completed FBA form

Identify a student who is consistently exhibiting behavior that interferes with learning or that may be unsafe and complete your district's FBA form. Collaborate with your school's special education teacher or your district special education coordinator if you don't know how to access this form.

Remove or mark out any identifying information about students and adults.

Artifact 2: Case Study

(Four to six single-spaced pages, including any tables or charts)

Use the completed FBA form to conduct a case study of this student.

Your case study should include:

- Description of the student (demographic information, school, and family history) *without including personally identifying details.*
- Reason for referral. Include a specific explanation of why these behaviors are being identified as disruptive to their own learning or the learning of others.
- Two to three classroom observations of the target behavior over a sufficient period of time to collect enough data to hypothesize its function. Describe your data collection process and include samples of the materials used to document the behavior ([checklist](#) available in Resources section)
- Hypothesis of the function of the behavior.

Artifact 3: Intervention Meeting Summary and List

Meet with at least one colleague involved with the student to discuss your hypothesis, identify the desired behavior, and determine two to five possible interventions. Consider that interventions should avoid exclusionary practices (for example, repeated removal from class) and should be culturally responsive. Submit

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a concise summary of the meeting notes, including the desired behavior and the agreed-upon interventions you believe will support it.

Artifact 4: Intervention and Rationale

Select **one** intervention from the list developed in **Artifact 3** that would be effective for this student. Explain why you chose this intervention and why it's likely to be successful. Describe how you will implement and monitor the student's behavior, specify the duration of the intervention, and explain how you will communicate with relevant stakeholders.

*Remove or mark out any identifying information about students and adults.
Combine all of the above components into one document to submit.*

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Completed FBA Form	District form is completely filled out. Language used to fill out the form is professional, constructive, asset-based, and avoids deficit framing of the student or family. Student behaviors identified in the FBA are chronic and/or dangerous.	A few parts of the form aren't filled out. Language used may not be constructive or professional. Student behaviors aren't chronic or dangerous.	Form is missing most of the information. Language is blaming, shaming, or labels the student instead of describing behavior. Student behaviors are minor infractions or one-time incidents.
Artifact 2: Case Study	Case study includes ALL of the following: -Description of the student (demographic information, school, and family history) -Reason for referral -Two to three classroom observations of the target behavior over a period of time with sufficient data to hypothesize about the function of the behavior -Explanation of data-collection process	Case study includes three to four of the following: -Description of the student (demographic information, school, and family history; -Reason for referral -Two to three classroom observations of the target behavior over a period of time with sufficient data to hypothesize about the function of the behavior; -Explanation of data-collection process;	Case study is missing most of the following, or it isn't clear: -Description of the student (demographic information, school, and family history) -Reason for referral -Two to three classroom observations of the target behavior over a period of time with sufficient data to hypothesize about the function of the behavior -Explanation of data-collection process

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	-Hypothesis of the behavior function	-Hypothesis of the behavior function	-Hypothesis of the behavior function
Artifact 3: Intervention Meeting Summary and List	Notes from a meeting with at least one colleague that include: -Discussion of your findings -Desired behavior -List of two to five possible interventions	Notes from a meeting with at least one colleague that include discussion of your findings but doesn't include the desired behavior and at least two possible interventions.	Notes from a meeting with at least one colleague may be missing or they don't include the desired behavior and/or any interventions.
Artifact 4: Intervention and Rationale	The educator selects one intervention from the list in Artifact 3. They include: -Intervention of focus -Rationale for why it will be effective -Time frame for implementation -How they will monitor the behavior -How it will be shared with stakeholders	The educator selects one intervention from the list in Artifact 3. They don't include all of the following: -Intervention of focus -Rationale for why it will be effective -Time frame for implementation -How they will monitor the behavior -How it will be shared with stakeholders	The educator selects an intervention that isn't on the list from Artifact 3 or the required information isn't included.

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Part 3 Reflection

400 - 600 words

Use the word count as a guide when writing your personal reflection about this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection, review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Please don't include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

Reflect on your experience creating the case study and respond to the following questions:

- Describe how the development of the case study supported your understanding of creating an FBA/BIP.
- What was most difficult about using this process, and what would you do differently in your own classroom (documenting target behavior and developing a hypothesis of function of the behavior)?
- Explain why implementing behavior data collection with fidelity is important when creating a BIP.
- Describe how collaboration with your colleagues helped you to choose possible interventions.
- How will the intervention selected support the student as they progress through the school year?
- Describe how this process might change outcomes for students who are often disproportionately disciplined.

Passing: Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on both educator practice and student success. Specific examples are cited directly from personal or work-related experiences to support claims. The reflection also includes specific, actionable steps that demonstrate how this knowledge will be integrated into future practices.