

Considerations for Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams

Does a student's behavior impede learning?

The rules of the Tennessee State Board of Education 0520-01-09-.24 state that a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) "shall be conducted to inform the development or revision of a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) in any of the following situations ... When the student exhibits a pattern of behaviors that impede their learning or that of others" The answer to this question is nuanced, but the following questions may help IEP teams clarify whether the target behaviors impede learning and warrant an FBA.

ARE OTHER SUPPORTS, INCLUDING TIER I, II, AND III SUPPORTS, CONSISTENTLY IN PLACE?

The team should determine whether the exceptional pattern of behavior has been nonresponsive to a consistently applied system of universal behavior supports, including supports that are less time and resource intensive than an FBA and BIP. The following questions may serve to focus the conversation.

Clarification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Have steps been taken to ensure the student understands the behavioral expectations?❑ Has the team provided the student with opportunities to practice these behaviors?
Reinforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Has the student received recognized or reinforcement for meeting expectations?❑ Were the reinforcers offered to the student preferred and meaningful for him/her?
Reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ When the student has struggled to engage in learning or has disrupted the behavior of others, has the school's plan for reacting and applying additional instruction or support been provided?
Skill deficits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Does the IEP provide for accommodation and/or modification to the student's education that would increase their ability to engage and decrease stress?❑ Has the team consistently presented instruction at the independent or instructional level of difficulty (e.g., the student can independently complete the assignment with at least 70% accuracy)?
Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ When nonacademic tasks are required, is adequate support provided?❑ In general, are the following areas of need being met across the school context?<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Physical health» Learning readiness» Prevocational skills» Mental health» Adaptive skills
Other strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">❑ Have IEP accommodations and/or modifications related to the student's behavior been implemented?❑ Have antecedent supports been implemented with fidelity?❑ Has the team consistently taught and reinforced a replacement behavior?❑ Has the student been provided reinforcement for engaging in pro-social behavior?❑ If any combination of the above have been attempted but unsuccessful, has the IEP team met to make changes?

WHAT IS THE PATTERN OF BEHAVIORS THAT IMPEDE LEARNING?

The team should determine whether the student is exhibiting an exceptional pattern of behavior that impedes learning. The following questions may prove beneficial to this conversation.

Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Has the student injured themselves?<input type="checkbox"/> Is the student likely to injure themselves?<input type="checkbox"/> Has anyone else been injured?<input type="checkbox"/> Is anyone else likely to be injured?<input type="checkbox"/> Is student safety dependent on specific strategies, such as withholding work demands or allowing the student to access preferred items for most of the school day?
Severity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> When the student's behavior impedes learning, does it also block progress on IEP goals?<input type="checkbox"/> Does the behavior impact the learning environment at a level resulting in extreme difficulty for one or more students to consistently access instruction?
Pattern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Is there data to show the behavior happens consistently and persistently across days and weeks?<input type="checkbox"/> Does the behavior change when the student is in different classrooms or content areas?<input type="checkbox"/> Does the behavior change if there are different staff members providing instruction and/or support?<input type="checkbox"/> Does the behavior change when activities or assignments are altered?
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> If the behavior continues, is there evidence that one or more peers are at risk of failing to achieve grade-level standards or individual IEP goals selected by their IEP teams?<input type="checkbox"/> Does the student require close adult supervision to prevent or respond to the target behavior?

FOR BEHAVIORS THAT DO NOT WARRANT AN FBA, TEAMS MAY CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

1. Teams may create an informal behavioral plan or provide behavioral accommodations within the student's IEP.
2. Identify and agree on a trial period for support implementation. Consider including informal goals to track the success of the strategies identified.
3. Seek technical assistance through the Tennessee Technical Assistance Network (TN-TAN).