

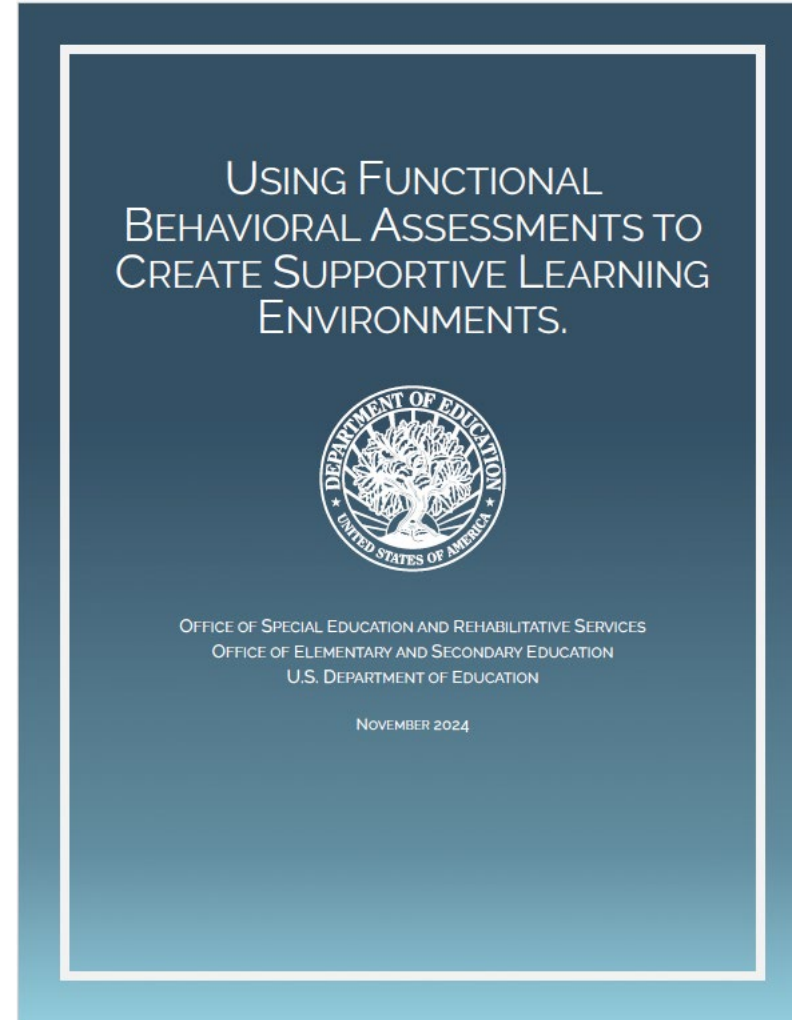
Using Functional Behavioral Assessments to Create Supportive Learning Environments

December 3, 2024



U.S. Department of Education

On November 20, 2024, U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education released guidance titled, ***Using Functional Behavioral Assessments to Create Supportive Learning Environments***, as part of the Department’s commitment to supporting safe, inclusive learning environments that increase students’ engagement and sense of well-being.





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More than **2 million** school days are missed due to suspensions.

Nearly **1 million** K-12 students received at least one in-school suspension and over **500,000** students received at least one out-of-school suspension in SY 2020-21.



A photograph of a school hallway with lockers on the right and coats hanging on the left. The hallway is brightly lit, and the floor is polished. The text is overlaid on the image.

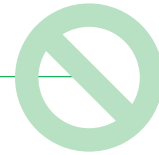
Black boys and girls, White boys, and boys of two or more races, students with disabilities attending public schools are **overrepresented** in suspensions and expulsions.



Impact of Exclusionary Discipline

↓ Decreased academic achievement

↑ Increased absenteeism



Not finishing high school

↑ Increased involvement in juvenile justice system

↑ Increased family stress



What is an FBA?

Functional behavioral assessment (FBA) is used to understand the function and purpose of a child's specific, interfering behavior and factors that contribute to the behavior's occurrence and non-occurrence for the purpose of developing effective positive behavioral interventions, supports, and other strategies to mitigate or eliminate the interfering behavior.

- OSERS Questions and Answers Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities and IDEA's Discipline Provisions, July 2022



What Does the Research Say?

An FBA is used to understand how and why a student behaves in a certain way and to reduce behavior that interferes with learning for students with and without disabilities.

Function-based interventions and supports to address a student's behavior have been shown to be more effective than the use of non-function-based interventions, such as exclusionary discipline.

FBA's and the use of function-based supports, interventions, and behavioral plans that consider the purpose of a student's behavior, can reduce interfering behaviors, such as noncompliance and task avoidance, and support skill development, such as academic engagement and participation in general education settings for students with and without disabilities.

Implementing function-based supports may help to reduce the number of students needing more complex, resource-intensive supports and interventions.



FBA Guidance Overview

Dear Colleague Letter by
Glenna Wright-Gallo &
Adam Schott

What is an FBA?

What are common
characteristics of an FBA
and Behavioral Support
or Intervention Plans?

What are guiding
principles to support the
effective development
and implementation of
FBAs and BSPs/BIPs?

How can FBAs support
students with
disabilities?

What sources of Federal
funding can support the
use of FBAs and
BSPs/BIPs?

Technical assistance
resources



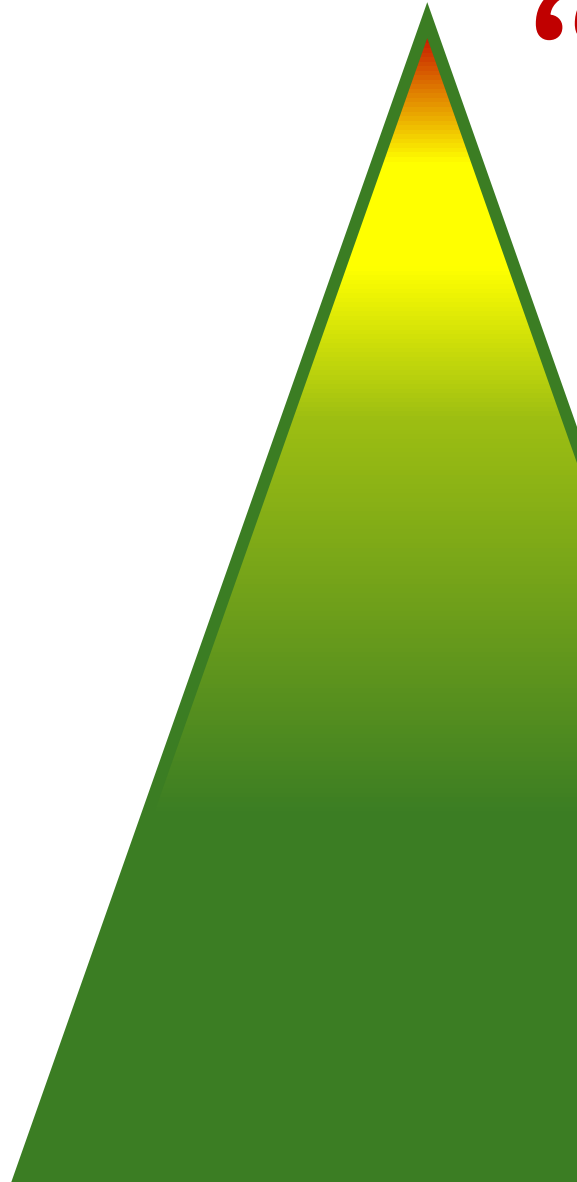
Function-Based Support as a Universal Practice

Shifting from Reactive to Proactive

- Considering the why
- Considering the child's past and current experiences
- Understanding the meaning of behavior and seeking to meet the child's needs
- Identifying and examining biases
- Identifying preventions
- Focus on teaching new skills



A Continuum of Function-Based Support



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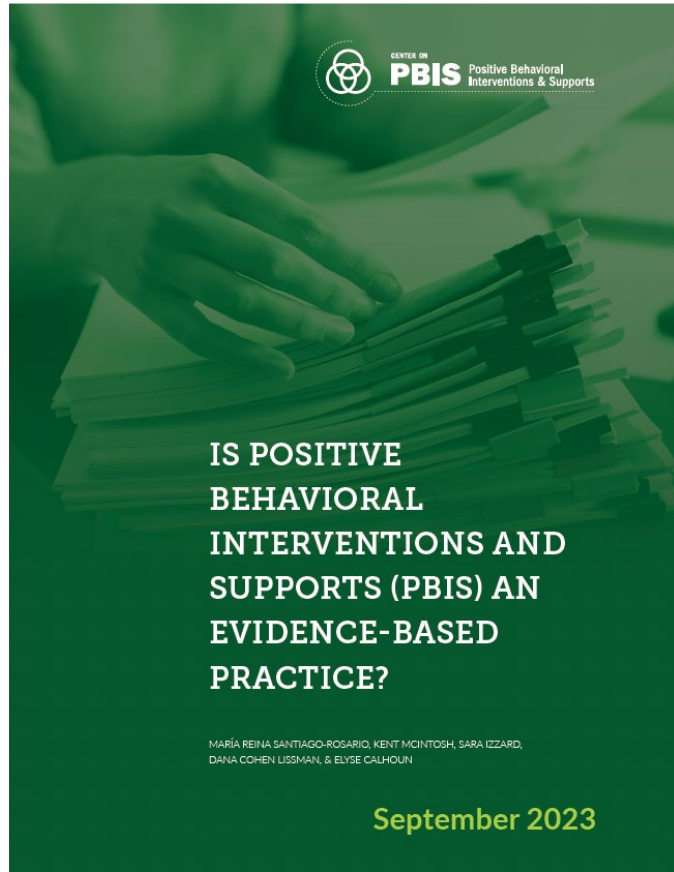
- **Tier 3:** For students with more persistent, complex, and/or intensive SEB needs, educators conduct a Functional Behavioral Assessment (**FBA**) to inform development and implementation of an individualized, multi-component, and function-based behavior support plan (**BSP**).

- **Tier 2:** Educators use **function-based problem solving** to identify and enhance the effectiveness of targeted supports for students who require an additional layer of support to be successful.

- **Tier 1:** Educators use **function-based thinking** to anticipate common challenges and select functionally-relevant classroom behavior support strategies.

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Evidence Supports a PBIS/MTSS Framework*



IS POSITIVE
BEHAVIORAL
INTERVENTIONS AND
SUPPORTS (PBIS) AN
EVIDENCE-BASED
PRACTICE?

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September 2023



CENTER ON
PBIS Positive Behavioral
Interventions & Supports



Improved Student
Outcomes

- Academic Achievement
- Attendance
- Emotional Regulation
- Student Engagement and Instructional Time
- School Culture and Organizational Health



Reduced
Exclusionary
Discipline

- Office Discipline
- Suspensions
- Restraint and Seclusion
- Racial and Ethnic Disparities
- Drug Use



Improved Teacher
Outcomes

- Teacher Efficacy
- Teacher-Student Relationships

*when implemented with fidelity

Common Characteristics of an FBA

Description of Behavior

- Clear, specific, measurable, observable, objective
- Sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences, free from bias and judgement.

Data Collection

- Provide insights into environmental and behavioral factors.
- Includes direct data (e.g. observation), indirect data (e.g., interviews), existing data (e.g., academic performance, previous behavioral incidents).

Function-Based Behavior Review

- Analyze data to consider the events that happen before the behavior occurs; the interfering behavior; and the events that happen immediately after the behavior occurs.

Skill Development

- Use data analysis to identify social, emotional, academic skills to further develop to support the student.



Guiding Principles to Support Effective Development, Implementation of FBAs, BSP/BIPs

An FBA can be useful for any student whose behaviors interfere with learning.

The planning and implementation of an FBA and behavioral plan benefits from professionals who are adequately prepared and skilled.



By incorporating the FBA and BSP/BIPs into an MTSS framework, educators can proactively address interfering behaviors through a tiered prevention model.

An FBA and BSP/BIP are strategies that should support a student's access, participation, and engagement in their learning environment.

Collaborative partnerships between educators, parents, and students during the planning, implementation, and review of an FBA and BSP/BIP are important.



How Can FBAs Support Students with Disabilities?

Support
Behavioral Needs

As Part of the IEP
Process

As a Screening for
Instructional
Purposes

As Part of an
Evaluation Under
IDEA

In Certain
Circumstances
Related to
Discipline



Learn More About FBAs



Function-Based Support Throughout the Continuum: New Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE) within the U.S. Department of Education have released new guidance on function-based support. Access their guidance *Using Functional Behavioral Assessments to Create Supportive Learning Environments*.

Our five key take aways and main messages from their guidance include:

1. **Function-based support** can be infused **throughout the continuum** to support **all students**, including before a functional behavioral assessment (FBA) is needed (see 1. Overview).
2. FBAs and BSPs/BIPs can range from **brief to comprehensive**, enabling teams to tailor their approach to the needs of an individual student (see 2. Resources to Support FBAs & BIPs/BSP).
3. **FBAs** and behavior support or intervention plans (**BSPs** or **BIPs**) can (and should!) be developed for **any student** with intensive social, emotional, and behavioral needs, regardless of disability, to support their SEB skill development (see 3. Tier 3 Systems to Support Effective FBA & BIP/BSP).
4. For students with disabilities, educators may use an FBA and to inform instruction or as part of an evaluation. Though parent/guardian consent may not be required, unless the

[Center on PBIS: Function-Based Support Throughout the Continuum: New Guidance from the U.S. Department of Education](#)

Resource Spotlight



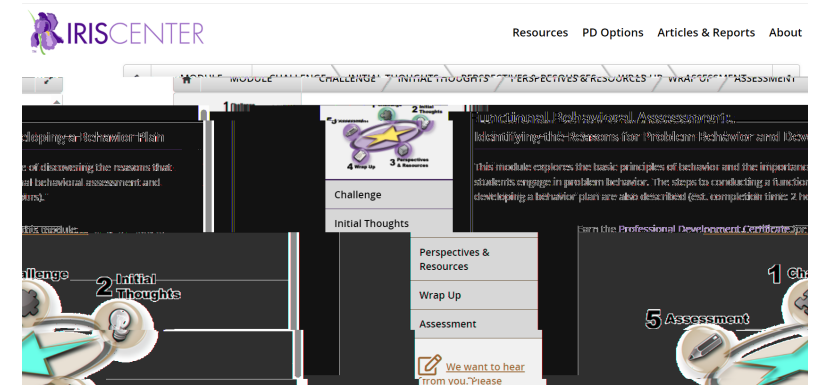
Pyramid Model Resource Collection: Providing Intensive Individualized Intervention

This resource provides teams and individuals with a wealth of resources and materials on Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) and the Individualized Positive Behavior Support (IPBS) process used for Intensive Individualized Interventions.

[More Info](#)

[Explore All Resources](#)

[National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations](#)



IRIS CENTER

Resources PD Options Articles & Reports About

Functional Behavioral Assessment: Identifying the Reasons for Problem Behavior and Developing a Behavior Plan

This module explores the basic principles of behavior and the important elements that engage in problem behavior. The steps to conducting a functional assessment and developing a behavior plan are also described (est. completion time: 2 hours).

1 Challenge

2 Initial Thoughts

3 Perspectives & Resources

4 Wrap Up

5 Assessment

We want to hear from you. Please

[IRIS Center | Functional Behavioral Assessment: Identifying the Reasons for Problem Behavior and Developing a Behavior Plan](#)





Thank You



U.S. Department of Education