Behavior Supports at a Glance

A practical introduction to behavior supports in school for families.

A Note for Families

Calls and emails about behavior can be stressful for any family. Behavior supports are designed to understand why a behavior happens and teach better ways to meet the same need. This guide explains the basics. It is a starting point, not a substitute for individualized guidance.

> DEA PERSPECTIVE
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> **Behavior is communication.**
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> Every behavior serves a purpose, such as getting attention, escaping a hard task, or managing sensory overload. When the team understands the purpose, it can teach a better way to meet that need.

Key Terms

FBA	A Functional Behavior Assessment gathers information to understand when, where, and why a behavior happens.
BIP	A Behavior Intervention Plan uses what the FBA found to prevent the behavior, teach replacement skills, and guide how adults respond.
Replacement Behavior	A more appropriate way for the student to meet the same need.
Positive Supports	Strategies that encourage and reinforce the behaviors the team wants to see.

When to Ask for an FBA

Consider asking for an FBA if behavior is getting in the way of your child's learning or others' learning, if it is happening often, or if current strategies aren't working. Put your request in writing.

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Discipline Protections

More Than 10 Days	Once a student with an IEP is removed for more than 10 school days in a school year, additional protections apply, including continued educational services.
Manifestation Determination	When discipline would change a student's placement, the team must meet within 10 school days to decide whether the behavior was related to the disability.
Behavior Supports	When appropriate, the team should complete an FBA and put a BIP in place or review an existing one.

Common Misconceptions

MYTH	WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW
A BIP is a punishment plan.	A BIP focuses on prevention, teaching new skills, and positive support, not consequences alone.
Students with IEPs can't be disciplined.	They can, but once removals become significant, additional protections apply.
Behavior problems mean my child just needs more consequences.	Consequences alone rarely change behavior. Understanding the reason behind it does.

Concerned About Behavior at School?

Every child is different, and no guide can replace individualized support. If you would like help requesting an FBA, reviewing a BIP, or preparing for a discipline meeting, schedule a consultation with Distributed Education Advocacy.

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