

PROCESS FOR FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT OF BEHAVIOR

A **functional assessment** is a process of identifying functional relationships between events and the occurrence and/or nonoccurrence of a target behavior. The principle objective of functional assessment is to derive clear hypotheses about the relationship between the environment and the behavior of interest, and the purpose of that behavior, so that the teacher/team may design an intervention that will be effective.

Antecedents are events which precipitate the problem behavior.

Consequences are events which occur as a result of the problem behavior.

Communicative intent is defined in this instance as what the student wants to tell others by his/her behavior or what the student understands from another's behavior.

Based on antecedents, consequences and communicative intents, a hypothesis upon which to develop a behavioral intervention strategy can be formulated.

This process must be applied when school personnel propose to change the placement of a student with disabilities as a result of a disciplinary infraction leading to a recommendation of a long term suspension [beyond ten (10) days] or expulsion.

FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS OF PROBLEM BEHAVIOR

Student name: _____ Age: _____ Date: _____
Public Agency: _____ Building: _____

1. Description of the problem behavior. Specific and objective terms must be used to describe the problem.

2. Statement of the frequency, duration, and intensity of the behavior. How often does the behavior occur?
(frequency: per hour/day/week/month/year) How long does the behavior go on? (duration: minutes/hours/days)
How severe is the behavior? (Intensity: e.g., damage to self/others/property)

- 3. Antecedent Analysis.** Statement and supportive documentation of identified antecedents. What immediately proceeds the occurrence of the behavior? What were you, the child, others doing? What in particular seems to start or set off the behavior? People? Noises? Criticism? Demands? Under what conditions does the behavior cease or become less frequent or intense? In what situations does the behavior occur? Lunch? Playground? Math class? With what individuals does the behavior occur or become worse? With what individuals does the behavior *not* occur? During what time of the day/week/month/ does the behavior occur? Consider setting events: events that though they may not immediately precede the behavior, could still trigger its occurrence. For example, not sleeping the night before makes the student more likely to be irritable, resulting in a temper tantrum.

Information can be derived from teacher/staff/parent observations; teacher/staff/student/parent interviews; rating scales; review of records; self-report measures; descriptive narratives; and anecdotal notes.

- 4. Consequence Analysis:** Statement and supportive documentation on the role of consequences in maintaining the behavior. The last time the behavior occurred, what was done? What is usually done after the behavior occurs? Is the consequence usually the same? What reactions do people have when the behavior occurs? What do the parents/ teachers/principal/peers usually do when the behavior occurs? What effect does the behavior have on others? What consequences have been used in the past to manage the behavior, and how have they worked? Have any actions after the occurrence of the behavior resulted in behavioral improvement? Have any actions after the behavior made the behavior worse?

Information can be derived from teacher/staff/parent observations; teacher/staff/parent/student interviews; review of records; self-report measures; descriptive narratives; anecdotal notes.

5. **Communicative Intent of the behavior.** Present hypotheses regarding the function of the behavior. Avoidance (Does the behavior result in the student avoiding a task or situation?) For example, the student may be screaming because (s)he wishes to stop an activity, or (s)he may tear up papers because (s)he does not know what is required to complete the activity. Other problem behaviors may occur because the student is physically uncomfortable (too hot, too cold, stomach ache). The student may have problem behaviors by which (s)he is communicating the need for attention.

Information can be derived from teacher/staff/parent observations; teacher/staff/student/parent interviews; Checklists for functions of problem behaviors; and descriptive narratives.

6. **Ecological Analysis of Behavior.** Some behavior problems occur because of conflicts between the environmental demands and the student's personal needs. Describe how any of the following may be contributing to the problem behavior. Examples of ecological analysis include:

- Expectations of student by teacher/staff
- Nature of the teaching materials and/or learning activity
- Instructional style of staff
- Student's physical limitations or condition
- Physical comfort of environment, e.g., too noisy/crowded/cold/hot
- Environmental constraints
- Teacher/pupil ratio
- Time-out available
- Teacher absent
- Behavior of others, e.g., modeling, behavior directed toward student
- Recent changes in environment; sudden changes in activity/schedule
- Accessibility to reinforcement
- Environment provides more positive or negative interactions

If any of the above apply, explain:

7. **Summary of Interventions.** Based on above analyses, summarize intervention strategies implemented and data to support their effectiveness.

