

17. BEHAVIOR PLAN

When the child continues to exhibit negative behaviors that interfere with his or her learning, or the learning of others, the child's IEP team needs to form a Positive Behavior Intervention/Support Plan. (See "Behavioral Assessments" for additional information)

This plan will include:

- Services to address any unmet needs
- Changes to be made in the classroom or other environment to reduce or eliminate triggers
- Strategies to replace problem behaviors with appropriate behaviors that will serve the same function for the child
- Supports and services to assist the child in using appropriate behavior.



Positive behavior interventions can be written into the IEP even without a Functional Behavior Assessment to address inappropriate behaviors.

IDEA specifically requires a Functional Behavior Assessment (a formal behavior assessment) whenever a child with a disability has his or her educational placement changed for disciplinary reasons. A change in placement occurs when a child is removed (suspended from school) for more than 10 school days in a school year.

The IEP team will develop various interventions depending, in part, on the reasons for the child's behavior. The child may use the behavior:

- Out of habit
- Because he or she lacks the skill and experience to use more appropriate behaviors
- Because the behavior serves a need (i.e., peer attention, a break from class)
- To disguise emotions and conflicts
- Involuntarily because of mental health, health or physiological (body related) factors
- Because the child sees no reason to end the behavior
- Lack of motivation (student sees no purpose or relevance to desired behaviors- i.e., completing assignments)
- As a reaction to environment or social pressures

The Positive Behavior Support Plan can include any appropriate option designed to address and change the child's negative behaviors. Possible services include:

- Teaching appropriate problem-solving techniques
- Clearly communicating expectations, repeatedly if necessary
- Cue or prompts to end or encourage certain behaviors
- Supports and services to address potential needs
- Instruction to teach necessary academic, behavioral, social/emotional and/or cognitive skills
- Techniques, strategies and supports designed to increase motivation and teach relevance
- Modifying the learning or home environment

Many abused children react involuntarily when they perceive a threat. Aggression, isolation, physical contact, and even disapproval can all be perceived as threats to an abused or neglected child. These threats then trigger certain, ingrained and often unwanted behaviors. The IEP team must identify environmental factors that may "trigger" such responses and work to minimize these situations. The IEP team can also provide services that will help the child develop more appropriate responses in these situations.

It is important for IEP teams to consider all positive interventions before considering punishment as an option. Punishment often makes behavior worse because punishment focuses on the symptoms of the problem and does not address the underlying reason for the behavior.

The Behavior Intervention Plan should be reviewed as a regular part of the IEP review process. More frequent contact between teachers and caregivers is recommended to monitor the child's progress, and gauge the effectiveness of the child's behavior support program.

Evaluating the Behavior Intervention Plan

The plan may be reviewed and re-evaluated whenever any member of the child's IEP team feels that a review is necessary. A review may be needed when:

- The child has reached his or her behavioral goals and objectives or benchmarks, and new goals and objectives need to be established
- The school, parent/caregivers or services providers are considering a change in placement
- The Behavior Intervention Plan is not effectively addressing the child's negative behavior(s)

Repeated use of punishment, such as suspension, indicates that the punishment is not effective.

CASA wishes to thank The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice for its invaluable contribution to this section.

For more information:

Humboldt County Department of Mental Health

1711 Third Street
Eureka, CA 95501
707-268-5728

State Department of Rehabilitation/Vocational counselors

310 3rd Street, St. A
Eureka, CA 95501
707-445-6300

On-line:

Parents Helping Parents:

<http://php.com/dopage/education>