



# Behavior Management

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## Problem Behaviors



Prince George's  
School Mental  
Health Initiative:  
Enhancing Student  
Success



### Special points of interest:

- \* Problem Behaviors
- \* Aggressive Children
- \* Tips and Suggestions
- \* Resources and References

A **Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)** is a process that can be used to address problem behaviors in children by examining the circumstances in which these behaviors occur. Developing an FBA involves identifying the antecedents, consequences, and reinforcers of the misbehaviors<sup>1</sup>. Using this process, an understanding of why a child is exhibiting a certain behavior is obtained, which facilitates the creation of a more relevant and effective **behavior intervention plan (BIP)**. A BIP is a formalized plan intended to alter targeted problematic behaviors. According to the Center for Effective Collaboration and

Practice there are several steps to follow when developing a FBA. First, a list of the problem behaviors should be created and the most problematic behaviors should be targeted first. Conducting a FBA is a team effort and may require group problem solving, brainstorming, and conflict resolution<sup>2</sup>. After identifying the problem behaviors, information should be gathered on the context, frequency, and/or duration of the behaviors. The information needed for the FBA can be obtained through observation, parent and teacher report, and even child report. Consequences of the misbehavior are important to note as well because

that may be a factor in identifying reinforcers of the behaviors.

After exploring the different possibilities of what could be causing and sustaining the misbehavior, a BIP should be developed and tested. The BIP should include positive behavioral supports which incorporate strategies and specific modifications of the child's environment. The BIP should not seek to control the problem behaviors; rather, the plan should teach new ways of behaving and address the sources of the problematic behaviors<sup>2</sup>.

## Aggressive Students

Aggression in students can be displayed in various ways such as physical confrontation, verbal threats, bullying and social manipulation. Trying to manage aggressive behavior in students can lead to increased stress, burnout, impaired teaching quality, and high job turnover<sup>3</sup>. Furthermore, teacher interactions with students are negatively affected by stress

level<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, it is important to develop an effective way to respond to such behaviors.

There are often many underlying causes of aggression in students. To address aggressive behaviors, first consider all possible reasons a student may be misbehaving and try to identify the source of their behavior. Then you

can work with other educators and student support staff (psychologist, guidance counselor, school clinician, etc.) to develop an intervention plan and provide the student with needed supports. It is important to help these students to ensure that they have the needed resources that will help them achieve in and outside of the classroom.

## Quick Tips and Suggestions for Managing Student Behavior

- Post 4-5 classroom rules that are simple, positively-framed (tell your students what to do instead of what not to do), and easily seen. Include consequences for following or not following the rules.
- Be consistent in observing and following the rules.
- Make sure that your students understand what behavior is and is not acceptable.
- Try to move around the classroom often (teacher proximity helps), and try different seating arrangements to maximize positive interactions between groups of students.
- Use consistent routines for all classroom activities, from how to ask a question to what to do when requesting to use the restroom.
- Use your observations to develop a theory about why a student is misbehaving, and address the underlying motivation.
- Teach the student an alternate behavior and reinforce that behavior in a way that will give the student the same response (attention, feeling of competence, etc.).
- Help the student use the more appropriate behaviors by providing frequent feedback (verbal and non-verbal cues).
- Focus on the student's motivation, and relate the material to his or her life.
- If the function of the behavior is to avoid doing work, try a different teaching technique, review directions, consider peer tutoring, or help the student with specific aspects of the work.
- Praise student frequently for replacement (good) behaviors.
- Set up a Daily Report Card for the student in which the parents will become involved. This will help monitor the student's behavior in the classroom and at home.
- Use active listening to interrupt a student who is upset without confrontation.
- Stay calm in the face of student provocation. It's okay to express controlled anger but remain outwardly calm.

Retrieved on February 13th 2007 from [www.interventioncentral.org](http://www.interventioncentral.org)

MSMHA/CSMH resource sheet "Managing Classroom Behavior"

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## References

1. Retrieved on February 12th 2007 from [http://www.afcec.org/tipsforteachers/tips\\_a3.html](http://www.afcec.org/tipsforteachers/tips_a3.html) The Alabama Federation Council for Exceptional Children (2004)
2. Retrieved on February 12th 2007 from <http://cecp.air.org/fba/default.asp> Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (2001)
3. Alvarez, H.K., Ollendick, T.H. (2004). Addressing aggressive behavior in schools: Arming the educator. Center for Mental Health in School Quarterly Newsletter

**Center for  
School Mental Health**

**Advancing Effective  
School Mental Health**

**Helpful Websites providing resources and  
strategies for classroom teachers**

[www.interventioncentral.org](http://www.interventioncentral.org)

<http://mfba.net/fbabip.pdf>

<http://www.naspcenter.org>

<http://cecp.air.org/fba/default.asp>

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/classroom-management/discipline/6283.html>

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