



Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

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Federal regulations require that if a student with disabilities has behavior that impedes his learning or that of others, the ARD/IEP committee **must consider** the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies to address that behavior. The plan developed by the ARD/IEP committee for this purpose is commonly called a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP), although the term is not mentioned in the IDEA regulations.

IDEA regulations state that if the ARD/IEP committee conducts a manifestation determination review and determines that a student's conduct was a manifestation of the child's disability, the committee must conduct a functional behavioral assessment (FBA), unless one was done before the behavior occurred. After the FBA is complete, the committee must develop and implement appropriate behavioral intervention services. If a plan has been developed previously, the committee must review it and modify it, as necessary, to address the current behavior problem. If the student's behavior was not a manifestation of his disability, the student with disabilities is subject to the same disciplinary actions as other students. However, the ARD/IEP committee may still want to conduct a FBA and develop a BIP to prevent the behavior from happening again.

The Glossary of Terms on the website of the Texas Project FIRST, www.texasprojectfirst.org, (approved by the Texas Education Agency) defines BIP and FBA as follows:

BIP -- "A written plan to address behavioral concerns impeding the child's learning or that of others. It is part of a student's IEP that includes positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address the behavior."

FBA -- "A process for collecting information that will help determine the underlying purpose or motivation of a student's challenging behavior (examples: seeking attention, peer acceptance, avoiding, etc.). Once the cause of the behavior has been determined, the ARD committee develops a BIP to teach the student appropriate alternatives to the behavior."

Functional behavioral assessment is a process for collecting data to determine the possible cause of problem behaviors and to identify strategies to address the behaviors. The results of a functional behavioral assessment process should be an informed hypothesis (or good guess) about how the child's *environment* contributes to his or her positive and problem behaviors. A functional behavioral assessment should also provide the basis for the development of a behavior intervention plan that is focused on teaching *new* skills. Too frequently, BIP's focus more on consequences than "on teaching new skills." A good BIP includes statements about behaviors that the student will do **more**, not less, and include how the desired behaviors will be reinforced. A BIP is not simply a list of the punishments the student will receive if he misbehaves.

Positive behavioral interventions and supports, mentioned above, involve changes in the student's environment. They can consist of a variety of approaches, ranging from actions involving an individual student, a classroom, or an entire school environment.

A BIP is not a substitute for an IEP; it is an addition to the student's current IEP. A BIP should be written so that the parents and those implementing it are able to clearly understand what is to be done. Im-

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plementation often involves general education teachers, and they should be familiar with the BIP and know how to follow it. For more information on this topic, read *An IEP Team's Introduction to FBA and BIP*, available

from: www.fape.org/idea_what_idea_is/osher/main.htm.

What are best practices for developing and using BIPs? The Advocacy Institute has reported on research conducted by Susan Etscheidt of the University of Northern Iowa and identified five essential "themes" needed when making decisions about BIPs:

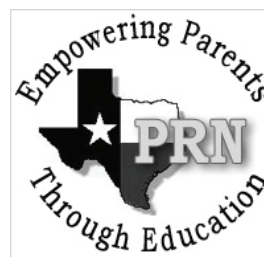
1. A BIP "must be developed when a student's behavior interferes with learning." Unsuccessful substitutions on the part of schools have included informal BIPs, social skills programs, student contracts, and more restrictive placements.
2. The BIP must be based on "recent and meaningful assessment data." In some cases schools developed a BIP without using a functional behavior assessment (FBA).
3. The BIP "must be individualized to meet the student's unique needs." In some cases a behavior management system was used for the entire classroom, or group counseling sessions or a restrictive program were used rather than an individualized BIP.
4. The BIP "must include positive behavior strategies and supports." Appropriate BIPs used a variety of individualized, positive and student focused strategies, such as environmental alterations, alternative skill instruction, cooling off periods, curricular modifications and frequent contact with parents and professionals working with the student outside of school. BIPs that included punishment and discipline, shorter school days, excessive use of time-out and isolation, and the use of

restraints as primary interventions were seen as inappropriate and contributing to students' lack of academic progress and negative self-image.

5. A BIP "must be implemented as planned, and effects must be monitored." Parents prevailed in cases where a BIP was simply not implemented at all, when the BIP was clearly inadequate and behavior of the student brought about more serious consequences, when staff was not trained to implement the plan, and when the plan was not updated by the IEP team as needed.

Go to http://www.advocacyinstitute.org/advocacy_inaction/Behavior_Intervention_Plans.shtml for the full report.

More information and recommendations for writing BIP's can be found on a variety of websites sponsored by the federal Department of Education, other educational institutions, agencies, and support groups. Many of these sites are listed in the resources section of PRN's website at www.partnerstx.org.



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