



Technical Assistance Center
on Social Emotional Intervention



Positive Behavior Support

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Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is a process for understanding and resolving the problem behavior of children that is based on values and empirical research. It offers an approach for developing an understanding of why the child engages in problem behavior and strategies for preventing the occurrence of problem behavior while teaching the child new skills. Positive behavior support offers a holistic approach that considers all factors that impact on a child and the child's behavior. It can be used to address problem behaviors that range from aggression, tantrums, and property destruction to social withdrawal.

The Process of Positive Behavior Support

The following steps are essential to the process of PBS.

1. [Building a Behavior Support Team](#)-PBS begins by developing a team of the key stakeholders or individuals who are most involved in the child's life. This team should include the family and early educator, but also may include friends, other family members, therapists, and other instructional or administrative personnel.
2. [Person-Centered Planning](#)-Person-centered planning provides a process for bringing the team together to discuss their vision and dreams for the child. Person-centered planning is a strength-based process that is a celebration of the child and a mechanism of establishing the commitment of the team members to supporting the child and family.
3. [Functional Behavioral Assessment](#)-Functional assessment is a process for determining the function of the child's problem behavior. Functional Assessment or Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) involves the collection of data, observations, and information to develop a clear understanding of the relationship of events and circumstances that trigger and maintain problem behavior.
4. [Hypothesis Development](#)-The functional assessment process is completed with the development of a behavior hypothesis statement. The behavior hypothesis statements summarize what is known about triggers, behaviors, and maintaining consequences and offers an informed guess about the purpose of the problem behavior.
5. [Behavior Support Plan Development](#)-Once behavior hypotheses statements are developed to summarize the data gathered from the functional assessment process, the team can develop a behavior support plan. Essential components of the behavior support plan are prevention strategies, the instruction of replacement skills, new ways to respond to problem behavior, and lifestyle outcome goals.
6. [Monitoring Outcomes](#)-The effectiveness of the behavior support plan must be monitored. This monitoring includes measurement of changes in problem behavior and the achievement of new skills and lifestyle outcomes.

Step One: Building a Behavior Support Team

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) begins by building a behavior support team of key individuals and stakeholders who are most involved in the child's life. Team members collaborate in multiple ways in order to develop, implement, and monitor a child's support plan. The collaborative process of PBS includes the following steps:

All these steps are essential to successful teaming and in developing a Positive Behavior Support Plan. When developing a behavior support team one must ask the following questions:

WHO are the key stakeholders and individuals in this child's life?

WHY is collaborative teaming a key element of PBS for this child?

WHAT do we need to do to make this a successful collaborative experience that will benefit the child and family?

HOW are we going to promote the active participation of the family and all team members in the behavior support planning process?

WHO are the key stakeholders and individuals in this child's life?

Potential team members include anyone who the family or teacher feels knows the child well and will be a part of the behavior support process. Parents and family are absolutely essential to the PBS teaming process. The goal is to create a team that represents all of the adults who will interact with the child in the natural environment. When that occurs, the team will be able to develop a behavior support plan that can be used across environments. Plans that are consistent across environments are more likely to be effective and new skills are more likely to be learned and generalized. Other potential members can include therapists, administrative staff, program consultants or resource professionals, and possibly even other key stakeholders (such as, extended care providers, individuals who transport the child, or even medical professionals).

WHY is collaborative teaming a key element of PBS for this child?

Collaborative teaming is based on the idea that all team members have contributions to the development, implementation, and monitoring of a behavior support plan. When the family is a part of the process from the beginning, and are encouraged to participate in the PBS process from functional assessment to plan implementation, they are more likely to "buy in" to the support plan and implement the plan with fidelity. In addition, the parents will learn to view behavior as purposeful and may be able to develop support strategies as their child moves to new settings or situations. Because collaborative teaming is a key element in PBS, the family builds a large foundation of knowledge about why their child uses problem behavior and a better understanding of how to teach their child new skills to use in place of problem behavior. The family is better able to use problem-solving skills in the future to support their child. Collaboration is a gift of family empowerment.

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