

Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs)

What Is an FBA?

A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) is a structured process used to understand why a student engages in challenging behavior. It identifies:

- The behavior of concern (clearly and objectively defined)
- The triggers and contexts in which it occurs
- The function the behavior serves (e.g., escape, attention, sensory regulation, access)

FBAs are designed to be preventive and instructional, not punitive.

Why FBAs Matter

When behavior interferes with learning, an FBA helps IEP teams:

- Address the root cause of behavior
- Design effective positive supports
- Reduce suspensions, removals, and crisis incidents
- Improve student safety, access, and outcomes

FBAs are the foundation for a strong Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP).

When Are FBAs Required?

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ([IDEA](#)):

FBAs are required when:

- A student with a disability is removed for more than 10 school days, and the behavior is found to be a manifestation of the disability

FBAs are expected when:

- Behavior consistently impedes learning
- Informal strategies are ineffective
- Disciplinary or restrictive responses are being considered

IDEA Requirements

Under [IDEA](#), when a student's behavior interferes with their learning or the learning of others, the IEP team must consider positive behavioral interventions, supports, and strategies. If appropriate, the team must implement a BIP based on a FBA, as required under IDEA. Timely FBAs and proactive behavioral supports are designed to prevent behavioral escalation, reduce reliance on suspensions or emergency interventions, and ensure the provision of a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment.

Louisiana Policy

Louisiana [Bulletin 1706](#) requires IEP teams to address behavior as soon as it impedes a student's learning or the learning of others by considering and implementing positive behavioral interventions and supports. In Louisiana [Bulletin 1530](#), when a student's behavior results in a disciplinary change of placement, the LEA must conduct a FBA and implement or revise a BIP. Louisiana [Bulletin 1508](#) further emphasizes the use of positive, proactive, and preventative behavioral supports within schoolwide and individualized systems, reinforcing that FBAs are intended to be conducted before behaviors escalate to crisis or exclusion.

What Makes an FBA High Quality?

A strong FBA includes:

- Multiple data sources (observations, records, staff and family input)
- Data across settings and times
- A clear hypothesis about the function of behavior
- Qualified, trained staff conducting the assessment