

Functional Behavior Assessment

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Functional Assessment

Behaviors
are
messages

Functional Assessment

1. Information gathering
2. Hypothesis Development
3. Hypotheses Testing-Functional Analysis
4. Intervention
5. Ongoing assessment and revision of support plan

Four Functions of Behaviors

Escape

Sensory

Tangible

Attention

Functional Relationship: an understanding of the place which behavior occupies in the person's life.

- Problem behavior is functional
- Function/Purpose is much more important than what it looks like
- Form does not say anything about function/purpose
- One form of behavior can have different functions
- Different forms of behavior can have the same function

Any challenging behavior that persists over time is “working” for the child

These behaviors represent the child’s attempt to communicate a variety of messages

“You’re asking me to do something too difficult.”

“I don’t understand what you want.”

“I want a certain thing and I want it now.”

“I’m bored, pay attention to me.”

What is a functional assessment?

- A functional assessment is a process for gathering information to understand the function (purpose) of behavior to enable and teach more effective behavior alternatives
- A functional assessment attempts to discover the purposes, goals, or functions by:
 - Clearly describing the challenging behaviors
 - Identifying the events, times, and situations that predict when the challenging behaviors will and will not occur across the range of daily activities/routines
 - Identify consequences that maintain the challenging behaviors
 - Developing one or more summary statements or hypotheses that describe specific behaviors, specific types of situations in which they occur, and the reinforcers that maintain the behaviors in that situation
 - Collecting directly observed data that supports these summary statements

From: Families and disabilities Newsletter (Winter 1997), Beach Center on Families and Disabilities.

Rationale for a Functional Assessment

Behavior is communicative

Behaviors are repeated for a **reason**

- People tend to repeat behaviors that lead to rewards.
- People tend not to repeat behaviors that do not lead to rewards

All behaviors either **achieves** or **avoids** something

Process to come up with a hypothesis

Questions to ask

- Is there a sequence of behavior?
- Do certain behaviors go together?
- Are there other factors (medical)?
- Is there a setting that triggers the behavior?
- What function does the behavior serve for the individual?
- What skill deficits may be causing the occurrence of the behavior?

Setting events vs. Stimulus events

Setting events: conditions, events or sensations that increase the probability that a problem behavior will occur

Stimulus events: elicit or lead directly to the occurrence of the behavior.

Setting events

- Lack of sleep
- Missing a meal
- Medication change
- Missing the bus
- Uncomfortable clothing

Stimulus events

- Told to put a toy away
- Asked to do a math worksheet
- Walked away from the student to help someone else

Functional Assessment Observation Form

- Records the frequency of behaviors
- Assists in determining setting events, stimulus events and function of behavior
- Records data across multiple days to analyze patterns of behavior
- Records consequences that may be maintaining behaviors

Motivational Assessment Scale

- Rating checklist
- Composed of 16 questions
- Allows rater to score a range of responses
- Provides information about the possible functions of behavior

ABC Analysis

Antecedent: What happened just before the behavior? What was he doing, what were you doing, what were other kids doing, what was happening in the room...?

Behavior: What did the child do? Give no reasons: describe the behavior and define the terms. Be specific

Consequence: What happened next? What did you do (even if you did not plan to do it), what did the other kids do, what incidents occurred...? Describe the event.

Reinforcement

- Positive behavior support means reinforcing the student's correct behavior
- Developing reinforcers is an important part of the assessment process
- Types of reinforcers:
 - Tangible/edible
 - Contingent activities
 - Social
 - Idiosyncratic
 - Tokens
 - Intrinsic

Using Reinforcement

Continuous schedule of reinforcement (CRF)

Most useful in acquisition of a new behavior

Intermittent schedule of reinforcement (ratio and interval)

Most useful to maintain a behavior