

How to Summarize Functional Assessment Interview Information

1. Be sure that anyone who supports the student/child in anyway participates. Ideally, this is a team process with all team members sharing the responsibility of problem solving.
2. Gather all interviews/questionnaires and any other data collection forms.
3. It is best to use some type of framework for organizing the information such as those attached.
4. Look through the interview or questionnaire forms for information on all the “triggers” for the behavior. The “triggers” are the events that “set off” or cause the behavior (regardless of whether they should or not). These include questions that ask about “least likely” and “most likely” or the questions that ask “what you could do to the make the behavior happen?” or “one thing to increase positive behaviors.” You may also see words like “antecedents.” Antecedent is another word for “trigger.” Some people also use the word “predictor.”

Next, look at data collection sheets that identify behaviors by activity, time of day, and/or day of the week. These are also triggers for challenging behavior. That is, an activity, time of day, or day of week identifies the “most likely” occasion or “trigger” for the behavior. Likewise, you want to also consider activities, times of day, or days of the week when there are no behaviors or few behaviors. These are important for understanding what works well for the student/child.

5. Next list the [challenging] behaviors. Behaviors are what follow the trigger. It is best if you can attach the behavior to the trigger, but that is not always possible. You can usually clarify this during a meeting or by asking the individuals that filled out the interviews or data collection forms, the behaviors accompany the triggers they listed in their on their form.
6. On the summary framework, list the actual responses. The responses are the ways that adults or peers respond to the challenging behavior. These are important because sometimes people respond in ways that may inadvertently encourage the challenging behavior. These also help us to identify the function or purpose of the problem behavior.
7. From the above information, try to determine what the function or purpose is for the behavior. Consider the trigger or context of the behavior (e.g., activity, transition, subject, etc.), if it involves work or something no preferred and the response is a removal of that work (e.g., time out, sent to office, take work away, etc.) then the function may be escape. If the trigger or context of the behavior involves the absence of attention, a social interaction, etc. followed by a response of attention (e.g., talking with the student/child, a lecture, laughing or joking, etc.) then the function may be attention. Likewise if the

behaviors are because of wanting materials, toys, activities, or refusing to give up something or share then the function is to get the tangible object.

8. Once the triggers, behaviors, responses, and functions have been summarized then, the support plan can be developed.

9. The first step in the support plan is to consider the triggers and how they might be altered or changed in any way. If it is an activity, it might be presented in a different way or chunked so that the student/child doesn't need to escape. If it is the absence of attention or infrequent attention, then the student/child may be provided with a task or a time when they can get attention.

10. Next decide what new behaviors can replace the challenging behaviors. Can the student/child ask for help when something is hard or confusing? Can the student/child get a break during long activities? Teach them to negotiate that. Can the student/child learn new ways to recruit attention, a different way to initiating conversation, a better way to get the teacher's attention, when the teacher is busy? Do they need to do self-monitoring where they can observe and track their own new behaviors? Self-monitoring can act as a reminder.

11. Finally, it might be necessary to change the response to the student's/child's challenging behavior. Rather than sending them to time out, can the teacher remind them that they can ask for help? Or redirect them to the task, but let them know they just have a few more to do (e.g., remember that you only have 5 more problems, just three more sentences, etc.). Can the teacher ignore attention-seeking behavior? Can the teacher remind the student/child of a time when they can get attention (e.g., remember you can talk with Larry at the end of the period, or remember you and I are going to discuss your weekend at the end of the period, remember to call my name when you need something, etc.)? Can the teacher let a student/child know when they might get access to a desired activity (e.g., you can use the computer at 3:00 p.m., let's make a list of whose on the computer today, etc.)? The strategies developed here should go under change responses).

12. From this framework, the teacher or coordinator of the functional assessment can develop a more thorough behavior support plan.