

Positive, Proactive Approaches to Supporting Children With Disabilities

Implementing Evidence-Based Approaches to Respond to Student Needs: Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS)

Overview

Public early childhood programs, elementary, and secondary schools are responsible for meeting the needs of children with disabilities, which includes addressing their social, emotional, and behavioral needs. Far too often, positive and proactive approaches that focus on preventing interfering behavior are not part of a child's individualized education program (IEP). As a result, children with disabilities—particularly children with disabilities of color—are frequently subjected to exclusionary discipline, which removes them from their learning environment without focusing on how to best meet their unique behavioral needs. Schools and early childhood programs must understand how to protect the rights and needs of children with disabilities to ensure their disability-based behaviors are understood and that their IEPs are appropriately developed and effectively implemented to enable social, emotional, and academic success.

In July 2022, the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), published the guide [*Positive, Proactive Approaches to Addressing the Needs of Children with Disabilities: A Guide for Stakeholders*](#), which provides actions state educational agencies (SEAs), local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, early childhood programs, and educators can take to implement positive, proactive, and preventative practices that seek to better address a child's behavioral needs while decreasing the use of exclusionary discipline. These practices reinforce core pillars of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), including how addressing the behavioral needs of children with disabilities is part of IDEA's requirement to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) provided in the least restrictive environment (LRE), and the IEP as the vehicle for fulfilling this obligation. By implementing practices associated with these positive and proactive approaches, students with disabilities can be assured of access to an educational environment that is nondiscriminatory, supportive, positive, and nurturing for both their academic and behavioral development.

OSEP Technical Assistance (TA) Center Resources

The resources in the following tables can support schools and early childhood programs in implementing positive, proactive approaches to support and respond to children's behavioral needs more effectively. Following the resources is information about OSEP TA Centers that can provide additional information to support schools in implementing the practices described below.

SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTS

Resource	Description	Audience	Reference Citation
Integrating Trauma-Informed Support in MTSS	This presentation answers the questions: How can trauma-informed interventions enhance the PBIS/behavioral health system in schools? When should trauma-informed approaches be used and at what tiers? How can the core features of an Interconnected Systems Framework support and guide the implementation of trauma-informed approaches in schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Health and related services providers • Local and district agencies • School administrators 	Eber, L., & Barrett, S. (2017). <i>Integrating trauma-informed approaches within MTSS</i> [Webinar]. Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. https://www.pbis.org/resource/integrating-trauma-informed-support-in-mtss
PBIS Forum 2021: Getting Started: Establishing Systems of Support	Schools implementing evidence-based practices need support systems to enable effectiveness and efficiency to enhance outcomes. PBIS schools establish working structures or operational procedures to organize, sustain, and scale implementation. This session will describe the foundational system features critical to successful school-wide implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Health and related services providers • Local and district agencies • School administrators • State and regional agencies 	Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. (2021). <i>PBIS Forum 2021: Getting Started: Establishing Systems of Support</i> [Video]. https://www.pbis.org/video/session-c3-pbis-forum-2021-getting-started-establishing-systems-of-support
PBIS Forum 2021: Getting Started: Implementing Effective Practices	The strategies used to support the students and adults at every level are key to improving school outcomes. This session will describe how data-driven PBIS teams emphasize the careful selection and integration of evidence-based practices or interventions into a continuum of effective behavior support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Health and related services providers • Local and district agencies • Researchers • School administrators • State and regional agencies 	Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. (2021). <i>PBIS Forum 2021: Getting Started: Implementing Effective Practices</i> [Video]. https://www.pbis.org/video/session-c2-pbis-forum-2021-getting-started-implementing-effective-practices
Promoting Social Emotional Competence	This video provides an overview of the Pyramid Model as a PBIS framework for promoting young children's social and emotional development and preventing and addressing challenging behavior.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • School administrators • State and regional agencies 	National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (2018). <i>Promoting social emotional competence</i> [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zTl7rfclhvM

SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION AND SUPPORTS

Resource	Description	Audience	Reference Citation
Providing Access to School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports for Students With Significant Cognitive Disabilities	This brief aims to discuss how to design PBIS systems that are accessible to all students. It includes information about the importance of including all students in PBIS structures and practical strategies to help schools achieve this goal. It ends with the story of a student who benefited when he gained full access to his school's PBIS system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Health and related services providers • Local and district agencies • Researchers • School administrators • State and regional agencies 	<p>McDaid, P., Strickland-Cohen, M. K., Walker, V. L., & Conradi, L. A. (2022). Providing access to school-wide positive behavioral interventions and supports for students with significant cognitive disabilities. TIES Center and Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. https://www.pbis.org/resource/providing-access-to-school-wide-positive-behavioral-interventions-and-supports-for-students-with-significant-cognitive-disabilities</p>
Understanding Program-Wide Implementation of the Pyramid Model	The Pyramid Model provides a PBIS framework for promoting young children's social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes. This fact sheet provides information on the components of a program-wide approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local and district agencies • State and regional agencies 	<p>National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations. (2020). Understanding program-wide implementation of the Pyramid Model. https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/docs/Program-Wide_Implementation_factsheet.pdf</p>
Facilitating Individualized Interventions to Address Challenging Behavior	This guide is designed to assist the early childhood mental health consultant, behavior specialist, or school psychologist in guiding preschool teachers, teams, and families in developing and implementing an individualized plan of support that results in a reduction of challenging behavior and the promotion of communication and social skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Local and district agencies • School administrators 	<p>Blair, K-S. C., & Fox, L. (2011). Facilitating interventions to address challenging behavior. Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation. https://www.ecmhc.org/documents/CECMHC_FacilitatingTookit.pdf</p>

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT (FBA)

Resource	Description	Audience	Reference Citation
Considerations for Conducting Virtual Functional Behavior Assessments & Behavior Intervention Plans (FBAs & BIPs)	This brief provides considerations for conducting and implementing functional behavior assessments (FBAs) and behavior intervention plans (BIPs) using virtual technology.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Health and related services providers • Local and district agencies • School administrators 	Iovannone, R., Fontechia, K. M., Cassell, E., & Clarke, S. (2022). <i>Considerations for conducting virtual functional behavior assessments & behavior intervention plans (FBAs & BIPs)</i> . Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. https://www.pbis.org/resource/considerations-for-conducting-virtual-functional-behavior-assessments-behavior-intervention-plans-fbas-bips
Functional Behavioral Assessment: Identifying the Reasons for Problem Behavior and Developing a Behavior Plan	This self-paced module explores the basic principles of behavior and the importance of discovering the reasons that students engage in problem behavior. The steps to conducting a functional behavioral assessment and developing a behavior plan are described in detail with interactive practice opportunities embedded throughout.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Local and district agencies • State and regional agencies 	IRIS Center. (2022). <i>Functional behavioral assessment: Identifying the reasons for problem behavior and developing a behavior plan</i> . https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/fba
Basic FBA to BSP Trainer's Manual	This manual presents procedures to train school-based personnel to conduct basic FBA and design function-based behavior support plans (BSP).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Health and related services providers • School administrators 	Loman, S., Strickland-Cohen, M. L., Borgmeier, C., & Horner, R. (2019). <i>Basic FBA to BSP: Trainer's Manual</i> . Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. https://www.pbis.org/resource/basic-fba-to-bsp-trainers-manual
FBA/BIP/BSP Video Resources	Recordings include keynotes and presentations about FBA/BIP/BSP concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Health and related services providers • Local and district agencies • School administrators 	Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. (n.d.). Video. https://www.pbis.org/video-examples/video#fbabipbsp

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT (FBA)

Resource	Description	Audience	Reference Citation
Function-Based Support: An Overview	This brief describes how educators use a function-based approach to (a) prevent contextually inappropriate behaviors and (b) teach and encourage social, emotional, and behavioral skills throughout the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) continuum of support. In addition, this brief highlights critical features of effective FBA and BSP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Health and related services providers • School administrators 	<p>Strickland-Cohen, M. K., & Simonsen, B. (2022). <i>Function-based support: An overview. Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.</i></p> <p>https://www.pbis.org/resource/function-based-support-an-overview</p>
Tier 3 Brief Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) Guide	The purpose of this guide is to describe how school-based personnel can build and implement a continuum of function-based supports at Tier 3 that are designed to more effectively meet the needs of a broader range of students who struggle with persistent challenging behavior. This guide aims to be a resource for individuals and teams with a working knowledge of Tier 3 who regularly design and implement supports for students with intensive needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Health and related services providers • Local and district agencies • School administrators 	<p>Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. (2022). <i>Tier 3 brief functional behavior assessment (FBA) guide.</i></p> <p>https://www.pbis.org/resource/tier-3-brief-functional-behavior-assessment-fba-guide</p>
Tier 3 Comprehensive Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) Guide	The purpose of this practice guide is to help teams conduct a comprehensive FBA, develop a function-linked behavior intervention/support plan, and make data-based decisions. FBAs help teams to identify the relation of targeted serious and intense (i.e., challenging) behavior to the environmental events that occur before and after the behavior is performed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators • Health and related services providers • Local and district agencies • School administrators 	<p>Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. (2022). <i>Tier 3 comprehensive functional behavior assessment (FBA) guide.</i></p> <p>https://www.pbis.org/resource/tier-3-comprehensive-functional-behavior-assessment-fba-guide</p>

OSEP TA Centers

- **Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR)** | CPIR provides universal technical assistance to the network of Parent Centers funded by OSEP. Among its priorities are: (a) providing Parent Centers with products and materials to support their work with families; (b) increasing Parent Centers' knowledge and capacity in specific domains; and (c) increasing the coordination of parent training efforts throughout the network. Among the products and services CPIR provides to the Parent Center network are: (a) its information-rich website in English and Spanish (called the Parent Center Hub); (b) a twice-monthly e-newsletter called the *Buzz from the Hub*; (c) the eLearning Hub, which features online, self-paced learning modules for all Parent Center staff as part of capacity building; (d) frequent webinars on high-priority topics; (e) national Parent Center capacity-building conferences; (f) private communication spaces where Parent Centers can share resources and collaborate with their colleagues (CentersConnect); and (g) coordination of annual data collection and reporting of Parent Center activities, training contacts, and services provided to families, professionals, and youth with disabilities.

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org>

Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) | The Center on PBIS was initially funded in 1998 and a new 5-year funding cycle launched in October 2018. The purpose of the new center is to improve the capacity of state educational agencies, LEAs, and schools to establish, scale up, and sustain the PBIS framework to (a) scale up Tier 2 and 3 systems to improve outcomes for students with or at-risk for disabilities, (b) enhance school climate and school safety, and (c) improve conditions for learning to promote the well-being of all students. The Center on PBIS is grounded in the values of comprehensive prevention, based on human-centered science, and implemented through collaborative partnerships, centered in equity, to improve social, emotional, behavioral, and academic outcomes.

<https://www.pbis.org>

- **IDEA Data Center (IDC)** | IDC provides TA to build the capacity of states and LEAs to collect, report, analyze, and use high-quality IDEA Part B data. IDC offers a full range of services and resources to support states' efforts to submit 616 (State Performance Plans and Annual Performance Reports or SPP/APR) data and 618 (or *EDFacts*) data that meet the U.S. Department of Education's data quality standards for accuracy, timeliness, and completeness. IDC also partners with States and LEAs to help them use these data to identify programmatic strengths as well as areas for improvement, including addressing root causes of poor performance and evaluating progress toward goals and desired outcomes.

<https://ideadata.org>

- **IRIS Center** | The IRIS Center develops and disseminates free, engaging online resources about evidence-based instructional and behavioral practices to support the education of all students, particularly struggling learners and those with disabilities. These resources, designed to bridge the research-to-practice gap, are intended for use in college teacher preparation programs, in professional development (PD) activities for practicing professionals, and by independent learners. The array of IRIS resources includes modules, case studies, fundamental skill sheets, information briefs, course/PD activities, a high-leverage practices alignment tool, and an online glossary of disability-related terms.

<https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu>

- **National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII)** | NCII is housed at the American Institutes for Research and works in conjunction with many of our nation's most distinguished data-based individualization (DBI) experts. The mission of the NCII is to build knowledge and capacity of state and local leaders, faculty and professional development providers, educators, and other stakeholders to support implementation of intensive intervention for

students with severe and persistent learning and/or social, emotional, or behavioral needs using DBI.

<https://intensiveintervention.org>

- **National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations** | The mission of NCPMI is to improve and support the capacity of state systems and local programs to implement an early childhood multi-tiered system of support to improve the social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of young children with, and at risk for, developmental disabilities or delays. The goals of the center are to assist states and programs in their implementation of sustainable systems for the implementation of the Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children (Pyramid Model) within early intervention and early education programs, with a focus on promoting the social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes of young children birth to five, reducing the use of inappropriate discipline practices, promoting family engagement, using data for decision-making, integrating early childhood and infant mental health consultation and fostering inclusion.
<https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/index.html>

More information on positive, proactive approaches to supporting the behavioral needs of children with disabilities is available from the [U.S. Department of Education](#) and a companion [resource page](#), which includes an eight-part TA Resource Guide series and an archived video summarizing the Department's guidance and its main principles.

This document contains resources collected from OSEP-funded technical assistance centers that are provided for the user's convenience to assist in implementation efforts. The inclusion of these materials is not intended to reflect their importance, nor is it intended to endorse any views expressed, or products or services offered. These materials may contain the views and recommendations of various subject-matter experts. The opinions expressed in any of these materials do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education (Department). The Department does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of any outside information included in these materials.

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