

## **Module: Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)**

### **Overview of Functional Behavior Assessment**

Collet-Klingenberg, L. (2008). *Overview of functional behavior assessment*. Madison, WI: The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, Waisman Center, The University of Wisconsin.

Functional behavior assessment (FBA) is a systematic set of strategies that is used to determine the underlying function or purpose of a behavior, so that an effective intervention plan can be developed. FBA consists of describing the interfering or problem behavior, identifying antecedent or consequent events that control the behavior, developing a hypothesis of the behavior, and testing the hypothesis. Data collection is an important part of the FBA process. Often, teachers/practitioners use functional communication training (FCT), differential reinforcement, response interruption/redirection, extinction, and stimulus control/environmental modification to address these behaviors in learners with ASD.

#### **Evidence**

FBA meets evidence-based criteria with five single-subject and one group design studies across ages, as well as in the domains of behavior and communication.

#### **With what ages is FBA effective?**

According to the evidence-based studies, learners with ASD ranged in age from 3 to 15 years with the majority of studies showing the effectiveness of functional behavior assessment with elementary age learners.

#### **What skills or intervention goals can be addressed by FBA?**

FBA targets skills in the domains of behavior and communication, usually with a focus of decreasing inappropriate behavior and teaching or increasing appropriate communicative alternatives. The studies in the evidence base targeted behaviors described as severe, stereotypical, disruptive, escape-motivated, rejecting, and leading. Replacement skills included more appropriate forms of communication such as signing, pointing, talking, and the use of alternative and augmentative communication (AAC) devices.

#### **In what settings can FBA be effectively used?**

In the evidence base, functional behavior assessment procedures were implemented in a variety of home, school, and community settings.

#### **Evidence Base**

The studies cited in this section document that this practice meets the NPDC on ASD's criteria for an evidence-based practice. This list is not exhaustive; other quality studies may exist that were not included.

## **Module: Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)**

### **Preschool**

Mancil, G.R., Conroy, M.A., Nakao, T., & Alter, P.J. (2006). Functional communication training in the natural environment: A pilot investigation with a young child with autism spectrum disorder. *Education and Treatment of Children, 29*(4), 615-633.

### **Elementary**

Buckley, S., & Newchok, D. (2005). Differential impact of response effort within a response chain on use of mands in a student with autism. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 26*(1), 77-85.

LaBelle, C., & Charlop-Christy, M. (2002). Individualizing functional analysis to assess multiple and changing functions of severe behavior problems in children with autism. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 4*(4), 231-241.

Lucyshyn J. M., Albin, R. W., Horner, R. H., Mann, J. C., Mann, J. A., & Wadsworth, G. (2007). Family implementation of positive behavior support for a child with autism: Longitudinal, single-case, experimental, and descriptive replication and extension. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 9*(3), 131-150.

### **Middle/High School**

Butler, L. R., & Luiselli, J. K. (2007). Escape-maintained problem behavior in a child with autism: Antecedent functional analysis and intervention evaluation of non-contingent escape and instructional fading. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 9*(4), 195-202.

### **Selected Additional References**

Asmus, J. M., Franzese, J. C., Conroy, M. A., & Dozier, C. L. (2003). Clarifying functional analysis outcomes for disruptive behaviors by controlling consequence delivery for stereotypy. *School Psychology Review, 32*(4), 624-630.

Aspy, R., & Grossman, B. G. (2007). *The ziggurat model*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Bregman, J. D., Zager, D., & Gerdtz, J. (2005). Behavioral interventions. In F. R. Volkmar, R. Paul, A. Klin, & D. Cohen (Eds.), *Handbook of autism and pervasive developmental disorder, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed.* (pp. 897-924). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Carr, E. G., Horner, R. H., Turnbull, A. P., Marquis, J. G., McLaughlin, D. M., McAtee, M. L., et al., (1999). *Positive behavior support for people with developmental disabilities: A research synthesis*. Washington, DC: American Association on Mental Retardation.

## **Module: Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)**

Dragow, E., Halle, J. W., Ostrosky, M. M., & Harbers, H. M. (1996). Using behavior indication and functional communication training to establish an initial sign repertoire with a young child with severe disabilities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 16*, 500-521.

Fox, L., Dunlap, G., & Buschbacher, P. (2000). Understanding and intervening with children's interfering behavior: A comprehensive approach. In A. M. Wetherby & B. M. Prizant (Eds.), *Autism spectrum disorders: A transactional developmental perspective, Volume 9* (pp. 307-332). Baltimore: Brookes Publishing Company.

Henry, S., & Myles, B. S. (2007). *The comprehensive autism planning system (CAPS) for individuals with Asperger's syndrome, autism, and related disabilities: Integrating best practices throughout the student's day*. Shawnee Mission, KS: Autism Asperger Publishing Company.

Koegel, L. K., Stiebel, D., & Koegel, R. L. (1998). Reducing aggression in children with autism toward infant or toddler siblings. *The Journal of Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 23*(2), 111-118.

Martin, C. A., Dragow, E., Halle, J. W., & Brucker, J. M. (2005). Teaching a child with autism and severe language delays to reject: Direct and indirect effects of functional communication training. *Educational Psychology, 25*(2&3), 287-304.

National Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports.  
<http://www.pbis.org>

O'Neill, R. E., & Sweetland-Baker, M. (2001). Brief report: An assessment of stimulus generalization and contingency effects in functional communication training with two students with autism. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders, 31*(2), 235-240.