

Tips for Parents: Behavioral Intervention Plans

What is a Behavioral Intervention Plan?

A behavioral intervention plan is a written document for a child with a disability, age 3 through 21. A behavioral intervention plan is usually a part of your child's Individualized Education Program (see "Tips for Parents: Individualized Education Program" material). Sometimes a child with a disability will have a "behavioral disorder." A behavioral disorder is a condition that interferes with your child's educational performance. Rule 51 sec. 003.08B (2006). When the behavioral disorder interrupts your child's learning, or the learning of another, you can request a behavioral intervention plan.

The goal of a behavioral intervention plan is to teach your child to manage his or her behavior so that the behavior does not interrupt the learning process. A behavioral intervention plan is to reinforce positive behaviors.

Who is eligible for a Behavioral Intervention Plan?

Your child must first be evaluated by the school district's Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation or Independent Educational Evaluation processes (see "Tips for Parents: Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation" and "Tips for Parents: Independent Educational Evaluation" materials). The Multidisciplinary Team decides whether your child has a disability. If your child is found to be "a child with a disability" as defined under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), he or she is eligible for an Individual Education Program (IEP). Rule 51 sec. 007.01 (2006).

If your child's behavior is related to the disability, then your child is probably eligible to have a behavioral intervention plan added to his or her IEP.

What is a Functional Behavior Assessment?

A functional behavior assessment is the tool that the IEP Team completes to better a child's learning environment and to make sure that your child is getting enough behavioral support. The functional behavior assessment must describe your child's behavior; identify the things that cause the behavior, why your child behaves in this manner, and alternative behaviors, which your child can learn. Rule 51 sec. 003.24 (2006).

What must be in a Behavioral Intervention Plan?

There are no strict guidelines for what must be included in a behavioral intervention plan. The plan should be based on your child's individual needs. Your child's IEP can consider the use of positive behavioral interventions, behavioral support, and other strategies to address the behavior. Rule 51 sec. 007.07C4 (2006). Behavioral intervention plans may include:

- Skills training to increase appropriate behavior,
- Changes that will be made in classrooms or other environments to decrease behavior disorders,

- Strategies to replace bad behaviors with appropriate behaviors, and
- Supports for your child to use the appropriate behaviors.

What happens if my child does not have a Behavioral Intervention Plan?

Sometimes your child's behavioral disorder may result in your child being removed from class if they break a school rule of conduct. This is also called a "change in placement" if your child is out of class for more than ten (10) consecutive school days or if your child is out of class a total of more than ten (10) days in a school year.

After a change in placement, the school will have a "manifestation determination." This means that the school, IEP Team, and you will review all information related to your child's conduct causing the removal to determine if the conduct was:

- Caused by your child's behavioral disorder, or
- A result of the school failing to follow your child's IEP. Rule 51 sec. 016.02E1a; Rule 51 sec. 016.02E1b.

If your child does not have a behavioral intervention plan, the school will conduct a functional behavior assessment and then create a behavioral intervention plan. It is probably best that your child already have a behavioral intervention plan in place so that your child will not have an immediate change in placement.

How do I request a Behavioral Intervention Plan?

You may want to request an IEP meeting to discuss whether your child needs a behavioral intervention plan. It is a good idea to put all communications regarding your child's special education services between you and school administrators and staff in writing. Make sure to write down conversations and events that affect your child's schooling. Note the date, who was involved, what was said, and the resolution. You may want to create and maintain a file with all of your child's school information such as report cards, evaluation reports, and Individual Education Plans.

All requests for evaluations or meetings should be made in writing to your child's school principal. You should keep a copy for your own records. Send your written request to the school via certified, return receipt requested mail. Attach the return receipt to your copy of the request and keep this in your file.

Additional resources:

- *Tips for Parents: Individual Education Program.* Nebraska Advocacy Services (2006).
- *Tips for Parents: Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation.* Nebraska Advocacy Services (2006).
- *Behavior: The Works.* National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY 2004). This article includes various information
- *Nebraska State Resources.* NICHCY (2006). This is a list of organizations in Nebraska that you can contact for more information and to advocate for your child with a disability.
- *Functional Behavioral Assessment.* Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice. <http://cecp.air.org/fba/default.asp>. This web site has valuable information explaining behavioral intervention plans and functional behavioral assessments.
- *Parental Rights in Special Education.* Nebraska Department of Education Special Populations Office (August 2005).

Sample Letter

You may wish to use similar language when requesting an Individual Education Program (IEP) meeting to discuss creating a behavioral intervention plan for your child:

[Principal's Name]
[School's Name]
[School Address]
[City, State, Zip code]

Re: [Your child's name] – Request for an Individual Education Program meeting

Dear [Principal's Name]:

Please consider this letter as a formal request for an Individual Education Program (IEP) team meeting for my child, [Your child's name]. It is my understanding that I have a right to request an IEP meeting at any time, pursuant to the provisions of 92 NAC 51 (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 51). I would like to specifically discuss creating a behavioral intervention plan for my child.

To prevent complications with my schedule, please notify me of the date and time of the meeting one week in advance. I appreciate your prompt attention to this request and ask that you respond in writing by [Insert a date two (2) weeks from the time mailed], and that the meeting be held by [Insert a date five to ten days later than the previous date]. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]
[Your Address]
[Your City, State, Zip]
[Your Phone number]