

Ten Essential Considerations Regarding Behavior Plans and Services for Individuals with Special Needs

These are not rules, laws, or regulations. They represent considerations that, through research and years of fieldwork, we have learned can make a critical difference in behavior programming and progress.

Should Not Only Include Practical Components

- Practical Components Include
 - Accommodations
 - Modifications
 - Preventions
 - Antecedent Manipulations
 - Aide “Support”
 - Basically, involve changes in the environment and Others’ Behavior
- These efforts are important, especially until proactive efforts (see below) catch up to everyday, naturally occurring events
- Resultant differences in behavior typically reflect only behavioral “performance” effectuated by others--as opposed to actual growth, change, and learning.

Should Not Over-Emphasize Reactive Components

- Reactive Components involve what you do when the problem behavior occurs
- Often involve de-escalation efforts
- Reactive efforts help end incidents and over time promote turn-arounds, decreases in duration and intensity of episodes, and individual’s availability to the help of others.
- Reactive components do not teach what to do in the first place

Should Include a Healthy Dose of Proactive Programming

- Proactive Programming involves systematic teaching of replacements and alternatives to problem behaviors
- Should occur in between, not during, incidents
- Involves the breaking down and progressive building up of alternatives and replacements to problem behavior under increasingly naturalistic and provocative situations
- Teaches what to do in the first place

Should Include Teaching As Well As Motivation Elements

- Motivation Systems (Direct reinforcement, Token Economies, Time-In Systems, Contingency Contracts, Self-Management) typically should be included
- Motivations Systems while important, employed alone are usually not enough
- Utilized in conjunction with reactive and proactive instructional components

Should be Positively Oriented

- 10 positives for every discourager
- Positives built before inclusion of negatives
- Positives make system and efforts positive
- Catch them being good (and teachable moments)
- Fun factor
- Creativity and Novelty enhances efforts and results

Not Just Prompt Oriented

- Prompts aid learning and growth
- Prompts when used need to be faded
- Prompts when not faded can facilitate performance which is not the same as growth and learning
- Other strategies do exist
- Independence, Independence, Independence

Should Include Meaningful Alternatives and Truly Functionally Equivalent Replacements

- Individualized and unique replacements and alternatives should be targeted
- Not just based on two or four functions of behavior (There are more)

Balance Between Effectiveness and Logistical Reality

- Best program on the planet will be ineffective if can't be done

Balance Between Fidelity and Flexibility

- Structure and consistency are important
- Being responsive to the individual and the situation at hand is also important—It's not just about strict behavior rules or guideline
- In the moment problem solving, assessment, and decision making essential—True Behavior Analysis

Are the Staff Equipped To Do It?

- Staff training needs to be in more areas than just prompts and tokens
- There needs to be specific training in the unique program
- Training in teaching should be included
- Training should occur in analysis and decision making in the moment
- Is Oversight sufficient?
- Is Supervisor being a BCBA enough?
 - Does supervisor have skills in unique program development and evolution? — there are no cookie cutter solutions
 - Does supervisor have analysis and problem-solving abilities themselves?
 - Does supervisor provide ongoing oversight and training in staff competencies?
- You should be included as part of the behavior intervention team