

Does Your Child Have a Behavior Problem?

Does Your Child's School Say He Is a Behavior Problem?

We have been receiving numerous phone calls from parents telling us that their child's principal keeps calling them to come and get "Johnny", as he is having a behavior problem. Are you getting these phone calls? Are you being told your child is having behavior problems at school or that your child is a behavior problem?

While it is true that inappropriate behaviors will interfere with a child's ability to learn the skills they need to succeed, constant phone calls to the parent to come pick up Johnny because of his behavior does not help Johnny learn appropriate skills to become successful. Schools have the obligation, the resources, and the ability to teach child the skills they need to master to succeed in life. These skills should not be restricted to reading, writing, and arithmetic. Best practices show it is much more effective to address the problem that is preventing a child from learning as it arises and teach the student the skills that are necessary to prevent that behavior. For the student with a behavior problem this might require the development and implementation of a Positive Intervention Plan. With a PIP in place and a supportive IEP team, Johnny can learn appropriate behaviors and the skills necessary to succeed...and the phone calls home can stop.

Functional Behavior Assessment

Is an assessment designed to determine or better understand a child's problem behaviors, how they develop and what purpose they serve. The purpose of an FBA is to develop a Positive Intervention Plan which will teach children how to manage their behaviors. IDEA 04 requires an FBA whenever placement has changed for discipline reasons, though you may request an FBA at any time that your child's problem behaviors are becoming worse or your IEP team cannot explain why the problem behaviors occur. A parents' input is very important with the FBA as you know your child best and you will provide valuable information when developing your child's behavior plan.

Positive Intervention Plan

If we learn about the behaviors and know when and where they are likely to happen, we can plan positive strategies to teach new behaviors. These strategies are called positive behavioral interventions. Teachers and parents will use the information from an FBA to help a child learn new skills. The goal is to teach children how to manage their own behaviors. An effective behavior intervention plan (also called a behavior support plan or positive intervention plan) is used to teach or reinforce positive behaviors. Typically, a child's IEP team develops the plan. It usually includes: skills training to increase appropriate behavior; changes that will be made in classrooms or other environments to reduce or eliminate problem behaviors; strategies to replace problem behaviors with appropriate behaviors that serve the same function for the child; or supports for the child to use the appropriate behaviors.