University of North Carolina TEACCH® Autism Program
Functional Behavior Assessment Guide

Use the attached iceberg to highlight the main points of this process. Note that the data will be collected and charted separately.

SECTION ONE-A – IDENTIFY THE TARGET BEHAVIOR

Define the target behavior, what the individual does in concrete, objective, and observable terms.

Document on the iceberg.

SECTION ONE-B – IDENTIFY THE EXPECTED BEHAVIOR

Select one situation in which the target behavior occurs and describe the expected behavior in concrete observable terms, what should the individual be doing if they were not engaging in the target behavior. State the original expectation, such as, completing assigned work, eating lunch, walking from the bus to the classroom, playing with their toys.

Document on the iceberg.

SECTION TWO – BRIEF PROFILE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

Identify the individual's developmental level/intellectual functioning, communication skills, current academic skills and supports, strengths and interests. The individual's profile (the information in this section) will help to better understand the "why" behind the behavior as well as develop appropriate supports for the expected behavior.

    A. Describe developmental level/intellectual functioning

    B. Describe the individual's communication skills

        a. Describe the individual's spontaneous expressive communication skills
        Verbal, using full sentences conversationally
        Verbal with scripted language and/or some conversational skills
        Non-verbal to minimally verbal: communicates with objects or pictures

        b. What is their receptive language communication level?
        Follows one step verbal directions
        Multi-step verbal directions
        Follow group instruction

        c. Additional thoughts:

C. **Describe the individual's academic skills (literacy and math)**
    a. **What is their current level of independent comprehension?**
        Grade level – Reading   ☐ On ☐ Above ☐ Below

        i.   Reads and comprehends:
              written sentences
              single words
              pictures
              objects

    b. **Grade level – Written Language**   ☐ On ☐ Above ☐ Below
        generates written paragraphs
        generates written sentences
        generates written phrases
        copies written words

    c. **Grade level – Math** (relevant if the expected behavior involves math skills)
        ☐ On ☐ Above ☐ Below

D. **Describe the individual's current visual supports and work behaviors**
    a. **Schedule:** A personal, individualized schedule is meant to indicate what activities will occur and in what sequence. It increases independence with transitions and helps improve tolerance for change.
    - Describe personal schedule: _____
      _____
      _____
        Uses the schedule without prompts or adult support
        Needs prompts or support from adult

    b. **Work/Activity System**: An individualized work/activity system, is meant to provide a systematic approach to understanding what needs to be done, how much needs to be done, provides a concept of finished, and tells the individual what happens next.
    - Describe the work system and the settings): _____
      _____
        Uses the work/activity system without prompts or adult support
        Needs prompts or support from adult

    c. **Visual Instructions:** Visual Instructions help an individual independently understand how to complete an activity. The form of the instructions should be based on the individual's independent reading level.

- What type of visual instructions does the individual follow?
  - Written sentences
  - Short phrases
  - Single words
  - Pictures
  - Objects
- Level of independence
  - Follows the visual instructions without prompts or adult support
  - Needs prompts or support from adult

d. **Speed of Work Completion:**
  - Finishes quickly
  - Average speed
  - Rarely finishes

e. **Accuracy Of Work Completion** (does the Individual typically complete the assignments independently and accurately)?

E. **What are the Individual's Strengths and Interests?**

SECTION THREE – OBTAIN AND PRESENT DATA

Provide data that describes the frequency, duration, and intensity of the targeted behavior(s). Assure that data provides information on the context prior to the behavior's occurrence. If possible, collect data on the frequency of the expected behavior. This data will be used to develop hypotheses in section four.

A. **Data (Create a data form to collect the relevant information as indicated below)**
   a. Setting/Situation: where, when, with/by whom, activity, biological issues, other.
   b. Antecedents what is happening just prior to when the behavior occurs: describe what you see without judgment about why
   c. Consequences response(s) of others after the behavior occurs: when the behavior occurs how does everyone respond and what happens then?
   d. Individual's Response: how did the individual respond to what happened next?
   e. When does the behavior not occur?
   f. Data on frequency and setting/situation of the expected behavior
   g. Comments (other relevant information):

B. **Changes in the Individual's Routines, Physiological States or Mental Health**
Have there been any major changes in the individual's school setting, home life, or daily routines which may be causing confusion or stress? (e.g., changed schools, new teacher, new classmate, divorce, changes in routine due to holiday, weather, illness, etc.). Describe any that apply
   a. Home/family composition: _____
   b. Daily routine: _____
   c. Eating routines/diet: _____
   d. Sleep patterns: _____
   e. School class placement, class composition: _____
   f. Routines: _____
   g. Medication change or not taking: _____
   h. Physical exercise: _____
   i. Other mental health conditions: (We are only considering if there has been a change in the mental health condition. This behavior problem solving process focuses first on the autism, while keeping in mind there may be other factors to consider later.)
   j. Other: _____

C. **Analyze the Data**
Graph the data based on factors such as location, time of day, day of the week, activity, who is present, etc. Look for patterns in terms of when the target behavior occurs and when it does not occur. Also look at patterns regarding the expected behavior.
   a. Note any patterns:

SECTION FOUR – GENERATE HYPOTHESES

Develop hypotheses from the perspective of autism and level of developmental and cognitive abilities. Develop an understanding of the reasons underlying the behavior. Prioritize factors that may be getting in the way of the expected behavior. Reference and consider the information detailed in the overview of the individual.

Iceberg Concept – understanding behaviors from the perspective of autism.

Prioritize factors related to why the individual is not engaging in the expected behavior.

   A. **Learning Styles and Developmental Level of ASD in Relation to the Behavior: Check all that apply and then note details in the comment section.**
      a. Developmental level
            Is the expected activity at the individual's developmental level?
            Are the expectations and activity age appropriate?

- Comments:

b. Implicit Learning

    Are there skills that you assume the individual should know or skills that need to be taught more explicitly?

    Does the individual understand the meaning behind the activity? Why is this skill or behavior important from the individual's perspective?

    Does a skill need to be generalized?

- Comments:

c. Attention

    Have you highlighted what the individual should attend to or toned down the distractions?

    Does the individual have a warning or way to anticipate that it is time to shift his/her attention?

    Does the task require the individual to attend to more than one thing at a time?

- Comments:

d. Executive Functioning/Time and Organization

    Is their organizational skill/ability to initiate or sequence events or understanding of time causing any difficulties?

    Does the activity have a clear concept of finished?

    Does the Individual know what to do while waiting?

- Comments:

e. Communication: Receptive, Expressive

    Does the individual know what is being asked?

    Are they able to follow multiple step directions?

    Is there a concrete visual instruction for the expected behavior?

    How does the individual communicate?

    What might the individual be communicating with his/her behavior? What is a more expected way for them to communicate this need/desire?

    Does the individual need extra time to process information?

- Comments:

f. Social Communication: Multiple Perspectives

    Does the individual have the skills to appropriately engage another person?

Other than social motivation, why should the individual engage in the expected behavior?

Does the Individual understand other people's perspectives?

- Comments

g. Restricted Or Repetitive Behaviors or Interests

Is the individual driven to complete a specific routine?

Is this a functional routine?

Do they have a strong interest that is causing difficulty or could possibly be used to enhance engagement?

Does the individual learn routines quickly?

- Comments

h. Sensory Processing

Are there obvious signs of sensory seeking behavior?

Does the individual have some sensory aversions that may be related to the area of concern?

Does the individual appear to get overwhelmed by certain types or amounts of sensory input?

- Comments

B. **Linking Traditional Thoughts About the Why (Functions) of Behavior to Autism Learning Styles:**
As you review the data, if you develop hypotheses about the communicative functions, dig deeper and consider what may be the basis of this function from the perspective of autism.

a. Function to access items or activities

Does the person demonstrate the skills to request appropriately?

Are there visual supports in place so the individual can clearly see when they will get the preferred activity or item in the future?

Do they have a concept of time and sequencing?

- Comments

b. Function to escape/avoid a task or unpleasant stimuli

Does the person demonstrate the skills (do they know how) to perform the activity?

Do they have a meaningful visual strategy that clarifies what to do, how long it will go on, when they will be finished and what they will do next?

- Comments

    c. Function to Access Social Attention

            Does the individual have the social skills for getting attention in appropriate ways?

            Do they have a concept of turn taking?

        • Comments

    d. Function of Sensory Stimulation.

            Does the individual have appropriate and predictable ways to get these need(s) met?

        • Comments

        •

Overall, be sure that the individual has the supports in place to know how and when to do the expected behavior?

*Document the top 3-5 hypotheses on the iceberg.

SECTION FIVE: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENT INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION Based on Hypothesis

For each of your hypothesis in sections 4 A, B and C above, decide what you will structure or teach to address the hypothesis and **INCREASE ENGAGEMENT IN THE EXPECTED BEHAVIOR**.

 *Document and align the interventions with the corresponding hypotheses on the iceberg. It might be helpful to number the hypothesis and corresponding interventions. See suggestions below for ideas to address most common hypotheses.

    A. Develop or Modify the Meaningful Structure and Visual Supports

        a. Strategies need to match individual's developmental level. All strategies need to be explicitly taught.

        b. Physical Structure – how will you change the environment?

          i. Boundaries

          ii. Address sensory issues – How will you minimize distractions and reduce stimulation (visual, auditory, tactile, olfactory)

c. <u>Schedule</u> – how will you improve the schedule to clarify expectations and balance activities? Use strengths and interests, provide choices, engage in tension reduction activities, and socialize with peers. How will you increase the individual's ability to independently utilize and interact with schedule?

d. <u>Work System</u> – how will you highlight "WHAT TO DO, clarify FINISHED, and WHAT'S NEXT. Can the Individual access and use the work system independently? Identify how they know, visually, the answers to these questions, during this time:
    i. How much do I do?   _____
    ii. What do I do?   _____
    iii. When is it finished?   _____
    iv. What do I do next?   _____

e. Visual Instructions – how will you modify tasks to be more meaningful, clarify instructions, and how materials are structured?
_____

B. Teach New Skills to Address the Behavior:
   a. Teach expressive communication skills to address the function of the behavior i.e., a replacement behavior
   b. Teach social skills i.e., turn taking, sharing, social rules, social perspective taking, and initiation of social interactions
   c. Teach coping skills and emotional control strategies i.e., relaxation routine, calming activity, identifying an emotion.

C. Curriculum Adjustments: Indicate what if any curriculum adjustments need to be made.
   a. How will you make the curriculum more engaging, meaningful and or diverse? Is the curriculum/activity and expected behavior at the appropriate developmental level.
   b. What activities, objects, topics of discussion, etc. preoccupy or hold the Individual's interests? What does the Individual like best within the curriculum? Adjust the curriculum to use the Individual's interests.
   c. Could the physical exercise routine (or lack thereof) be affecting the behavior? Note that consistent physical exercise, aerobic exercise 3 to 4 times a week for at least 30 minutes, has been associated with positive behavior effect in individuals with autism.

D. Reinforcement and Tokens: Reinforcement and tokens are only appropriate if the expected behavior is within the individual's skill repertoire and has been demonstrated. If this is true, then one hypothesis is that the individual has the skill but not the motivation. Need to visually link the expected behavior to the reinforcer. Individual needs the opportunity to demonstrate the expected behavior across multiple occasions.

Questions to ask if planning to use a motivator or reinforcement.   What motivators can be available to focus the individual's attention on the expected behaviors? How will these motivators be presented so that the Individual knows when they will obtain the motivator?   It is usually most effective if the token or reinforcer does not expire.

SECTION SIX: CREATE A PLAN FOR WHEN THE BEHAVIOR OCCURS

A. **How to Address the Behavior in the Moment:** What will you do to keep everyone safe and to avoid creating negative routines? Remember proactively addressing the learning styles will be most effective approach to increasing expected behavior and decreasing problem behavior. What you do after the behavior occurs is about keeping everyone safe.
   a. Consider how to reduce demands and sensory stimulation
   b. Redirect the individual to the meaningful visual structure that clarifies "what to do"
   c. Consider ignoring unwanted behavior, but do not ignore the individual
   d. Consider processing the behavior later when the individual is calm

B. **Progress Monitoring:** Continue to take data on the problem behavior, expected behavior and/or your intervention to determine if your intervention is effective. Revaluate data and if needed, repeat steps three and four.