Basic FBA to BIP
District Planning & Implementation Guide

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Development of the Basic FBA to BIP e-Learning modules was funded through a grant from the US Department of Education, State Personnel Development Grant CFDA# 84.323 and Part B funds administered by the Kansas State Department of Education’s Early Childhood, Special Education and Title Services. However, content does not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and endorsement by the Office of Special Education Programs should not be assumed.
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This manual is to guide school districts in development of a comprehensive professional development plan to maximize benefits of the Basic FBA to BIP e-Learning modules (www.BasicFBA.com). The Basic FBA to BIP e-learning series can be an important component of a district plan to implement a system of function-based supports for students with persistent challenging behavior, however, the modules must be embedded within a comprehensive multi-year professional development plan.

The primary goal of the Basic FBA to BIP series is to train school-based personnel to conduct “Basic” functional behavioral assessments (FBA) and design, implement, and evaluate function-based behavior intervention plans (BIP). “Basic FBA to BIP” training methods are designed to train school-based personnel with the capacity and flexibility in their role to conduct teacher interviews and classroom observations, facilitate behavior planning meetings and support teachers and staff with implementation. The Basic FBA/BIP training methods are specifically designed for use with students that exhibit consistent problems that are NOT dangerous and have not been adequately addressed through previous assessment and intervention. Basic FBA to BIP trains the foundational skills of FBA/BIP with a focus initially on building skills to support students presenting with “Basic” rather than “Complex” needs. Repeated practice and fluency in the “Basic” FBA to BIP process provides the prerequisite knowledge, skills and experience necessary to progress to support more “complex” FBA to BIP cases through ongoing training.

One of the primary arguments for Basic FBA to BIP is the opportunity for earlier identification and support for students requiring behavior support. This is important not only for increasing our opportunities for success with the student, but also for engaging teachers and staff before they have experienced an extended period of frustration, which can make it difficult to solicit authentic cooperation of teachers and staff in FBA/BIP implementation.

The Basic FBA to BIP e-learning modules can function as a central training curriculum for a professional development plan. The modules can provide an efficient training resource for school districts to use to build school and district capacity for scaling up implementation of FBA/BIP. Content of the Basic FBA to BIP series provides a common language, process and framework for implementing function-based support in schools and across a school district, but the training modules alone are insufficient to support learners in attaining mastery and fluency with conducting FBA/BIP.

Even at the level of Basic FBA to BIP, individualized behavior support planning requires an array of knowledge and skills. The variability that behavior specialists can face across individual student cases, including the range of student, teacher, administrator and environmental circumstances do not often lend themselves to simple preconceived solutions easily attained through completion of a series of e-learning modules. The Basic FBA to BIP modules must be situated within a comprehensive professional development plan. The skills required to conduct an individualized assessment (FBA) and to facilitate a team through the design, implementation and evaluation of an individualized BIP require repeated practice, coaching and ongoing training across a range of FBA/BIP cases.
Building a District Leadership Team

Use of the Basic FBA to BIP modules will be most effective when situated within a multi-year, district-level professional development plan. A first step is to identify a leadership team to plan and coordinate systems for Individual Student Behavior Supports (e.g. Tier 2 & Tier 3 SWPBIS). The Leadership Team might standalone or could be a sub-committee of a District Leadership team focused on Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), behavior support, or climate and equity. The District Leadership Team for Individual Behavior Supports should include representatives across the range of stakeholders involved in programming to support students with challenging behavior. Below is a list of potential leadership team members:

- District Administrator (Superintendent, Special Education Director)
- District Behavior Specialists, Equity Coordinator, PBIS Coaches
- Behavior Teachers on Special Assignment (TOSA) and coordinators of other district/school behavior support efforts
- Building level behavior support staff (School Psychologists, Counselors, Social workers)
- Building Administrators (across school levels)
- Self-contained Behavior Classroom teachers
- Behavior Specialist/Expert from University or Regional Service Provider
- Representatives from local community and mental health support providers
- Paraeducators supporting students with behavior support
- Family representative
- Student representative

The focus of the District Leadership Team includes coordination and planning of systems to support the continuum of individual student behavior, social and emotional needs. This encompasses Tier 2 and Tier 3 systems of support, including general education, special education and wraparound supports.

Defining a Multi-Year Action Plan and Professional Development Plan

Using Data for Decision Making

One task of the leadership team will be to develop a multi-year action plan to build capacity for function-based support across the school district. This process should start by reviewing data to identify needs and to understand the current context of individual behavior support. For purposes of this document, the focus will be specifically on systems of Tier 3 Behavior Support. Data might address the following questions:

1) How many students in the school district would benefit from Tier 3 behavior support? (Sources of data might include ODR data and universal screeners for identifying students with elevated behavior support needs.)
2) How many students are currently receiving Tier 3 behavior support (e.g., # of students with individualized plans)?
3) What are the outcomes for those students receiving Tier 3 behavior support? (e.g. student outcome data from BIP/graphs)
4) What is the level of fidelity of implementation of Tier 3 behavior supports at the level of:
   a. Individual Student (i.e., Fidelity of Implementation ratings for individual student cases)
b. School System (e.g. scores on Tier 3-Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI))

5) What is the capacity for implementation of FBA/BIP and Tier 3 Behavior Support in the school district?
   a. How many personnel are the skills and role responsibility and flexibility to conduct FBA/BIP in the school district relative to the number of students requiring support?

Earlier identification and support for students who would benefit from FBA/BIP depends on school district capacity and increasing the number of staff with training and the role flexibility to conduct FBA/BIP. A review of the data might serve the initial step of conducting an audit of current personnel and district capacity for supporting students requiring individualized Tier 3 levels of behavior support across district and school levels. For example, the MTSS framework suggests that 5-7% of students are likely to require intensive individualized behavior support. The team might consider, based on the identified percentages, how many students in the district are likely to require intensive individualized support plans (e.g., if a school district has 10,000 students, 5% is 500 students that the district might anticipate would require highly intensive levels of individual behavior support). Next, the team would consider what supports are currently available and how many district-level behavior specialists are available to support those students with the most intensive support needs.

Defining Roles

A next consideration is a multi-level plan for building capacity for behavior support. This plan should include development of job descriptions with clearly defined roles and responsibilities of 1) District level Behavior Specialists and 2) Building level Behavior Specialists, or those individuals identified to be trained to conduct Basic FBA to BIP in schools. This model is likely to look different for larger school districts (see Figure 1) and smaller school districts (see Figure 2). The district will want to differentiate the roles and expectations of District Level Behavior Specialists and School-level Behavior Specialists.

District Behavior Specialists. Many district-level behavior specialists describe their role as that of the firefighter responding to crises as they appear across the school district. The focus is often times working with complex behavior support cases involving students with IEPs often driven by meeting legal compliance. A more proactive model would focus on identifying students much earlier and implementing behavior support before challenging behavior becomes more resistant to remediation and potentially more severe. This requires a shift in the role and capacity of the District Behavior Specialist to one of Capacity Builder and Coach. The District Behavior Specialist would still be involved in more complex behavioral cases in the district, but a primary responsibility would be in providing training, coaching and technical support to school-level teams of behavior specialists.

District Behavior Specialists should have strong knowledge of and experience conducting FBA/BIP. When identifying persons for this role, it is recommended that candidates provide evidence of previous FBA/BIPs and/or conduct an FBA/BIP as part of the interview and selection process. Given these prerequisite knowledge and skills, a first step in preparing District Behavior Specialists would be to increase their knowledge and experience implementing the Basic FBA to BIP process by completing the training modules and leading the Basic FBA to BIP process across a number of cases in a variety of school. This will prepare them for the role of coaching teams to implement Basic FBA to BIP. District Behavior Specialists should have expertise in conducting complex FBA/BIP, coaching and supporting
school behavior specialists in FBA/BIP skills, and supporting school implementation of Tier 3 Systems of Behavior Support, but these are frequently skills that require additional and ongoing professional development.

Responsibilities of the District Behavior Specialist in this model include:

1) Facilitating District Leadership Team coordination and planning for Tier 3 Behavior Support Systems
2) Supporting School-level Behavior Specialists and Behavior Support teams through:
   a. Training of Basic FBA to BIP
   b. Coaching and providing technical support in the Basic FBA to BIP implementation
      i. Modelling and providing feedback in FBA and BIP meetings and processes
      ii. Providing feedback on completed FBA and BIP documents (e.g. FBA Interview, Observation, Behavior Intervention Plan, Implementation Plan, Point card)
   c. Supporting implementation of Tier 2 and Tier 3 behavior support systems
3) Providing consultative support to school behavior support teams with Complex FBA/BIP cases

District Behavior Specialists can provide live feedback as school level specialists are completing each portion of the Basic FBA to BIP process (e.g. FBA interview, FBA observation, completing the Behavior Intervention Planning form, facilitating the Behavior Intervention Plan meeting, providing implementation support to teachers and staff, collecting data, and leading BIP Review meetings). It’s particularly important during initial training with the Basic FBA to BIP e-learning modules, that the District Behavior Specialists prompt, encourage and support school-level specialists to complete the homework and provide timely and meaningful feedback. Collecting evidence of module completion is not sufficient, it will be important to monitor and support homework completion (FBA/BIP), and multiple opportunities to practice and build fluency across FBA/BIP cases with coaching and feedback. It is our recommendation that the district specialist provide scaffolded coaching support to building-level behavior interventionists for at least the first three Basic FBA/BIPs completed following training.

School-level Behavior Interventionists/Specialists. The key to increasing school capacity for function-based behavior support is training school personnel to conduct Basic FBA to BIP. It is critically important to identify and train individuals who have the capacity, role, and expectation to conduct all aspects of the Basic FBA to BIP process. Schools are encouraged to identify a team of people who are currently tasked with supporting students with challenging behavior, and who have the capacity to conduct FBA interventions, classroom observations, facilitate BIP meetings and support teachers and staff with implementation. It is critical for staff members with training in Basic FBA to BIP to have the necessary time allocated to carry out the responsibilities associated with FBA/BIP. School-level Behavior Specialists are often special education teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers. It can be difficult for classroom teachers to function in the role of a behavior specialist because they often do not have the role flexibility to regularly conduct the responsibilities included in FBA/BIP.

Building Administrators. A building administrator is also instrumental to effective implementation of Basic FBA to BIP in schools. The administrator will not be expected to regularly conduct FBA interviews and classroom observations, in part because of the bias an administrator can immediately bring into the classroom environment that could impact both student and staff behavior. However, it is important that the administrator has a strong understanding of the rationale for FBA/BIP,
the implementation process, and the role the administrator must play in the process. The administrator should go through the Basic FBA to BIP training series with the school-level team of behavior specialists. Active commitment and participation by the building administrator sets an important tone for supporting implementation of Basic FBA to BIP. The administrator plays a central role during Behavior Intervention Planning when they provide decision making authority that allows the team to effectively and efficiently decide on interventions and supports such as scheduling, personnel and resources. The administrator can also increase accountability for staff implementation of the behavior intervention plan because the administrator is more likely to have a supervisory role over participating staff to encourage plan implementation.

Before embarking on Basic FBA to BIP training, it’s important that school district work with school leadership teams to assess school readiness and commitment. Moving forward with Tier 3 Behavior Support requires an authentic commitment to supporting students with persistent challenging behavior in the school. Working with schools and administrators to establish an authentic commitment to Tier 3 Behavior Support is a critical first step. Here is a link to a School Readiness and Commitment form outlining some of the important commitments.

**Figure 1.** Example Model for Larger District Implementing Basic FBA/BIP.

Over time, larger school districts (see Figure 1) may need multiple District Behavior Specialists to train and support a team of Behavior TOSAs to develop skills in coaching and supporting school level teams through Basic FBA to BIP implementation and build skills toward conducting more complex FBA/BIPs.
In smaller school districts (see Figure 2), there may be a single District Behavior Specialist who directly trains and supports the School Behavior Support Teams through Basic FBA to BIP training and implementation.

**Figure 2.** Example Model for Smaller District Implementing Basic FBA/BIP.

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**Evaluation Planning**

The District Leadership team and District Behavior Specialist should develop an Evaluation Plan that can help guide implementation of Tier 3 systems of Behavior Support and implementation of FBA/BIP. The plan should include measures of implementation fidelity, student outcomes, and scale of implementation.

**Fidelity of Implementation Data**

Measuring fidelity of implementation should occur across both the systems level and the individual case level. Specific questions could include:

1) Are schools implementing FBA/BIP with fidelity for individual student cases?
2) Is the District Professional Development effort improving fidelity of implementation of:  
   a. Tier 3 Systems in our schools?  
   b. FBA/BIP processes in our schools?

**Systems Level.** While FBA/BIP practices are important, it’s also necessary to consistently examine the systems that support implementation of Tier 2 and Tier 3 systems in the school as a context
for supporting continuing implementation of individual behavior support. It is important for school teams to regularly (at least annually) examine the data systems and team processes that guide consistent, enduring implementation of Tier 2 and Tier 3 supports in the school. The Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI; www.pbisapps.org) is specifically designed to support school teams in assessing implementation of behavior supports systems and guiding development of Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 systems. Teams should work with a coach to use the TFI as an action planning tool to guide implementation efforts.

**Individual Case Level.** Fidelity at the individual case level can be understood on two levels: (1) the fidelity of behavior specialists in implementing the steps and practices of the FBA/BIP process (e.g. FBA interview, observations, Behavior Intervention Plan, Implementation Plan, Evaluation Plan) and (2) fidelity of implementation of each student’s personal Behavior Intervention Plan. Both are important and worthy of measurement and monitoring. Since an initial emphasis is on training and supporting our School Behavior Specialists to implement the Basic FBA to BIP process, the emphasis here will be on monitoring the fidelity with which the behavior specialists are conducting elements of the FBA/BIP process with fidelity. Initially, measures of implementation fidelity should primarily be used through the provision of feedback to support skill development and build fluency of School Behavior Specialists. District Behavior Specialists can review FBA/BIP products and provide feedback to support School Behavior Specialists with developing skills and increasing fluency of FBA/BIP practices. Coaching tools are available that can be used to provide feedback on FBA/BIP products. Basic FBA to BIP provides Coaching Checklists that can be used as progress monitoring tools to support the continuing development of School Behavior Specialists FBA to BIP skills. Coaching Checklists are available for the homework tasks assigned with each module, coinciding with each step of the FBA/BIP process:

A) FBA Interview – examines the extent each component of the interview was effectively completed  
B) FBA Observation and Summary of Behavior – examines the efficacy with which the ABC Observation was completed and the process of merging FBA information into a Summary of Behavior  
C) Behavior Intervention Plan – examines whether the competing behavior pathway and intervention suggestions are function-based and align with the FBA information collected  
D) Implementation Plan – examines the clarity of the implementation plan in identifying specific tasks to implement, who is responsible and a clear timeline for implementation  
E) Evaluation Plan and Data Collection forms – examines whether the data collection forms align with information on the competing behavior pathway and goals, and specifies who is responsible for each of the data collection tasks  
F) BIP Review - examines collection and presentation of data and whether review of data led to appropriate decisions

Another good tool for assessing fidelity of FBA/BIP is the Technical Adequacy Tool for Evaluation (TATE; here are links to the TATE Scoring Guide and Scoring Rubric).

The data from the coaching checklists or TATE can be used in two ways. First the data can help the district specialist provide individual feedback to School Behavior Specialists in training. The data also allow the district-level coach to identify patterns of mistakes being made across cases completed by the school behavior specialists to inform skills and topics to review and provide continuing training to
supplement the initial Basic FBA to BIP training.

A few simple, but important, measures of implementation fidelity can include whether the right participants are attending BIP Meetings, whether BIP Review meetings are happening, whether student outcome and whether implementation fidelity data are being collected and reviewed at meetings.

The compilation of this fidelity data can also be an important indicator of the effectiveness of the district level professional development plan and coaching and technical assistance supports.

**Outcome Data**

While the focus is on improving outcomes for individual students, the number of BIPs implemented in the district may be an important outcome of an effective professional development effort for FBA/BIP. There are a variety of measures that could be used to examine student outcomes, but the primary measure in Basic FBA to BIP is reviewing the data directly linked to each student behavior plan by reviewing the graphs presenting the daily point card data for the BIP. Are students making progress and/or meeting the 80% criteria as measured in their BIP? Other less direct measures might be the number of students being expelled, moved to more restrictive placements for behavior, or the rate of disciplinary infractions (e.g. discipline referrals, suspensions) students receive before and after implementation of the BIP. Another indicator might be student attendance.

**Scale of Implementation**

Scale of implementation can be a way to evaluate capacity building efforts within schools and across the school district. Measures might include:

- Number of FBA/BIPs completed
- The number of staff members completing FBA/BIPs
- The length of time between referrals for FBA and the beginning of the FBA/BIP process
- Type (or severity) of problem behaviors for which FBA is being conducted
- Number of students receiving individualized BIPs who do not have IEPs (e.g., prior to referral for Special Education in an effort to prevent special education referral)
- The number of FBA/BIP cases started by month, striving toward more cases beginning in the early school months, rather than waiting until later in the school year
- The number of discipline referrals or suspensions a student has received prior to starting the FBA/BIP process.

Over time, schools might also examine how the role of the District Behavior Specialist has shifted and if they are able to contribute more meaningfully to complex FBA cases due to increased capacity for implementing Basic FBA to BIP in the schools.

**Maximizing Training with the Basic FBA to BIP e-Learning Modules**

School districts should consider the most effective ways to make the e-learning modules available to trainees. First, as mentioned previously, be purposeful in identifying people for training who will have the time, capacity, flexibility and expectation to carry out the FBA/BIP process on which they are receiving training. Next, it’s important to plan out a training schedule. The Basic FBA to BIP training sequence was
purposefully scaffolded to limit the amount of information presented at one time. Training in the entirety of the FBA/BIP process in a single training session is overwhelming, particularly when participants will not be able to immediately practice the skills and processes for which they were trained. For example, if a behavior specialist is trained on how to lead a team through the Implementation Planning process in a one-day FBA/BIP training, there is likely to be two weeks to complete the FBA before the trainee is ready to lead an Implementation meeting, which means they have to recall what they were trained on two weeks ago.

Basic FBA to BIP chunks out each component of the FBA/BIP process so that training should be closely followed by the opportunity to practice the skills trained in the module. For example, when someone is trained to conduct an FBA interview, it is best if that person applies the skills in practice within a day or two following training, rather than waiting for two weeks to go by, at which time they should probably go through the training again.

It is recommended that each module is scheduled a week or two weeks apart with an emphasis on completing the homework task assigned in that module prior to moving on to the next module. Module 1 doesn’t have a homework task specifically related to conducting the FBA/BIP, except for the task of identifying a student and gaining consent, so that the participant can get started with the FBA interview immediately after completing Module 2 on FBA Interviews. It’s also important that the training modules are not spaced too far apart, otherwise the FBA/BIP process gets too disjointed, and teachers and staff can get frustrated with the slow process. It’s important that the District Behavior Specialist is assertive in their coaching role to ensure that completion of homework tasks is a priority.

Another consideration is the where and how of training delivery. The e-learning format provides great flexibility for when and how people can take the training, but focused engagement with the modules is important. It is not suggested that a link to the module be distributed via email with the suggestion or directive to complete the module on your own time. This may lead to “multi-tasking” (e.g. completing another work task, watching Netflix) while completing the modules, which is not going to provide the level of engagement necessary to garner the greatest benefit from the modules. Due to the highly interactive nature of the e-learning modules, it is encouraged that each trainee completes the modules individually, but it is encouraged that this be done in community during an assigned professional development time within professional hours. While completing the modules, periodic breaks to share important points, challenges, ask questions or check for understanding of module content can increase engagement and a sense of community in the training process. A District Behavior Specialist, or someone with more experience and expertise with FBA/BIP and the Basic FBA to BIP content are encouraged to be present to address questions and facilitate discussion of the module content. Training with the entire school team, or with multiple school teams, also provides the opportunity to provide feedback on homework from the prior week and answer any questions that might have surfaced during the process of completing the homework task. The modules usually take about an hour to 75 minutes to complete, so including time for discussion the trainings might best be scheduled for 90 minutes to 2 hours.

Trainings should also extend beyond completion of the seven Basic FBA to BIP e-learning modules. Reaching a level of mastery and fluency with FBA/BIP requires completing more than a single FBA/BIP. Ongoing trainings should provide an opportunity, encouragement and expectation to conduct additional FBA/BIP cases. The focus of training can shift toward reviewing specific cases and/or aspects of the
FBA/BIP process that require additional review and development across School Behavior Specialists.

It's also encouraged that, if possible, the training series begins early in the year. In order to (a) scaffold learning and try to set up trainees for success and (b) identify and begin addressing student behavior support needs as early in the school year as possible. Starting early in the year, also provides more opportunity for continuing practice with multiple cases across the year.

**School-wide Training**

As teams of behavior specialists are being trained in the Basic FBA to BIP modules they are encouraged to facilitate school-wide staff training in the Basics of Understanding Behavior (Module 1) and Function-Based Intervention (Module 4). The goal is to create a common language and framework across staff for understanding behavior and behavioral intervention. This should (a) provide teachers and staff with additional skills and tools for understanding and intervening when they are working with students engaging in persistent challenging behavior and, (b) increase teacher and staff ability to more effectively and efficiently participate in the FBA/BIP process for their students.

It is important to be strategic in planning this school-wide professional development. It is important that school leadership teams agree to this before they commit to participating in Basic FBA to BIP training, so that they can plan ahead for scheduling school-wide PD sessions.

Here are suggestions for planning the school-wide training for Basic FBA to BIP:

- Schedule a designated time to complete the modules during school PD
- Have a plan for encouraging and following up with homework
- Make sure to provide a context and rationale for the training so staff clearly understand the purpose of the training
- Train in smaller groups of staff (e.g. grade levels) when possible, assigning members of the School-level Behavior Support team to different groups with the opportunity to answer questions, facilitate discussion and follow up on homework task
- Build in time and opportunity to follow up with homework tasks in groups

**Nana korobi, ya oki**

“Nana korobi, ya oki” is a Japanese proverb that means “Fall down seven times, stand up eight.” It is choosing to never give up, to maintain hope, and to always strive for more. It means that your focus isn’t on the reality in front of you, but on a greater vision that may not be reality yet.

FBA/BIP and Tier 3 Behavior Support is critically important in our commitment to serving all students in our schools. This work is also among the most challenging and humbling work that we do in schools. Each individual case can provide a myriad of challenges ranging from teacher frustration and exhaustion to personality conflicts, from implicit biases to long-standing traditions of exclusionary practices. Throughout professional development, it’s important to create an environment of accountability, but to
balance that with compassion, support and encouragement. This is true for the members of BIP teams in schools, but also for Behavior Specialists as they progress through this training. There will be disappointments and challenges when we struggle to work with some of our colleagues, or our students aren’t responding. It’s important to recognize and understand limitations in our schools to meet the vast needs presented by some Behavior Support cases. Most importantly, each challenge and disappointment needs to be embraced as an opportunity for learning and growth. “Nana korobi, ya oki” In the face of disappointment, it’s important that Behavior Specialists stubbornly maintain the steadfast belief that the failure does not lie within the student and that they can support the student to be successful though the appropriate environmental and instructional supports. Individualized, function-based support gives many of our students and staff members their best hope for success in our schools.