BUILDING POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT SYSTEMS IN

SCHOOLS

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT

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Figures 2.4, 5.2, and 7.4, and Appendices B, E, and F © 2003 Deanne A. Crone and Robert H. Horner

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CHAPTER 4

Designing a Behavior Support Plan

INTRODUCTION

Using the three case examples introduced in Chapter 3, this chapter will demonstrate how to use a FBA to design a BSP. A BSP is a written record that summarizes the FBA information and documents the intervention plan. An effective BSP describes in detail how, by whom, and in what situations the intervention strategies will be implemented. In addition, an effective BSP should include monitoring and evaluation procedures.

COMPETING BEHAVIORS

The first step in designing a BSP is to generate strategies for reducing problem behaviors and increasing appropriate, replacement behaviors. By ensuring that the intervention is linked with the FBA, the efficiency, efficacy, and relevance of the BSP are increased. The Competing Behavior Pathway form is one instrument used to create a link between the FBA and the BSP The Competing Behavior Pathway form is incorporated into the F-BSP Protocol. A blank copy is included in Appendix B (Step 6: Build a Competing Behavior Pathway).

Competing behaviors are behaviors that are mutually exclusive. An individual cannot simultaneously engage in two competing behaviors. For example, running and walking are competing behaviors. Applied to BSPs, problem behaviors and desired behaviors are competing behaviors. A child cannot simultaneously engage in "ignore the teacher" and "follow directions."

The purpose of the Competing Behavior Pathway step is threefold: (1) to highlight the importance of building the behavior support plan around the hy-

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pothesis statement; (2) to identify competing behavioral alternatives (desired or acceptable behaviors) to the problem behavior; and (3) to determine strategies for making the problem behavior ineffective, inefficient, or irrelevant through changes to the routine or environment.

The Behavior Support Team uses the Competing Behavior Pathway step to brainstorm multiple strategies for changing the routine by (1) modifying the predictors that set off the problem behavior; (2) teaching appropriate or alternate behaviors; and (3) modifying ineffective consequences that have maintained rather than eliminated the problem behavior. The intervention strategies developed by referring to the Competing Behavior Pathway step will become the basis of the behavior support plan.

To clarify, examine the sample Competing Behavior Pathway form for Tom in Figure 4.1. The middle section of the Competing Behaviors Pathway form restates the hypothesis statement. Put simply, "This is what is happening now." The top section identifies the appropriate, desired behavior expected of the child: "This is what we'd like to have happen eventually." The bottom section indicates alternative behaviors that serve the same function as the problem behavior, but are more acceptable to the teacher, other school staff, and parents: "This is what we'd be happy with in the meantime." Often, it is not the function of the problem behavior that is offensive (e.g., to receive adult attention). Rather, it is the strategies the child uses to achieve that function (e.g., causing serious disruptions in the class) that is problematic. To create an effective BSP, the Behavior Support Team and referring teacher must teach the child alternative, acceptable behaviors that serve the same function as the problem behavior (e.g., teaching the child to request help for difficult tasks).

Consider the case example of Tom by referring to Figure 4.1. Tom's primary problem behavior was "refusing to do work and causing disruption." The function of his problem behavior was "gaining teacher and peer attention." A desired alternative (i.e., competing behavior) could be "completing work without disruption." An acceptable alternative behavior, serving the same function as the problem behavior while also competing with the problem behavior, could be "requesting intermittent attention and assistance from the teacher or a competent peer." If the student begins to consistently engage in the acceptable alternative, this alternative will serve as a stepping-stone to the "desired behavior." For example, Tom's teachers and parents would like him to eventually be able to work independently without overreliance on his teacher or peers. The Competing Behavior Pathway forms for Vera and Ronald are presented in Figures 4.2 and 4.3.

Once the team has determined the desired behavior and an acceptable alternative to the problem behavior, they must generate strategies to facilitate the student's performance of these behaviors. In order to make the problem behavior ineffective, inefficient, and irrelevant, the team should focus on strategies

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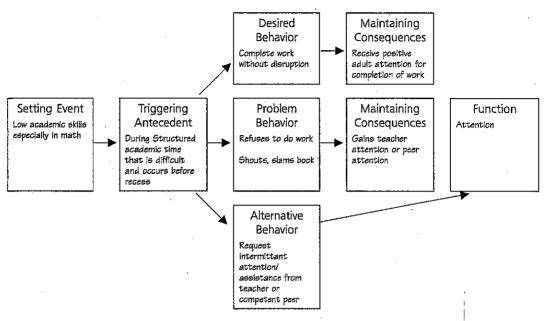
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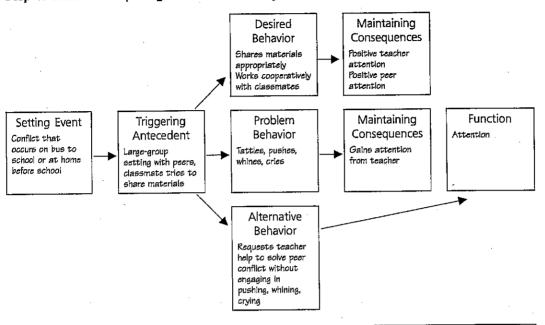
Step 6: Build a Competing Behavior Pathway



Setting Event Strategies	Antecedent Strategies	Behavior Teaching Strategies	Consequence Strategies
Assess if math curriculum is at	Define expectations	Teach expectations	Reward expectations
appropriate level	Divide one long recess into two short recesses	Teach about reward system	Ignore inappropriate behavior
Additional instruction in math	that occur earlier	Teach to ask for help	Earn "attention tickets"
1:1 instruction in math	Precorrect	through role play	Earn other tangibles—
•	Move desk to quiet area		e.g., art supplies or time to work on art projects.
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FIGURE 4.1. Behavior Support Plan, Step 6—Tom. The form itselft is from O'Neill et al., Functional Assessment for Problem Behavior: A Practical Handbook (2nd ed.). © 1997. Adapted by permission of Wadsworth, an imprint of the Wadsworth Group, a division of Thomson Learning. Fax 800-730-2215.

Step 6: Build a Competing Behavior Pathway



Setting Event Strategies	Antecedent Strategies	Behavior Teaching Strategies	Consequence Strategies
Increase communication between home and	Define expectations	Teach expectations	Reward expectations
school	Precorrect	Teach to request help	Give positive attention for working appropriately
Increase communication between bus and school	Increase number of supplies available	Teach to problem solve with peers	and cooperating
			Reward system to earn
	Seat next to competent peer	Teach to take turns using materials	rewards for entire group
	Pair with peer who is a good role model	·	
		·	

FIGURE 4.2. Behavior Support Plan, Step 6—Vera. The form itselft is from O'Neill et al., Functional Assessment for Problem Behavior: A Practical Handbook (2nd ed.). © 1997. Adapted by permission of Wadsworth, an imprint of the Wadsworth Group, a division of Thomson Learning. Fax 800-730-2215.

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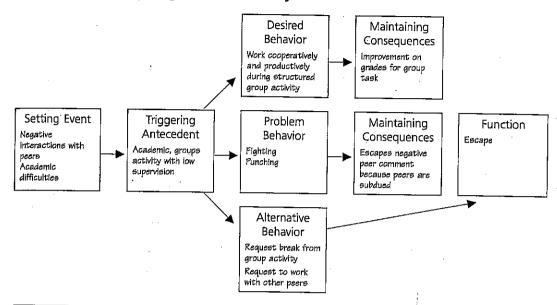
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FIGURE 4.3. tional Assessmimission of Wa 800-730-2215.

Step 6: Build a Competing Behavior Pathway



Setting Event Strategies	Antecedent Strategies	Behavior Teaching Strategies	Consequence Strategies
Setting Event Strategies Physically separate from peers with whom he has the most negative interactions Assess academic Skills Individualize/modify curriculum to match skills	Antecedent Strategies Define expectations Reduce number of group activities expected Allow choice of group or individual projects Increase his monitoring/ supervision Check-in system Pair with peer who provides good role model		Consequence Strategies Reward expectattions Emphasize connections between actions and grades Reward Ronald for appropriate behavior
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FIGURE 4.3. Behavior Support Plan, Step 6-Ronald. The form itselft is from O'Neill et al., Functional Assessment for Problem Behavior: A Practical Handbook (2nd ed.). © 1997. Adapted by perearning. Fax mission of Wadsworth, an imprint of the Wadsworth Group, a division of Thomson Learning. Fax 800-730-2215.

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et al., Funcpted by perthat teach the child new skills and behaviors or that alter aspects of the child's routine. At each point in the hypothesis statement (setting event, triggering antecedent, problem behavior, consequence), adults can alter the student's routine to improve the likelihood that the child will be successful—that problem behavior will be decreased and appropriate behavior will be increased. The Competing Behavior Pathway form (Step 6 of the F-BSP Protocol) provides space to brainstorm strategies for (1) setting event manipulations, (2) triggering antecedent manipulations, (3) behavioral teaching, and (4) consequence manipulations. The following are some strategies suggested on Ronald's Competing Behavior Pathway form (Figure 4.3): (1) to change the setting event—physically separate Ronald from those peers with whom he has the most negative interactions; (2) to change the antecedents-allow Ronald a choice of group or individual projects or increase bis monitoring/supervision; (3) to teach new behaviors—teach Ronald to request a break or a change in partners; (4) to change the consequences-reward Ronald for appropriate behavior.

At this point in designing the BSP, the Behavior Support Team is brainstorming. Team members should not censor any suggestions. Later the team will consider the list of ideas and decide which strategies fit best within the contextual limitations of the school and classroom. By brainstorming, the team creates a "bank" of ideas from which to draw. The team may choose a few strategies to begin with and then find that the original plan does not work for a particular child. The team will find that modifying an ineffective BSP is much easier when there are a multitude of additional options to go back to and choose from.

The primary reasons for using the Competing Behavior Pathway and for including parents and teachers in the development of the BSP are: "1) it increases the link between intervention procedures and functional assessment results; 2) it increases the fit between the values, skills, resources, and routines of the people who will carry out the plan and the procedures that will be employed; 3) it increases the logical coherence among the different procedures that could be used in a multi-element plan of support; and 4) it increases the fidelity with which the plan is ultimately implemented" (O'Neill et al., 1997, p. 69).

CONTEXTUAL FIT

A second, important consideration in designing a BSP is to increase the fit between the behavior support plan and the values, skills, resources, and routines of the people who will carry out the plan. This concept is called contextual fit. The importance of contextual fit cannot be overstated. Imagine designing the "perfect" BSP, one that if implemented properly could not fail to work, only to find that it cannot be implemented properly. The Behavior Support Team may find that t time, resc The i

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The importance of contextual fit can be illustrated with a few examples.

Example 1

The Behavior Support Team may choose to incorporate a home-school note into Ronald's BSP. First, the team identifies a behavioral goal for each class period. On a daily basis, Ronald checks in with each teacher to mark if he has met his goal during that class period. At the end of the day he checks out with the school counselor and takes the behavior sheet home. His parents are expected to review the behavior sheet, sign it, write an encouraging comment for Ronald, and return it to the school.

This is a sound strategy, one that has been demonstrated to work with middle school students at risk for serious behavior problems. Parents could be taught to understand and participate in the system. However, what if Ronald's parents are illiterate? In this case, they will not be able to read the daily report or add comments to it. How will this affect Ronald's success? Will it embarrass the parents and alienate them from the school? These types of problems can be easily avoided (once contextual fit is considered) with slight modifications. For example, the school could make phone contact rather than paper contact with the student's parents.

Example 2

Part of Tom's original BSP involved increasing communication between his homeroom teacher and his resource room teacher. Tom's resource room teacher would write a note about his behavior during class and Tom would carry the note back with him to his homeroom teacher. Two problems arose: (1) When Tom is angry (e.g., if he receives a negative report on his behavior) he has a tendency to rip his papers into shreds; and (2) Tom is very forgetful and distractible and often forgets or loses the resource room teacher's note. The intervention strategy does not have to be eliminated. Rather, by considering contextual fit, the strategy could be modified and made more effective. To eliminate the first problem, the behavior note could be laminated and reused, using a grease pencil, on a daily basis. To eliminate the second problem, the responsibility for sending the note between teachers could be placed on the teachers, not on the student. Another possible solution would be to reward Tom for delivering the note to his homeroom teacher, whether or not the note contained good news or bad news.

Often, problems of contextual fit revolve around issues of time and effort.

The team may design a comprehensive BSP that requires more time and effort than the teacher has to give. In designing BSPs, the Behavior Support Team should emphasize effectiveness and efficiency. For example, rather than design a BSP that requires constant teacher monitoring and interaction, the Behavior Support Team might create a BSP that includes self-management or self-monitoring strategies by the student. By taking some of the burden off the teacher, while teaching the child responsibility and independence, a BSP that includes self-management achieves a double purpose.

INDIVIDUALIZING THE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN

One of the most difficult challenges in intervening with children with behavior problems is their variability in response to treatment. Intervention strategies may be effective for some children but not for others, or may only be effective for certain children in certain settings. When a BSP does not incorporate FBA, different children exhibiting the same type of behavior problems may receive the same intervention, even if the problem behavior serves different functions for different children.

Imagine a second-grade student who frequently causes serious disruption in the classroom. Based on an FBA, the following hypothesis statement is generated: "After the teacher gives Reuben a difficult reading assignment, Reuben crumples his paper and starts flinging spit wads at his peers in order to get out of the assignment." An FBA of the same behavior exhibited by a different child yields a slightly different hypothesis statement. For example, "When Rita is in reading class and she has not received any individual teacher attention for over 10 minutes, she starts crumpling her assignment and flinging spit wads at her classmates in order to get the teacher's attention." The behavior of the two students looks exactly the same. However, the predictors and function of the behavior are quite different and suggest very different BSPs.

Assume that the teacher employs a very common response to disruptive behavior: each time a child causes a serious disruption he or she is made to sit in the hallway for 10 minutes. This generic approach to managing problem behavior is actually rewarding to Reuben! By being placed in the hallway he obtains what he is seeking: escape from his reading assignment. Placing the student in the hallway might be a more effective discipline strategy for Rita. This strategy further reduces the amount of teacher attention Rita receives. In the future, she is less likely to try that strategy to obtain teacher attention.

A function-based approach considers the unique features of the situation, the child, or the behavior that predict the success or failure of a behavioral intervention. Use of FBA procedures helps the Behavior Support Team to design behavior support plans for each student with whom they work.

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A second important consideration in individualizing BSPs is the choice of reinforcers. Many BSPs will incorporate a reward system to reinforce the child's appropriate behavior. The choice of reinforcers should be based on what is motivating to this particular student, not based on what an adult believes is motivating to all students. For example, in Tom's original BSP, the team decided that he could earn 5 minutes of computer time if he exhibited appropriate behavior during typically problematic routines. The plan was implemented, but Tom's behavior got worse. Why did Tom's behavior get worse after implementing the intervention? The team was perplexed until they spoke with Tom. After speaking with Tom, they discovered that his least favorite activity was using the computer! In effect, the team was "rewarding" Tom's good behavior with an activity that was actually punishing to him. Upon further questioning, the team learned that Tom enjoys using art supplies. The BSP was modified so that Tom could earn 5 minutes of art time instead of computer time. Immediately, his behavior improved as he worked toward a personally meaningful reinforcer. Information about a student's preferred activities and reinforcers can be easily obtained through the student-guided interview, as described in Chapter 3.

DOCUMENTING A BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN

After completing the Competing Behavior Pathway form and deciding which strategies will be used, the Behavior Support Team documents these decisions in the form of a written BSP. Each school district typically provides their own forms for documenting BSPs. A sample form for each of the three case examples is presented in Figures 4.4, 4.5, and 4.6. A blank copy of this form is incorporated into the F-BSP Protocol (see Appendix B, Step 7: Selection Intervention Strategies).

The team chooses among the strategies generated on the Competing Behavior Pathway form and lists each strategy on the BSP (this is Step 7: Select Intervention Strategies on the F-BSP Protocol). At times, the team may add strategies that were not used in Step 6. It is critical to document who is responsible for implementing the strategy, when it will be implemented, and how it will be implemented. If the student is to be taught a new behavior, the plan must indicate who will teach the child the behavior. Someone on the team should be designated to discuss the BSP with the student. This critical step is often forgotten or neglected. If the BSP is to be effective, the student *must* be informed about its expectations, goals, and rewards, and must have the opportunity to ask questions about the plan.

An essential component of the BSP is documenting a plan for managing inappropriate behavior. The child's inappropriate behavior has been built over a long period of time. It may take an equally long period of time to replace the inappropriate behavior with appropriate behavior. The adults in the student's rou-

Step 7: Select Intervention Strategies

āsks	Person Responsible	By When	Review Date	Evaluation Decision
. Math assessment and curriculum Individualization	Math resource teacher	Two weeks— 11/1/99	2–3 weeks 11/8/99	
Role-play how to make appropriate requests for help	School psychologist	By 10/25/99	11/8/99	
Allow Tom to earn "coupons" to trade in at school store or for 5 minutes of art time as a reward for appropriate behavior throughout a class period	Teacher	Begin 10/22/99	11/8/99	
 Design behavior card and "coupons." Communicate to all relevant adults how the behavior card will be used 	School psychologist	10/21/99	11/8/99	
5. Explain behavior support plan to student	Teacher	10/21/99	11/8/99	
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^{*}If emergency behavior management procedures are necessary, attach crisis plan as separate sheet.

FIGURE 4.4. Behavior Support Plan, Step 7-Tom.

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- 1. "1-minute of positive at morning by was and be behavioral
- 2. Practice roright way and how the
- 3. Provide po: encourage: 10 minute: work exhibi
- 4. Explain bel
- 5. Ignore tati

^{*}If emergency !

Step 7: Select Intervention Strategies

Tasl	ks	Person Responsible	By When	Review Date	Evaluation Decision Monitor Modify Discontinue
_	"1-minute check-in." Teacher provides positive attention first thing in the morning by asking Yera how her morning was and by precorrecting her about behavioral expectations for school	Kindergarten teacher	Next Tuesday 1/25/99	Within 2– 3 weeks 2/6/99	
2.	Practice role playing with student the right way to share with other students and how to ask for help from teacher rather than tattle	Kindergarten teacher	1/28/99	2/6/99	
3.	Provide positive attention (smile, encouragement, pat on back) after every 10 minutes of cooperative, nondisruptive work exhibited by Yera	Kindergarten teacher	1/25/99	2/6/99	
4.	Explain behavior support plan to Vera	School psychologist	Day before it starts 1/24/99	2/6/99	
5.	Ignore tattling behavior	Kindergarten teacher	1/25/99	2/6/99	
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^{*}If emergency behavior management procedures are necessary, attach crisis plan as separate sheet.

FIGURE 4.5. Behavior Support Plan, Step 7-Vera.

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Step 7: Select Intervention Strategies

Tas	ks	Person Responsible	By When	Review Date	Evaluation Decision Monitor Modify Discontinue
1.	Provide student with choice to complete project individually or with group	Science and social studies teachers	Next day 2/11/99	2-3 weeks 2/28/99	
2.	Increase supervision of group activities	Teachers	2/11/99	2/28/99	
3.	Student participate in peer conflict resolution group	Led by school counselor	Ongoing group: begin 2/18/99	2/28/99	
4.	Student participate in relaxation skills group	Led by school counselor	Ongoing group: begin 2/19/99	2/28/99	
5.	Teach student to request a break from work or to request a change in work partners	School psychologist	2/11/99	2/28/99	
6.	Respond to student requests for break and praise student for appropriate use of the strategy	Teachers	2/11/99	2/28/99	
7.	Create behavior card for monitoring behavior in class	School psychologist	2/11/99	2/28/99	
8.	Explain behavior support plan to student	School psychologist	2/11/99	2/28/99	
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^{*}If emergency behavior management procedures are necessary, attach crisis plan as separate sheet.

FIGURE 4.6. Behavior Support Plan, Step 7-Ronald.

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ation Decision onitor odify scontinue tines should have a consistent plan for responding to inappropriate behavior. In the case of mild misbehavior, the plan may be simply to ignore the behavior. Severe or dangerous behavior may require a crisis plan.

A crisis plan was developed for responding to Ronald's severely disruptive or dangerous behavior. This crisis plan, as presented in Table 4.1, should be attached to the BSP. The crisis plan should be based on data collected during the FBA and during discussion of the school's resources and the staff's availability to assist each other. Each of the staff involved in Ronald's plan agreed to their part in the plan. A copy of the crisis plan is distributed to the principal and each of Ronald's teachers.

Perhaps the most important step in documenting the BSP is to obtain the written agreement of everyone involved in the implementation of the plan, including the student, teacher, parent/guardian, and other members of the Action Team. Finally, the team should specify a date when the plan will be reviewed, evaluated, and modified if necessary. A copy of the BSP should be provided to each of the student's teachers and to the student's parents. A copy should also be kept on file in the Behavior Support Team's records.

Designing an effective BSP is both a science and an art. To be effective, each BSP needs to address numerous critical features that have been discussed in this book. Some of these critical features include (1) an observable, measurable description of the problem behavior; (2) a testable explanation regarding the function of the problem behavior; (3) strategies for extinguishing problem behavior; (4) strategies for reinforcing appropriate behavior; (5) strategies for measuring and evaluating behavioral change; and (6) consideration of contextual fit. Although Step 7 of the F-BSP Protocol lists the actual strategies that will be employed, the entire document, Steps 1–8, can be considered part of the final BSP. The F-BSP Protocol includes all of the critical features of a good, function-based BSP without creating redundancy by requiring the same information on multiple forms (e.g., on the Interview form, the BSP form, the Evaluation form, etc.). Hor-

TABLE 4.1. Sample Crisis Plan for Ronald

- 1. Be aware of cues that student is upset.
- 2. Try to calm student. Separate student from peers if possible.
- 3. If problem gets worse, notify school principal.
- 4. School counselor will cover gym teacher's class
- 5. Gym teacher will come to talk with student and escort him to gym.
- 6. Student takes a 10-minute time-out outside of gym.
- 7. Student is verbally praised for calming himself and for taking time-out appropriately.
- 8. The gym teacher reminds student of expectations upon returning to class.
- 9. The gym teacher (or other adult) escorts student back to class.

ner et al. (1999–2000) designed a checklist for assessing the quality of BSPs. This checklist is reproduced in Figure 4.7; a copy of the checklist is also included in Appendix I.

Although a complete treatment of the subject of designing BSP is beyond the scope of this chapter, the reader can refer to the Supplementary Section of this chapter for a list of resources on this topic.

SUPPLEMENTARY SECTION

Behavior Support Plans

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8.	Intervention/ Extinction (m a)
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FIGURE 4.7. (1999–2000).

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A CHECKLIST FOR ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLANNING: DOES THE PLAN (OR PLANNING PROCESS) HAVE THESE FEATURES?

When developing and implementing behavior support plans, judge the degree to which each of the following has been considered:

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orth.

G =	Good O = Okay P = Poor N = Not applicable
2. 3. 4.	Define academic and lifestyle context for behavior support Operational description of problem behaviors Problem routines identified Functional assessment hypotheses stated Intervention/Foundations (issues that cut across routines) a) health and physiology b) communication c) mobility d) predictability e) control/choice f) social relationships g) activity patterns
6.	Intervention/Prevention (make problem behavior irrelevant) a) schedule b) curriculum c) instructional procedures
, 7.	Intervention/ <i>Teaching</i> (make problem behavior inefficient) a) replacement skills b) new adaptive skills
8.	Intervention/Consequences Extinction (make problem behavior ineffective) a) minimize positive reinforcement b) minimize negative reinforcement Reinforcement (make appropriate behavior more effective) a) maximize positive reinforcement Punishment (if needed) a) negative consequences contingent upon problem behavior Safety/Emergency Intervention Plan a) clear plan for what to do if/when problem behaviors occur
9	Evaluation and Assessment a) define the information to be collected b) define the measurement process c) define decision-making process.
10	Ensure Contextual Fit a) values b) skills c) resources d) administrative system e) perceptions that program is in best interest of student

FIGURE 4.7. Behavior support plan checklist. Adapted from Horner, Sugai, Todd, & Lewis-Palmer (1999–2000). Copyright 1999–2000 by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Adapted by permission.