

IS A CAREER AS A BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST RIGHT FOR YOU?



WHAT IS A BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST?

A behavior specialist is someone who is an expert in understanding and modifying human behavior. Behavior specialists work with students to address their challenging behaviors and improve their social and daily living skills.

WHAT MIGHT YOU DO AS A BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST?

As a behavior specialist, you might work in a school, a home, or in the community. Your job responsibilities may include:



Observing students to see what “triggers” them to engage in challenging behaviors.



Recommending ways to de-escalate behaviors so students are safe.



Teaching students school-appropriate behaviors to replace challenging behaviors.



Teaching students skills to cope with challenges.



Checking in with the students and teachers to see how interventions work.

YOU MIGHT ENJOY A CAREER AS A BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST IF YOU LIKE TO:

- Think on your feet.
- Make decisions under pressure.
- Use data to make decisions.
- Work with students of different ages and abilities.
- Build relationships with students and their families.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD: MEET A BEHAVIOR SPECIALIST

“ I think it’s a great career path...and you really do get to make a difference in the lives of students. ”

Stephanie Baynham
Behavior Specialist
Lancaster-Lebanon Intermediate Unit 13

Scan the QR code to watch the interview.



HOW TO BECOME A BEHAVIORAL SPECIALIST IN PENNSYLVANIA:

In Pennsylvania, a behavior specialist requires a college education, specialized training, and licensure. Behavior Specialists must hold a Behavior Specialist license issued by the Pennsylvania Department of State.

Educational Requirements:

- Obtain a bachelor’s degree in a relevant field such as psychology, social work, and counseling.
- Obtain a Behavior Specialist Certificate, Behavior Analysis Certificate, or Applied Behavior Analysis Certificate and/or a master’s degree in a course of study such as school, clinical, developmental, or counseling psychology, special education, social work, speech therapy, occupational therapy, professional counseling, or behavioral analysis.

To learn more about the certificates and master’s programs in applied behavior analysis, use the link to explore the college and university websites.



Gain Experience:

- Most positions require at least 1,000 hours of in-person experience with individuals with behavioral challenges or autism spectrum disorders.
- Start working in entry-level positions in social services, mental health facilities, or related fields.

Licensure:

- Apply to the Pennsylvania Department of State Board of Medicine.
- The application can be found on the [Department of State website](#).

