Early Intervention Program Guidance for
Developing a Behavior Support Policy

Introduction

Positive behavior supports include a variety of techniques to develop and maintain skills that enhance all children's opportunities for learning and building social skills. However, even when developmentally appropriate behavior supports are systematically provided, some children require an individualized behavior support plan to help them manage challenging behaviors. Potential causes of challenging behavior, such as physical or medical conditions, environmental factors, staffing and program concerns, shall be reviewed and addressed prior to the development of an individual behavior support plan. An individual behavior support plan will include specific strategies that are in addition to the general classroom or home positive behavior support. A positive behavior support policy is required for all Early Intervention programs to give program-wide guidance on developing individual behavior support strategies, goals, and plans.

Regulatory Basis of Positive Behavior Support

Positive, rather than negative, measures must form the basis of behavior support programs to ensure that all...eligible young children shall be free from demeaning treatment, the use of aversive techniques and the unreasonable use of restraints. Behavior support programs must include research based practices and techniques to develop and maintain skills that will enhance a young child's opportunity for learning and
self-fulfillment. Behavior support programs and plans must be based on a functional assessment of behavior and utilize positive behavior techniques.
[PA Regulations 14.133(a)]

A functional assessment involves the strategic collection of data to determine the purpose of a child's behavior that is interfering with learning or participation. The behavior will be viewed as an event that includes behavioral triggers, the objective definition of the behavior, and consequences that are reinforcing the behavior of concern. When a possible function has been determined through data collection, additional new skills will be considered and appropriate replacement behavior will be taught and reinforced.

When an intervention is needed to address problem behavior, the types of intervention chosen for a particular young child shall be the least intrusive necessary. One or more of the following will be developed as a result of the functional assessment:

- Written behavior plan that employs positive behavior support strategies
- IFSP/IEP goals that address behavior needs
- Specially-designed instruction specifying behavioral guidance strategies

In order to provide appropriate guidance to Early Intervention staff and contractors, each Early Intervention program should develop a behavior support policy that includes the following components.

Core Items to Include:	Specific Examples	Regulations and References
Definitions of words and terms that are required to ensure that all users have a common understanding of the policy	Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) Behavior Support Positive Behavior Support Plan (PBSP) Environmental Supports Safety Net Procedures Others that provide clarity to the policy	PA Regulations 14.133(b)

Core Items to Include:	Specific Examples	Regulations and References
Positive Behavior Supports Describe what your program expects staff to provide to support children learning appropriate behavior. Focus on what and how you will teach. For home-based programs, address how staff are to support parents in teaching the behaviors they want from their children. Pay more attention to consequences for using new skills appropriately than to consequences for misbehavior.	Positive Strategies Behavior Management Strategies ■ High rates of child engagement ■ Frequent monitoring ■ Clear rules and procedures ■ Social praise and other reinforcement for desired behaviors ■ Environmental adaptations ■ Curriculum/activity adaptations ■ Direct instruction ■ Developmentally-appropriate schedule of activities Specific strategies to increase positive behavior ■ Teaching desired behaviors ■ Reinforcing desired behaviors much more often than undesired behaviors ■ For home-based services, supporting parents as they teach and reinforce the behaviors they want from their children Behavior reduction strategies ■ Replacement skills ■ Prevention of reinforcement of undesirable behaviors	PA Regulations 14.133(a)
Functional Behavior Assessment and Positive Behavior Support Plan Guidance Provide specifics about how your staff and contractors should proceed with the FBA/PBSP process. Who should be notified that you desire to conduct an FBA? How is the family contacted to be involved? Who determines when an FBA is warranted? Who will be on the team? One or more of the following will be developed as a result of the functional assessment: ■ Written behavior plan that employs positive behavior support strategies ■ IFSP/IEP goals that address behavior needs ■ Specially-designed instruction specifying behavior strategies	Steps that must be included in the process: 1. Identify and describe the behavior(s) of concern 2. Gather information and collect data on the target behavior(s) through interview, record review, and observation 3. Develop hypothesis about the function of the behavior 4. Design an intervention plan 5. Implement the plan and monitor its effectiveness; add specificity about data collection throughout the process 6. Modify the plan as required; fade the support when possible	O'Neill, R. E., Horner, R. H., Albin, R. W., Sprague, J. R., Storey, K., & Newton, J. S. (1997). *Functional assessment and program development for problem behavior: A practical handbook.* Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Core Items to Include:	Specific Examples	Regulations and References
Safety Net Procedures As a rule, children are not to be restrained in an attempt to manage their challenging behavior. The expectation is that the only time that restraint would ever be used is in a situation where the child is in imminent danger of harming himself or others and there is no other way to prevent harm. Even in those situations, the child must be released as soon as safety can be assured. This does not mean as soon as the child is calm…it means as soon as the situation can be made safe, even if child is still agitated. Holding a child's hand while walking down the hall or using a seat belt in a high chair for general safety purposes are not considered restraints. Using body parts or equipment to hold a struggling child in place is considered to be restraint. Routine use of mechanical restraint to control involuntary movement or a lack of muscular control such as using a harness to stabilize a child who has difficulty holding herself upright must be specified in the child's IFSP/IEP, be recommended by a medical professional with the qualifications to make such a determination, and be agreed to by the child's parent(s). In your behavior policy, include specific guidance that your program expects staff to follow in order to avoid having to restrain a child. Having staff trained to safely manage severe behaviors constitutes your safety net. In the rare event of behavior that is so dangerous that restraint is deemed necessary, staff who are specifically trained in safe physical intervention techniques (safety net procedures) should remove a child or children from a dangerous situation. The least restrictive technique that is effective will be used and the child **must** be released as soon as it is safe to do so. Your plan should stipulate who is expected to be trained and how that training is to be provided. Your plan must also describe the steps that are to be taken to prevent future incidents if safety net procedures are used.	Examples of strategies that would prevent having to use restraint might be: ■ Move other people and children away from the child who is in danger of hurting someone ■ Remove items that might be thrown or toppled ■ Provide soft items to replace items that might cause damage or pain if thrown ■ Station adults near exits to avoid children being able to escape ■ Ignore verbal outbursts The use of a safety net procedure to manage the aggressive behavior of an individual child shall cause the Early Intervention program to notify the parent and shall cause a meeting of the IFSP/IEP team within 10 school days of the inappropriate behavior. At the meeting, the IEP/IFSP team shall consider whether the young child needs a functional behavioral assessment, reevaluation, a new or revised positive behavior support plan, or a change of placement to address the inappropriate behavior. Immediately following any use of physical restraints, the Early Intervention program administrator shall notify the program's OCDEL Early Intervention advisor of the use of restraints, the circumstances that led to the use of restraint, and the scheduled date of the resultant IFSP/IEP meeting.	PA Regulations 14.133(c)

Core Items to Include:	Specific Examples	Regulations and References
Emergency Plan Every program should have an emergency plan that describes what staff are to do when faced with a threat from a child, family member, staff or community member. All staff should be aware of this plan and be able to implement it quickly.	An emergency plan for behavior that presents a clear and present danger to the young child or others may include the following information: ■ Crisis prevention strategies ■ Program personnel who should be notified of the event ■ Family notification procedure ■ Specific Early Intervention Advisor to be contacted by the program administrator ■ Contact information for local emergency services (*i.e.*, police, ambulance)	

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