Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) That Actually Work

A Practical Guide for Teachers, Administrators, and Behavior Teams

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Purpose:

A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is not a punishment plan; it's a teaching plan. Its purpose is to replace challenging behavior with new, functional skills that help students get their needs met in more appropriate ways. Too often, BIPs become paperwork exercises instead of actionable roadmaps. This worksheet provides a clear step-by-step process, practical templates, and examples to help teams design, implement, and monitor BIPs that actually change behavior.

What Makes a BIP Effective

1. **Data-Driven:** Built on solid FBA data (not assumptions).

2. **Skill-Focused:** Replaces problem behavior with a functional, teachable skill.

3. **Proactive:** Focuses on preventing triggers, not reacting after escalation.

4. **Consistent:** Uses clear, repeatable responses for all staff.

5. **Monitored:** Includes ongoing data review to refine supports.

6. **Inclusive & Equitable:** Culturally responsive and respectful of student identity, communication style, and autonomy.

The BIP Development Framework

Step	Key Task	Guiding Questions	Tools
1. Define the Behavior	Write clear, observable, measurable definition.	What exactly does the student *do*?	ABC Data, teacher logs
2. Identify the Function	Determine *why* the behavior occurs (gain/escape/sensory).	What need is the behavior meeting?	FBA summary, interviews

3. Select Replacement Behavior	Choose a skill that meets the same need in a socially appropriate way.	What can the student do *instead*?	Social scripts, visual supports
4. Develop Prevention Strategies	Modify triggers, settings, or routines.	How can we make the problem behavior unnecessary?	Schedule changes, environmental supports
5. Define Teaching Strategies	Explicitly teach the replacement skill.	When and how will we teach it?	SEL lessons, role-play
6. Plan Reinforcement System	Identify motivators tied to data and student preference.	What's meaningful to the student?	Preference assessments
7. Plan Response Strategies	Define calm, consistent adult responses.	What will staff do when behavior occurs?	Response hierarchy chart
8. Monitor & Adjust	Review data, graph progress, adjust plan.	Is it working? Do we need new supports?	Data logs, team meetings

Sample BIP Summary Template

Section	Example
Target Behavior (Definition)	Leaving class without permission (walking out without staff consent).
Function (FBA Results)	Escape from difficult academic tasks.
Replacement Behavior	Request a break card or assistance from teacher.
Prevention Strategies	Chunk assignments, preview directions, offer choice of order.
Teaching Strategies	Model and role-play break request daily for 2 weeks; reinforce correct use.

Reinforcement	Earn "calm corner" time or preferred task after completing required work.
Response When Behavior Occurs	1. Stay calm 2. Use visual prompt 3. Escort safely after 2 minutes if not returning 4. Debrief post-incident.
Data Collection Method	Frequency count (break card used vs. leaving class).
Review Schedule	Every 3 weeks during Student Support Team meeting.

Reinforcement Framework

Type	Example	Notes
Immediate Reinforcement	Praise, sticker, point	Builds connection between skill use and reward
Delayed Reinforcement	Token system, class privileges	Sustains motivation for older students
Natural Reinforcement	Increased autonomy, fewer prompts	Encourages internal motivation
Social Reinforcement	Positive recognition, peer shout-out	Strengthens belonging and self-esteem

Inclusive & Equitable BIP Practices

Traditional Pitfall	Equitable Upgrade
Uses generic "compliance" goals	Use SMARTIE, skill-based goals co-created with the student.
Ignores cultural or linguistic differences	Include family input and culturally responsive reinforcers.
Punitive consequences for disability-related behavior	Provide additional instruction and reteaching opportunities.

Excludes student from planning	Involve student in selecting strategies and reinforcers.

Data Collection Options

Data Type	When to Use	Example
Frequency	To track # of occurrences	"Break card used 3x/day."
Duration	To track length of behavior	"Time out of seat: 2 min average."
Latency	To track delay in responding	"Followed direction within 45 sec."
Interval Recording	To track % of time behavior occurs	"On-task 8 of 10 intervals."
Anecdotal Notes	To capture context	"Behavior occurs most after transitions."

Implementation Checklist

- Behavior is clearly defined and observable.

- Function of behavior identified via FBA.

- Replacement skill serves same function.

- Plan includes prevention + teaching + reinforcement.

- Staff know their specific response steps.

- Student voice included in reinforcement choice.

- Data collection method chosen and scheduled.

- Review timeline documented.

Case Example

Student: 8th grader with ASD engaging in task refusal.
Behavior: Puts head down, refuses to work when given writing assignments.
FBA Findings: Escape from non-preferred task due to writing frustration.
BIP Focus: Teach "I need help" request using a help card.
Reinforcement: Student earns computer time after 15 minutes of task persistence.
Outcome: Task completion increased from 40% → 85% within six weeks.

Quick Educator Script (During Escalation)

- "I can see this is tough. Remember your help card—we can use it instead of walking out."

- "You did the right thing asking for help. Let's take a quick break and then come back."

Action Starter: Try Tomorrow

- Pull one current BIP in your school.

- Check whether the replacement skill truly matches the behavior's *function*.

- Revise the plan to include clear prevention, teaching, and reinforcement steps.

- Identify one data tool your team can start using consistently this week.