

Collaborating with BCBAs and Behavior Teams

Bridging Communication Between Instruction and Behavior

Purpose

When teachers and Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBAs) work in silos, students lose consistency. When they collaborate, they create powerful, data-driven systems that combine academic instruction and behavioral growth. This worksheet offers a framework for building partnerships that honor each team member's expertise, reduce tension, and keep the focus where it belongs: on the student.

Understanding Each Role

Role	Core Expertise	Primary Contribution	Example in Action
Teacher	Academic instruction, relationship-building	Implements accommodations, monitors progress, communicates daily patterns	Collects classroom data and shares trends with BCBA
BCBA	Applied Behavior Analysis, data analysis, systems design	Conducts FBA/BIP, designs interventions, trains staff	Provides visuals and reinforcement plans based on data
Administrator	Oversight and compliance	Aligns staffing, ensures fidelity, mediates concerns	Schedules collaboration time and reviews implementation data
Support Staff (Paras, RBTs)	Implementation fidelity	Carries out intervention steps under guidance	Tracks frequency of target behaviors daily

Principles of Effective Collaboration

1. **Shared Purpose:** The goal is always student success—not who’s “right.”
2. **Role Clarity:** Define what each person *will* and *will not* do.
3. **Mutual Respect:** Academic and behavioral expertise are equally valuable.
4. **Transparent Communication:** Data and context are shared openly, without defensiveness.
5. **Consistency:** The student’s experience across adults must be unified.

The Collaboration Cycle

Phase	What to Do	Example
1. Define the Focus	Identify the target behavior or instructional challenge.	“Student leaves seat 10+ times per class.”
2. Share Data	Teacher provides frequency or ABC data; BCBA reviews for trends.	Weekly 5-minute data debrief.
3. Co-Create the Plan	Align instructional and behavioral supports.	Combine break card use with self-monitoring goal.
4. Implement & Observe	All staff apply plan consistently.	Both teacher and BCBA reinforce same skill.
5. Reflect & Adjust	Review data, refine supports, celebrate progress.	Graph progress and identify next skill.

Communication Do’s and Don’ts

Do	Don’t
Use student-centered language (“We’re seeing...”)	Say “Your student is...”

Share objective data	Share opinions or assumptions
Ask for clarification	Assume intent or expertise
Document agreements in writing	Rely on verbal memory
Express appreciation for support	Focus only on deficits

Meeting Agenda Template

(Use for BCBA–Teacher weekly or biweekly meetings)

Agenda Item	Notes/Decisions
1. Review student progress data	
2. Identify triggers or changes	
3. Update intervention strategies	
4. Plan reinforcement and fading steps	
5. Communication follow-ups	

Common Collaboration Challenges & Solutions

Challenge	Solution
Perception of “control” or role overlap	Clarify responsibilities; document who leads what.
Different vocabularies (academic vs. ABA)	Create shared language list (“reinforcement” = “positive feedback”).
Time constraints	Schedule 10–15 min “touch base” instead of full meetings.
Staff burnout	Keep data manageable; celebrate small wins.

Family confusion	Share unified message home (teacher + BCBA email summary).
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Quick Collaboration Script Starters

Purpose	Example Script
Clarifying intent	“I want to make sure I’m implementing this plan the way you designed it. Can you walk me through the prompting sequence?”
Sharing classroom data	“Here’s what I noticed this week: behavior spiked after lunch. Can we brainstorm environmental tweaks?”
Addressing disagreement	“I see it a little differently. Can we compare our data to understand why?”
Unified family communication	“We both wanted to update you: here’s how we’re supporting consistency across settings.”

Fidelity Check Template

Step	Was It Implemented as Planned?	Notes/Next Steps
Visuals posted in classroom	☐ Yes ☐ No	Replace missing visuals
Reinforcement delivered every 10 mins	☐ Yes ☐ No	Adjust timing
Student data logged daily	☐ Yes ☐ No	Assign to RBT for tracking

Collaboration Reflection Prompts

- Do our plans reflect both instructional and behavioral needs?
- Are we reviewing data *together* rather than separately?

- Have we explained strategies in clear, non-technical terms to families and staff?
 - Is our tone collaborative and student-centered during all discussions?
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Action Starter

- Schedule a 10-minute collaboration meeting with your BCBA or teacher partner this week.
- Choose one target behavior and co-write a quick data plan (what, when, who).
- Review together next week and make one improvement to increase consistency.