

Research Highlights

Topic: Positive Behavior Support

Turnbull, H. R., Turnbull, A.P., & Wilcox, B. L. (2002). Family interests and positive behavior support: Opportunities under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. In J. Lucyshyn, G. Dunlap, & R. Albin, (Eds.), *Families and positive behavior support: Addressing problem behavior in family contexts* (pp. 349-370). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

BOTTOM LINE

This chapter describes the 1997 version of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act's (IDEA) family-participation provisions, the PBS provisions of IDEA, the relationship between the PBS and family-participation provisions, and the consequences of that relationship for families, service providers, and researchers. The authors conclude that parents, as well as schools, have an interest in securing generalized and durable interventions for their children, but the burden of persuading schools to implement PBS often falls too much upon parents. In order to receive and, thus benefit, from PBS parents will have to use their parental rights to participation to advocate for the use of PBS for their child.

TIPS

- Encourage parents to influence IEP team “consideration” of PBS by *documenting* how the team fulfills its IDEA requirements, including:
 - ◆ Does the team understand PBS well enough to “consider” it?
 - ◆ Did the team engage in a discussion of whether PBS would be appropriate?
 - ◆ Did perceived inability to implement PBS impede “consideration” of its use?
 - ◆ What was the reasoning behind the final decision on whether to use PBS?
 - ◆ What evaluative information was used to reach this decision?

KEY FINDINGS

- Positive behavior support includes systems change activities, environmental alterations, skill instruction activities, and behavioral consequence activities designed to produce “socially important behavior change.”
- IDEA requires the IEP team *to consider* PBS in two circumstances:
 - ◆ During the IEP process, when appropriate, as a special factor, when the child’s behavior impedes the child’s learning or that of others
 - ◆ When amending an IEP to address behavioral problems
- Impeding behaviors are:
 - ◆ Those that could cause the student to be disciplined or result in consideration of a change in placement, AND
 - ◆ Are consistently recurring and therefore require functional behavioral assessment and systematic and frequent applications of behavioral interventions (PBS)
- Impeding behaviors can include behaviors that are:
 - ◆ Externalizing (verbal abuse, aggression, self-injury, or property destruction)
 - ◆ Internalizing (physical or social withdrawal, depression, or noncompliance)
 - ◆ Manifestations of biological impairments (obsessions, compulsions, impulses)
 - ◆ Manifestations of maltreatment (neglect, abuse, exploitation)
 - ◆ Disruptive (annoying, confrontational, defiant, taunting)
- Consideration of PBS should include:
 - ◆ Sufficient understanding of PBS and how it works
 - ◆ The ability to implement PBS
 - ◆ Discussion about whether to employ PBS
 - ◆ Detailing the reasoning behind any decision to employ or not employ PBS
- The IEP team should document its decision-making process in order to create a record that reflects: which interventions are considered, how much time was spent considering each, who attended the meeting, how many meetings were held (and how often), consideration of PBS or factors ruling out consideration of PBS, and what other strategies were considered.
- Additionally, there are several other considerations to take into account when the creation of a behavioral plan or discipline is considered:
 - ◆ Limitations on removal from current placement (suspension and expulsion)
 - ◆ The manifestation rule (required determination if behavior is a manifestation of the child’s disability)
 - ◆ Presumption against aversive or non-positive interventions

METHOD

- This article resulted from the analysis of the legal requirements set out in IDEA and discussions with experts on PBS.
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RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Turnbull, H. R., Wilcox, B. L., Turnbull, A. P., Sailor, W., & Wickham, D. (2001). IDEA, positive behavioral supports, and school safety. *Journal of Law and Education, 30*(3), 445-503.
- Turnbull, H. R., Wilcox, B. L., Stowe, M. J., & Turnbull, A. P. (2001). IDEA requirements for use of PBS: Guidelines for responsible agencies. *Journal of Positive Behavior Support, 3*(1), 11-18.
- Turnbull, H. R., Wilcox, B. L., Stowe, M. J., Raper, C., & Hedges, L. (2000). Public policy foundations for positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions, 2*, 218-230.
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