

# RIGHTS OF MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH REGARDING FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENTS

Prepared by the Mental Health Legal Advisors Committee  
June 2012

## When can a student get a Functional Behavior Assessment?

A Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) is a test that school districts must conduct under certain circumstances as part of the process of developing an IEP. An FBA pinpoints the cause, or “function” of a student’s problematic behavior and aims to remedy it with an appropriate intervention addressing the underlying cause. If evaluators believe that behavior is an issue for a child, they should concretely define the problem behavior and conduct an FBA to determine causes for and solutions to the behavior.<sup>1</sup> However, student access to FBAs varies because each school district may interpret the guidelines for conducting FBAs differently, and some schools may opt to conduct them less frequently than others.<sup>2</sup>

## Resources for FBAs:

OSERS, Questions and Answers On Discipline Procedures (Rev. June 2009),  
<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/.root,dynamic,QaCorner,7>,

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice website, Functional Behavior Assessment,  
<http://cecp.air.org/fba/default.asp>

Pacer Center, Functional Behavioral Assessment and Positive Interventions:  
What Parents Need to Know, <http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/php-c79.pdf>.

National Association of School Psychologists, Resources on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, Functional Behavioral Assessments, and Behavior Intervention Plans,  
[http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/pbs\\_resources.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/advocacy/pbs_resources.pdf)

Virginia DOE, Functional Behavioral Assessment, Behavioral Intervention Plans, and Positive Intervention and Supports: An Essential Part of Effective School Wide Discipline in Virginia (2005-06), [http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student\\_conduct/monograph.pdf](http://www.doe.virginia.gov/support/student_conduct/monograph.pdf)

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<sup>1</sup> The Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, *Addressing Student Problem Behavior* 4 (1998), <http://cecp.air.org/fba/problembehavior/funcanal.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Starin, Ph.D., *Functional Behavioral Assessments: What, Why, When, Where, and Who?* 1, <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/discipl.fab.starin.htm>.

OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, IDEA  
2004: Final Regulations and the Reauthorized Functional Behavioral Assessment,  
[http://www.pbis.org/school/pbis\\_and\\_the\\_law/reauthorized\\_fba.aspx](http://www.pbis.org/school/pbis_and_the_law/reauthorized_fba.aspx)

FAPE, An IEP Team's Introduction To Functional Behavioral Assessment  
And Behavior Intervention Plans (2nd edition, 1998),  
<http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED426523>