



Assessment Guide

Functional Assessment of
Behavioral & Social Supports
(2nd Ed.)

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Acknowledgments

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Contact Information

Early Childhood Research and Development Initiative

Please visit us at: <https://www.ecrdi.info/>

Introduction

The Functional Assessment of Behavioral and Social Supports (FABSS) was developed to provide a format for critically assessing social, behavioral and functional skills of young children as they prepare to transition to kindergarten and first grade classrooms.

The Functional Assessment of Behavioral and Social Supports (FABSS) was developed as a result of work with preschool teachers through the STEPS Outreach Project, a grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education and awarded to the University of Kentucky in 1996. This assessment is designed to extend the Helpful Entry Level Skills Checklist by allowing a more in-depth assessment of skills in the same five areas: classroom rules, work skills, communication skills, social/behavior skills and self-management skills. All curricular materials currently available to support the Helpful Entry Level Skills Checklist can be used with the FABSS.

The FABSS is designed to assist preschool teachers in identifying the supports they provide to children in the classroom to help them to 1) prepare them for new environments and 2) help them adjust to current environments

and participate in classroom activities. The skills included on the assessment are consistent with those identified on the Helpful Entry Level Skills Checklist.

Assessing the presence or absence of skills viewed as important for the transition process can be accomplished through a variety of means. Teachers can use surveys, checklists, questionnaires and direct observations. This assessment is designed as a functional assessment, whereby various people who interact with the child across environments, identify the types of supports used to assist the child in demonstrating social, behavioral and functional skills. In addition, those working with the child are encouraged to use observations to help identify critical differences between the sending and potential receiving environments in which the child will be spending time.

Facilitating Social Skills Development

In designing the FABSS, the classic work of Stokes and Baer (1977) was used as a conceptual framework. Stokes and Baer found several instructional strategies that could be directly linked with the generalization of social skills across settings, situations and individuals. These included the following.



Settings

When teaching social skills, it is important for adults to provide prompts and support within settings where skills are needed. Therefore, identification of the variety of settings in which children need skills is critical to helping children successfully develop these skills.



Value

When identifying skills to focus on, adults should select skills that are valued within those settings in which children participate regularly. Selecting skills that adults or other children value or see as important increases the opportunities to provide support and reinforcement.



Embedding Skills

Social skill instruction should be embedded across environments, settings, times and situations. Therefore, adults should identify natural opportunities within the daily routines to support social skill development.



Reinforcement

Social skills generalize and maintain when children are intrinsically motivated. Therefore, adult support should be designed to help the child rely on natural reinforcers to maintain social skills.

Adult Supports

The focus on the FABSS is on the identification of the adult behaviors and supports provided to children in the classroom to promote social skill development. Therefore, during the assessment process, the type of support provided is as critical as the child's behavior. The assessment process is designed with an understanding that program staff should begin the transition process by creating a caring community of learners and promoting a positive climate for learning. This includes not only attending to the specific

instructional techniques we use to facilitate learning, but also attending to the environment in which we offer these services. Providing a climate of mutual respect allows for positive teacher/child interactions, including ensuring that staff provide motivation for learning and social skill development and use positive guidance in acquisition of skills (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).



Providing a climate of mutual respect allows for positive teacher/child interactions

Appropriate Populations

The FABSS is designed for children from 3 through 6 years of age. It can be used with any child who has been identified through observations or other assessments (i.e., the Helpful Entry Level Skills Checklist) as needing assistance with social, behavioral and/or functional skills. The overall purpose of the FABSS is to provide an in-depth functional assessment across environments in which the child participates.

In addition, early intervention providers and families can use the FABSS as children, (from age 2 years, 9 months to 3) prepare to leave early intervention programs and enter preschool environments. In this case, assessment data is considered baseline data, and should be used by the preschool staff to assist them in identify strategies that will help the child adjust to the preschool environment(s).

The Assessment Team

The FABSS is most successful when completed by a team of professionals and family members that interact on a regular basis with the child. This can include teachers, assistant teachers, family members, related service personnel, child care providers, etc. Social, behavioral and functional skill needs occur in all settings. In addition, consistency in intervention across environments is more successful than when different interventions are applied in different settings. Therefore, the assessment process takes into consideration the supports and interactions between the child and various adults throughout the day. For example, the supports provided to the child within the home during toileting may be different that those provide in the classroom. The differences in the support may cause confusion for the child.



Conducting the Assessment

The assessment is designed as an observational assessment to be completed after the child has been in the classroom setting for approximately 30 days. The teacher generally serves as the lead on the assessment. Input from other professionals or family members can be obtained formally, during a team meeting or informally, through individual conversations across family members and providers.

[How to Conduct an Assessment >>](#)



Complete the demographic information. This includes information about the child, the family, the child's age and date of birth and the program or classroom the child is in. Those who provide input into the assessment should be included as members of the Assessment Team

Child's Name:

Parent or Guardian:

Child's Date of Birth:

Child's Age:

Program/Classroom:

Lead Teacher:

Assessment Team
Members:



This page also provides assessment summary information. The date of the assessment can be entered at this time. Additional information should be added after the assessment is complete.

Assessment Date:

Skill Area	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Classroom Rules												
Work Skills												
Communication Skills												
Social/Behavioral Skills												
Self Management Skills												

#3

Begin the functional analysis, using the following response guidelines. There are four basic skill levels for each item presented on the assessment: **Yes**, **Inconsistent**, **Emerging** and **Not Present**. Within each response level, there are several response options for each section.

Skill Level: Yes

The behavior or skill is independent or can be facilitated with adult intervention or support. There are five different response options that can be used within this section.

- I** **Independent:** The child demonstrates competency in this area with minimal assistance from adults in the classroom.
- V** **Verbal Prompt:** The child can successfully demonstrate the skill when provided with verbal support or prompts from adults. For example, if Johnny is running in the classroom, the adult may say, “Remember your walking feet”, and Johnny responds consistently by walking.
- M** **Model Prompt:** The child can successfully demonstrate the skill when provided with models from adults or other children. For example, if Johnny is trying to put on his coat, the adult may demonstrate and Johnny can follow his/her example. The item is marked “M” with the understanding that adult will additionally provide verbal support by talking through steps as they demonstrate.
- P** **Physical Prompt:** The child can successfully demonstrate the skill when provided with physical assistance from other adults or children. For example, if Johnny is transitioning from one activity to another, the adult may hold his hand to get him from one place to another. The item is marked “P” with the understanding that adult will additionally provide model and verbal support by talking through steps and demonstrating prior to physical contact.
- O** **Other Support:** The adult uses other types of support to help the child successfully demonstrate the skill. This could include things such as communication devices, gestures, pictures, etc. When items are marked in the other column, a description of the type of support should be provided in the Description box.

Skill Level: Yes

Descriptions of Adult or Classroom Supports

This section allows the assessment team to provide specific descriptions about the adult behavior or classroom supports that are provided routinely to assist the child with a specific skill. It is important to describe the behavior of the adult, not the child. For example, if the assessment team indicates that a child needs a verbal prompt in order to successfully demonstrate the skill, comments would specifically describe what is said to the child (i.e., use your walking feet).

Skill	I	V	M	P	O*	Description of Adult or Classroom Supports
Walks rather than runs indoors	✓					
Waits quietly in line		✓				"Please wait"
Sits or waits appropriately				✓		Hand to shoulder
Complies with simple directions provided a group		✓				Eye to Eye contact with repeated directions

#3

Begin the functional analysis, using the following response guidelines. There are four basic skill levels for each item presented on the assessment: **Yes**, **Inconsistent**, **Emerging** and **Not Present**. Within each response level, there are several response options for each section.

Skill Level: Inconsistent

The behavior or skill is inconsistently demonstrated by the child. This can include inconsistency across time (i.e., better in the morning than afternoon), across adults (i.e., does it for mom by not dad), or across environments (i.e., does it at day care but not at home). There are several response options that can be used.

V Verbal Prompt: The child is inconsistent when provided with verbal support or prompts from adults. For example, if Johnny is running in the classroom, the adult may say, "Remember your walking feet", and Johnny responds inconsistently, walking sometimes, while continuing to run others.

M Model Prompt: The child is inconsistent when provided with model support or prompts from adults or peers. For example, if Johnny is trying to put on his coat, mom can demonstrate and Johnny can follow her example, while he will not follow the example of the preschool teacher. The item is marked "M" with the understanding that adult will additionally provide verbal support by talking through steps as they demonstrate.

P Physical Prompt: The child is inconsistent when provided with physical support or prompts from adults. For example, if Johnny is transitioning from one activity to another, the adult may hold his hand to get him from one place to another during the morning hours, but in the afternoon, he pulls his hand away and refuses to comply. The item is marked "P" with the understanding that adult will additionally provide model and verbal support by talking through steps as they demonstrate.

O Other Support: The child responds inconsistently with other types of support. This could include things such as communication devices, gestures, pictures, etc. When items are marked in the other column, a description of the type of support should be provided in the Description box.

Skill Level: Inconsistent

Descriptions of Adult or Classroom Supports

This section allows the assessment team to provide specific descriptions about the adult behavior or classroom supports that are provided routinely to assist the child with a specific skill. In addition, the specific nature of the inconsistency should be described (i.e., inconsistent across time). Again, it is important to describe the behavior of the adults, not the child.

Skill	V	M	P	O*	Description of Adult or Classroom Supports
Walks rather than runs indoors	✓				"Walking feet" works at school, but not home
Waits quietly in line				✓	Responds to gestures by lead teacher, will not comply for others
Sits or waits appropriately		✓			Follows peer models in morning, not in afternoon
Complies with simple directions provided a group			✓		Hand over hand works with lead teacher, not others

#3

Begin the functional analysis, using the following response guidelines. There are four basic skill levels for each item presented on the assessment: **Yes**, **Inconsistent**, **Emerging** and **Not Present**. Within each response level, there are several response options for each section.

Skill Level: Emerging

The behavior or skill has shown consistent improvement during the observation period. This means that the child is making progress towards skill acquisition with the typical supports provided in the environment. There are several response levels that can be used.

V **Verbal Prompt:** The child has shown improvement over time when provided with verbal support or prompts from adults. For example, if Johnny is running in the classroom, and the adult says, “Remember your walking feet”, Johnny has increased his ability to respond to the prompt.

M **Model Prompt:** The child has shown consistent improvement over time when provided with model support or prompts from adults or peers. For example, if Johnny is trying to put on his coat and mom demonstrates, he needs increasingly smaller amounts of model behavior to demonstrate the skill. The item is marked “M” with the understanding that adult will additionally provide verbal support by talking through steps as they demonstrate.

P **Physical Prompt:** The child has shown consistent improvement over time when provided with physical support or prompts from adults. For example, if Johnny is transitioning from one activity to another, the adult may have started by holding his hand, and has moved toward a light touch to the hand to get him from one place to another. The item is marked “P” with the understanding that adult will additionally provide model and verbal support by talking through steps as they demonstrate.

O **Other Support:** The child has shown consistent improvement over time with other types of support. This could include things such as communication devices, gestures, pictures, etc. When items are marked in the other column, a description of the type of support should be provided in the Description box.

Skill Level: Emerging

Descriptions of Adult or Classroom Supports

This section allows the assessment team to provide specific descriptions about the adult behavior or classroom supports that have been provided routinely during the observation period to assist the child with a specific skill.

Skill	I	V	M	P	O*	Description of Adult or Classroom Supports
Walks rather than runs indoors	✓					Responding to classroom verbal cue "walking feet"
Waits quietly in line				✓		Touch to shoulder, decreasing over time
Sits or waits appropriately					✓	Uses carpet square without further assistance from adults
Complies with simple directions provided a group			✓			Using peers as models with increasing frequency

#3

Begin the functional analysis, using the following response guidelines. There are four basic skill levels for each item presented on the assessment: **Yes**, **Inconsistent**, **Emerging** and **Not Present**. Within each response level, there are several response options for each section.

Skill Level: Not Present

The Not Present column should be used when no supports have been identified that can be used to assist the child in successfully developing the skill. It can additionally be used to indicate when particular behaviors have not been observed during the observation period.

Further Note on Inconsistent and Emergent Behavior

The primary reason for denoting differences in inconsistent and emergent behaviors is to assist preschool teachers with the development of instructional strategies to facilitate skill development. Instructional strategies used to assist children with behaviors that are inconsistent should be well planned to ensure consistency across environments, people and time. For behaviors that are emerging, the current instructional strategies and supports being used in the classroom may be already supporting skill development and should be continued until a time when they are no longer effective or until the skill is mastered.

*** Important - When determining appropriate response levels, please note that responses can be recorded in more than one category. For example, if a child can demonstrate a skill with physical support consistently, but can demonstrate the same skill with verbal support inconsistently, both can be indicated on the form.*

#4

Identify Patterns of Support. A box has been provided on each page to indicate specific patterns of support that have been identified as a result of the assessment process. Patterns of support are those that the data show are consistently successful for the child. For example, if the data indicate that the child inconsistently responds to adults in specific environments, the comment would reflect this.

Patterns of Support

Johnny is very inconsistent across environments when it comes to classroom rules. He tends to respond much better to the lead teacher than other adults in the classroom.



#5

Choose Priority Skills. After administering the assessment, the assessment team should identify those skills that are most likely to interfere with the child's successful inclusion in classroom activities or in their transition to a new environment. The skill can be identified as a priority skill by marking the box the left of the skill column.

Priority	Skill
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Walks rather than runs indoors
<input type="checkbox"/>	Waits quietly in line

Once the Assessment Team has identified priority skills, they will need to identify the first three to five skills that will be addressed by the team. These skills should be denoted on the front page of the assessment form.

Assessment Date*:

Skill Area	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Classroom Rules	✓											
Work Skills			✓									
Communication Skills												
Social/Behavioral Skills							✓					
Self Management Skills			✓			✓						

*Please complete Assessment Date prior to assessment.

Information related to the priority skills and written information about instructional strategies selected by the team to facilitate skills should be shared with the family and all members of the assessment team and others who interact with the child.

Sharing Assessment Data

Due to the nature of the FABSS, it is critical that assessment data be shared across family members and service providers. A copy of the recommendations from the assessment should be shared with other providers and family members. This includes both priority areas and instructional strategies chosen by the assessment team.

In addition, assessment information should be shared with the child's receiving teacher before

his/her transition. This may be included in a follow-up packet prepared by the preschool. Child portfolios or work samples, progress and instructional summaries, current evaluation results and other pertinent information may also be included. The child's family may take the packet to the receiving teacher or the preschool may send the packet through other means.

References

- Bredenkamp, S., & Copple, C. (Eds.) (1997). *Developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood programs*. National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, D.C.
- Stokes, T. E., & Baer, D. M. (1977). An implicit technology of generalization. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 10, 349-367



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