Behavior Intervention Plans vs. Individual Discipline Plans: A Comparison

The following information is taken from the April 2014 LRP “Training Tips for IEP Team Members”

A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) and an Individual Discipline Plan should not be considered as alternate labels for the same educational service. There are significant differences between the two plans that have legal implications under the IDEA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN</th>
<th>INDIVIDUAL DISCIPLINE PLAN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A proactive plan</td>
<td>A reactive plan</td>
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<td>Includes IEP provisions that develop, change, or maintain selected behaviors through the systemic application of behavior change techniques</td>
<td>Generally limited to the identification of acts of misconduct and specific consequences for the student should (s)he engage in any such behavior</td>
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<td>Serves as a plan for managing the behavior of a student with a disability ... should be considered as a supplementary aid and service for a student whose behavior is disruptive prior to any change in placement*</td>
<td>Best understood as an alternative to the school’s regular education disciplinary code.</td>
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*The only time that a district can opt for removal without implementing a BIP is when the student’s behavior is “extreme and dangerous to himself and others.” (Bonita Unified Sch. Dist., 27 IDELR248 [SEA CA 1997]; 34 CFR 300.530[g])

A BIP needs to be considered whenever behavior interferes with the school’s teaching and learning activities. It is not limited to dangerous behaviors or non-dangerous violations of the schools disciplinary code.

The IDEA expresses a strong preference for the inclusion of positive behavior interventions and supports in BIPS.

The IDEA does not specify BIP components. However, it does indicate that a BIP should:

- Describe the behavior of the student that is interfering with learning
- The expected behavioral changes
- The positive strategies and supports that will be used to change the behavior.

Despite the fact that Federal Regulations do not require that BIPs be in written format, a written version is preferred. Best practice includes developing, reviewing, implementing and documenting a BIP during the IEP process.

RELATED TERMINOLOGY: FBA (Functional Behavior Assessment) ... provides the IEP Team with additional information, analysis, and strategies for dealing with undesirable behavior, especially when it interferes with a child’s education. The process involves identifying the “target” behavior, observing the student in different environments, collecting data on the target behavior, antecedents and consequences, formulating a hypothesis about the cause of the behavior, developing an intervention to test the hypothesis, and collecting data on the effectiveness of the intervention(s)in changing the behavior.