8.1 What is Behavior?

Behavior is something a person does that can be observed and measured.

In school setting, some student behavior is labeled *misbehavior* or *challenging behavior* because this behavior is disruptive or offensive to others. Challenging behaviours are often responded to with consequences or punishments, ranging from a loss of privilege to exclusion from school. This approach can work for some students, but students with chronically challenging behaviors often do not respond to these strategies.

To support students with challenging or complex behaviour, it is key to remember that, according to Jessica Minahan, author of *The Behavior Code:*

- *Behavior is communication.*
- *Misbehavior is a symptom and has an underlying cause.*
- *Behavior has a function.*
- *Behavior occurs in patterns.*
- *Behavior can be changed.*
- *The only behavior a teacher can control is their own*

In order to respond effectively respond to challenging behavior, school staff needs to:

- Understand the pattern of the behavior
- Understand the function of the behavior
- Understand the underlying cause of the behavior as an underdeveloped skill and teach that skill
- Understand how to effectively respond to the behavior in a way that changes it

Functional or Positive Behavior Plans are a strategy to meet these goals. Functional behavior plans use behavioral data to identify the function of the behavior, target the needed skills, and focus on the behavior of the adults to improve the behavior of the child.

For more information, please see Inclusive Education Procedures:

8.3 What is Functional Behavior?

8.4 What is a Behavior Plan?

    8.4.1 ABC Behavior Tracking Template

    8.4.2 FAIRS Functional Behavior Plan Template