



Concerned about your child's behavior at school?

This tip sheet will give you basic information about steps you can take if your child is experiencing behavior issues at school.

Behavior is communication

Children often communicate their needs or feelings through their behavior. If you figure out what might be causing your child's behavior, you can address the issue instead of just reacting to it.



Causes, supports, and interventions

If your child is not on an Individualized Education Program (IEP), you can ask the school what interventions are available to general education students. If you think your child might need special education services to address their behavior, you can request a special education evaluation.*

If your child is on an IEP

If your child is on an existing IEP, an IEP team meeting is a good place to start. You can discuss what the behavior looks like, when it occurs, and what might be causing it. The IEP team has an obligation to address behavior that gets in the way of your child's learning or that of other students.

*To learn how to request a special education evaluation, refer to the disability advocacy tip sheet titled "How to ask for a special education evaluation."

Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs)

A behavior intervention is an action that interrupts challenging behavior and teaches and rewards a replacement behavior. Behavior interventions work best when used consistently at home, in school, and in the community. A BIP is a plan created by the school to redirect and replace your child's challenging behavior. To create a BIP, the school may suggest doing a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) to figure out the cause of your child's challenging behavior.

Ask the school what interventions can be put in place while the BIP or FBA is in process. The school district's behavior specialist can also offer ideas for how to redirect the behavior.



Get advice from professionals



Ask other specialists in your child's life, like their doctor, therapist, psychiatrist, or psychologist what they think might be causing the behavior. They may have ideas about how to address the behavior. Provide their suggestions to your IEP case manager and ask how they can be included in your child's IEP and BIP. However, the school is not required to implement suggestions from outside providers.

If you have more questions about your child's behavior at school, call PACER at (952) 838-9000 and ask to speak with an Advocate or visit [pacer.org](https://www.pacer.org).