



### **What is a Functional Behavior Assessment?**

Before a behavior plan is written it is essential that the team, including you as a parent, make a careful assessment of when, where, and why the behavior is happening. This process cannot be guesswork by one or two people. Consider asking for a functional behavior assessment to lead key team members through a scientific process that can accurately determine these key factors, when, where, and why.

The reason for having several people on such an assessment team is simple. Each person will have key information that will provide pieces to the puzzle. As they work together they will be able to assemble the complete picture of what is happening to cause the behavior. That is why one person alone should not be assigned to conduct a functional behavior assessment. However, it is crucial to have a person leading the team who has had special training and experience in conducting a functional behavior assessment.

There can be one factor or a number of factors involved in the root cause of an inappropriate behavior. For instance, a child who gets into trouble by acting out during adaptive P.E. may be over stimulated and overwhelmed by the noise element in a gym, or perhaps is easily overheated. By changing the environment of PE, the inappropriate behavior disappears. Sometimes the cause is much more complicated. But with careful analysis a team can find positive, workable solutions that will, over time, improve a behavior.

A meaningful functional behavior assessment collects measurable data and utilizes input from several team members and others who have knowledge of the child.

The process for an appropriate functional behavior assessment is much more involved than this brief overview. A properly conducted functional behavior assessment should involve a number of people, a leader well versed in the process, and a scientific approach to the evaluation.