



Information sheet:

A process for assessing behaviour

Behaviour is a form of communication and it serves a purpose. When you understand its purpose, you will understand how to respond and intervene.

Remember to assess both externalised behaviours and internalised behaviours, such as withdrawing, low mood or unusual quietness.

When assessing a child or young person's behaviour, observations are far more accurate and you are less likely to get resulting inferences.

Use this information in conjunction with:

- Information sheet: Understanding why children behave the way they do
- Information sheet: Safety/behaviour plans

A process for assessing behaviour	
What exactly is the behaviour you are concerned about?	
How often does it happen?	
How long has it been happening?	
What are the signs the child or young person might be about to...?	
Describe the actual behaviour from beginning to end.	
How long does the behaviour go on for? (Record in real time with a stop watch and convert to a percentage of the day to get a proper perspective.)	
On a scale of 1-10, how intense is the behaviour?	
What does the child or young person do after the incident?	
What do the teachers do when the behaviour happens?	
Do all adults respond in the same way?	
How serious is it for others or how serious is it for the child or young person?	

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What events are most likely to set the behavior off (triggers)?	
What are the situations where this behaviour is more likely to happen? What would you have to do to make sure the behaviour happened?	
In which situations is the behaviour less likely to occur? What would you have to do to ensure the behaviour did not occur?	
What are the common elements that affect whether the behaviour happens/doesn't happen?	
How much language does the child or young person understand?	
Can the child or young person be understood by others easily?	
Can/does the child or young person use socially mediating language?	
What cultural elements are important to the child or young person's development?	
What sort of learner is the child or young person? How do you engage with them? Discuss their developing learning dispositions?	
What sort of play is the child interested in?	
What are the child or young person's strengths or things they are good at?	
Describe their social interactions with adults.	
Describe their social interactions with peers.	
What is their health like, eg hearing, sight?	
Other important issues.	

- Join up this information and describe the purpose of the behaviour.
- Use this information to develop a safety/behaviour plan.
- Identify what you will need to teach the child or young person for them to get their needs met in a different and appropriate way.