Using the Behavior Incident Report System: *Frequently Asked Questions*

Behavior Incident Report System Basics

Who does Behavior Incident Report (BIR) data belong to?

The Behavior Incident Report System (BIRS) is downloaded by an individual early childhood program for use within the program. BIR data belongs to individual programs. Once the Behavior Incident Report (BIR) Excel spreadsheet is downloaded, it should be saved either on the program's network drive, a cloud-based storage software (i.e., Dropbox, Google Drive, One Drive, Box), a flash drive, or on a computer's hard drive (i.e., Desktop, Documents folder). NCPMI does not endorse or recommend any specific cloud-based storage or other storage solution.

Who can see BIR data from my program?

Only program personnel and anyone the program shares their data with can see BIR data from their program. NCPMI does not have access to your data.

Is there a cost associated with the BIRS?

The BIRS is free to download and use.

How does behavior incident data remain confidential within the BIR System?

Programs are encouraged to use a child identification number instead of children's names and a classroom identification number instead of a classroom or teacher name to maintain child and teacher confidentiality. Identification numbers should not contain easily identifiable information.

Do I need a special program or computer to use the BIRS Excel workbook?

The BIRS Excel workbook can be used with desktop or laptop computers with a:

- Windows operating system with Microsoft Office 2010 and newer
- Mac operating system with Microsoft Office 2016

Please note that the BIRS Excel workbook cannot be used in Google Sheets.

Can the BIRS be integrated into my own online system?

NCPMI is unable to integrate the BIRS into your online system.

I am a coach for multiple programs. I just want one spreadsheet to view? Can I put the spreadsheets together for all the programs I am supporting?

No. The BIRS spreadsheet is meant to be used within individual programs to make improvements at the program level and/or to provide additional supports to teachers and children. If data are aggregated across multiple programs in one spreadsheet, program level summaries will not inform program-level decisions reliably. In addition to unreliable program-level data, disproportionality metrics will be unreliable.

Disproportionality metrics are used to indicate when a particular group has more BIRs or experiences more exclusionary discipline than another. The metrics are calculated based on the demographic profile of each program. An alert is activated when the ratio of a group of children with a BIR exceeds what is expected given their enrollment in the program. If children from different programs are aggregated in one spreadsheet, the metrics will calculate based on enrollment across multiple programs, leading to the inability of a coach to validly identify if any programs have possible disproportionality without manually calculating each metric.

Understanding the BIR

How is the BIR different from the incident report that we are required to do for childcare licensing? Don't they serve the same purposes?

It is standard practice in early childhood programs to document incidents that might result in an injury for a child or staff member. Those reports are typically required by the agency that licenses or operates the program. The BIR tracks behavior incidents that are a concern to a teacher. It is not used as a report for injury or accident.

This is very similar to a system we have for tracking office discipline referrals in our elementary classrooms; what is different about the BIR?

What the BIR measures and tracks is different from an office discipline referral. The BIR measures an incident of child behavior that the teacher finds concerning or that exceeds what is developmentally expected. In contrast, the system for tracking office discipline referrals is tracking the teacher decision that a child has violated school social norms and an office referral is required by the school discipline process. See below for more comparisons.

Behavior Incident Report (BIR)	Office Discipline Referral (ODR)
The Behavior Incident Report provides a method of gathering and analyzing behavior incidents in early childhood programs.	The Office Discipline Referral is a way of tracking and analyzing behavior discipline events in school programs.
The BIR is used to make data-based decisions at the individual child, classroom and program level.	The ODR is part of a predictable discipline referral process and collects data that can be used by school teams and districts for school-wide data-based decision-making
BIRs include behaviors that young children might exhibit (e.g., biting, inconsolable crying).	ODRs include school rule violations such as a tardy or dress code.
BIRs are completed for behaviors that are not developmentally normative or the teacher finds concerning.	ODRs are completed for school rule violations as defined by the school code of conduct.
BIRs are completed in the classroom and interventions are typically expected to occur in the classroom.	ODRs are completed throughout the school and consequences are determined by designated staff or administrators.

Can I use this for children older than 5 (e.g., after school programs)?

You can use the BIRS if you determine it is a fit for your program. However, the BIRS is designed for use in programs for young children. The behaviors, activities, and responses to behavior are designed for those settings.

Use of the BIR Form

We want to edit the form and add additional behaviors that we often see in our program (e.g., spitting, hair pulling, pushing). Can the BIR form and spreadsheet be modified?

No. The BIR form and the spreadsheet cannot be modified. Almost all of the challenging behaviors that are seen in young children are captured in the set definitions of behaviors; if not, there is an option for "other" on the BIR form.

The form includes some responses to behavior that are not approved by our program. Can we delete those from the BIR form?

No. The BIR form and the spreadsheet cannot be modified. It will be important to track all responses. If a response is being used that is not approved, the leadership team might want access to this information during data reviews.

Why can you only select one option for each category (i.e., activity, problem behavior, others involved, possible motivation, response, administrative follow-up)?

The BIRS is designed to capture information that can be aggregated and analyzed by incident. There must be a single response per category for the data to be summarized meaningfully. When initially developing the BIRS Excel spreadsheet we developed two versions; one allowed users to select one option for each category and the other allowed users to select multiple options. We learned that the spreadsheet that allowed multiple options was less useful for analyzing incidents. A coach looking at those data would not see a useful summary of what was occurring at the program, classroom, or child level. We recognize that when young children have a behavior incident, it often includes multiple behaviors and teachers try multiple responses to support the child. There is a place on the form to capture additional information related to the incident and we encourage programs to use that area to note additional behaviors, responses, or concerns. Some programs have also instructed teachers to circle the most intrusive behavior or response and then place a checkmark by everything else that happens. However, if you use the form in that manner, it will be essential to make sure the form is completed accurately and the person doing data entry can interpret the selection.

Can I use the BIRS with only one child?

The BIRS is meant to capture data at the child, classroom, and program level. There might be better options for collecting and analyzing data for just one child. When used in a systematic way, the BIRS will help programs engage in data-based decisions for individual children.

We are not implementing the Pyramid Model, but we want to track what teachers are doing in the classroom to see if behavior is being managed well and if suspensions are occurring. Do you recommend we use the system for those purposes?

It could be used for this purpose but tracking data alone without a system of support in place will not inform decisions within your program.

Problem Solving After Use of the BIR Form

What do we do if teachers are not completing the incident report forms or completing them incorrectly (i.e., selecting more than one option for each category)?

If teachers are not completing all fields on the form or completing them incorrectly by selecting more than one option for each category, they will need retraining and coaching. A discussion with the teachers might identify other areas of concern (e.g., they are not clear why BIRs are necessary) that can be addressed.

What do we do if only a few of the classrooms are using the BIR?

A teacher might not complete a BIR because there are no problem behaviors in their classroom that warrant it. However, if coach observations of the classroom indicate there are problem behaviors warranting an incident report, consultation with the teacher will identify how the issue is best addressed. For example, the classroom teacher may need to be retrained and coached in the use of the BIR, or the teacher needs more information to understand why incident reports are important, or written policies and procedure are needed to demonstrate administrative support of the use of the BIR.

What do I do if there are classrooms reporting more BIRs than others?

Further observation by the coach will verify whether incident reports are being used correctly. Classrooms with higher but accurate use of BIRs might need help addressing challenging behavior from the coach and the person providing behavior support. Analysis of incident reports in that classroom will provide the necessary information to address the challenges. If the high number of incident reports are inaccurate, retraining and additional coaching should work.

Entering BIR Data

How often should data be entered into the BIRS Spreadsheet?

Programs are encouraged to enter data on a weekly basis. This allows for continuous monitoring of data quality and ensures that all data are entered in time for monthly Pyramid Model Leadership Team meetings.

BIRS Training

Who do I need to train to use the BIRS?

Programs need to identify a data entry person (and a backup), a data coordinator, and teachers who will use the system (the decision needs to be made if you will use it in only classrooms with children ages 3-5, infants and toddler classrooms, etc.). The data entry person might be someone different than the data coordinator (e.g., behavior specialist). For information about the data coordinator role, please refer to the BIRS Data-Based Decision-Making Guide.

How does the teacher get training on how to use the BIR?

Training is available through a recorded 1-hour webinar: https://usf.app.box.com/s/k51esxeghq56ok0enb412ghfihumnwbo. Teachers should also be trained on the operational definitions of the items on the form.

How are data entry staff trained?

Data entry staff should download the BIRS Data Entry Guide (https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Implementation/Data/BIRS.html) and watch the data entry video (link on the first tab of the BIRS Excel spreadsheet). This 45-minute recording explains the data entry process in detail as well as the critical elements of the BIRS Spreadsheet. Most questions about data entry are addressed in the guide or video, however, data entry staff can also contact Myrna Veguilla (veguilla@usf.edu) with any additional questions.

Data-Informed Decision-Making and Data Review

What are the responsibilities of the coach/behavior specialist/data coordinator for BIR review and analysis?

Each program will identify a data coordinator who will be an active member of the leadership team. The data coordinator prepares data reports for the leadership team meeting and ensures that a review of BIR data is a part of the standing meeting agenda. As members of the leadership team, the coach and behavior support specialist will engage in the data-informed decision-making process during the monthly team meetings.

In order to support teachers in use and understanding of BIR data, it will be critical for all coaches and behavior support specialist staff to be well versed in the data review and analysis process.

Will we have a team or one person reviewing and summarizing the BIR data? Who are they?

Each program will identify a data coordinator who will review and summarize BIR data on a monthly basis for the leadership team. The team uses the summarized data to engage in data-based decision-making and action planning during monthly leadership team meetings. A Data Coordinator Monthly BIR Data Review Summary template is available within the BIRS Data-Based Decision-Making Guide.

There are so many charts and tables, where do I start?

Programs are encouraged to use the BIRS Data-Based Decision-Making Guide instructions for the monthly data review process. In the guide, teams are directed to first review program level data located in the Program Summary tab.

Is there one chart or table that is most important?

Programs are encouraged to use the BIRS Data-Based Decision-Making Guide to facilitate the data review process. The importance of a chart or table is dependent on the question the data will inform. However, the BIR Program Summary chart provides several critical pieces of information at once, including total number of BIRs to date, total number of children with BIRs to date, the number of behavior incidents that were reported each month, the number of children with a BIR each month, and the average number of BIRs per child with a BIR.

What part should the BIRS play in our procedures for developing and implementing individualized interventions?

The BIRS should be part of the team process for behavior support. Teams analyze incidents and identify actions to address challenging behavior by following the steps in the BIRS Data-Based Decision-Making Guide. If the behavior continues in spite of the data-informed action plan or is of such intensity that it warrants an immediate individualized intervention, the incident report data provides preliminary information that will assist the behavior support team to complete a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA). The BIR will help to more clearly define the problem behavior, identify when and during what activities the behavior is most likely to occur, pinpoint when observations needed for the FBA will be most efficient, and identify possible motivation. The BIRS will also provide information about the previous interventions attempted and their success.

We have a child with an individualized behavior support plan. The teacher is collecting data for this child. Should we also enter this child's data into the BIRS?

Yes, you will want to enter this child's data into the BIRS as well. By entering this child's data, you will be able to see trends for the child over time and have valid data for the program.

How will the team determine when to provide more support to teachers and children?

The data from the BIRS will inform you on when to provide more support. Teams will use the "Think" process to interpret the data and identify specific actions that are designed to decrease the problem behavior.
The data will be used by the team to determine whether the actions are working. If the behavior persists or increases, more intense intervention is warranted. Note: if the behavior is dangerous, the individualized intervention process should begin immediately.

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