Podcast 1: The Functional Assessment Checklist for Teachers and Staff (FACTS)

The Functional Assessment Checklist for Teachers and Staff (FACTS) is a checklist consisting of two parts. Part A asks the respondent to identify strengths of the child, problem behaviors, and conditions (referred to as routines on the FACTS form) under which those behaviors are most likely to occur. In Part B, the respondent identifies one to three routines for further assessment to identify more details about the problem behaviors, suspected antecedents, typical consequences and previous strategies that have been used to control the behavior. A summary statement is then developed (step 6 on the FACTS checklist), which is intended to serve as the basis for developing interventions.

Checklists like the FACTS are quick, easy and efficient tools to help identify potential functions of problem behavior. However, checklists should be chosen with care. For example, some checklists or rating scales address functions of the problem behavior but not some specific antecedents that trigger the behavior. In addition, some potential functions may not be addressed in some checklists. The FACTS form is fairly comprehensive, addressing setting events, specific antecedents and several possible functions. It also instructs the respondent to diagram the behavior chain, including setting events and
antecedents, problem behavior, and maintaining consequences. Thus rating scales like the FACTS are quick methods to identify possible functions or can be used to corroborate functions identified via other methods. However, rating scales should be used in conjunction with interviews to obtain additional needed information.

Take a look at the FACTS that was completed for Craig’s functional assessment. If you look at the information provided by Mrs. Conrad on the FACTS, she indicated there was a very low likelihood that problem behavior would occur during morning meeting, so no specific problem behavior was listed in the last column. She also indicates it is highly likely that Craig will demonstrate problem behavior during shared reading, P.A.L.S., lunch, guided reading, break, centers and specials. However, if you look at the specific problem behaviors, different behaviors tend to occur during different activities. In the case of Craig, behaviors occurred most frequently during structured reading activities (P.A.L.S., guided reading, writer’s workshop), so one Part B was completed that included those activities. The behaviors that occurred during less structured settings (hallway, cafeteria, playground) were very different, so a second Part B was completed for those areas. After completing the FACTS, there were two summary statements which formed a hypothesis of the functions of the problem
behaviors in two separate settings or conditions. One summary statement indicates that during activities that are primarily focused on reading, Craig demonstrates off task behavior (such as calling out, leaving seat or area) which can escalate to tantrums to avoid tasks and teacher attention. A second summary statement hypothesizes that when he is in low supervised or unstructured settings, Craig will “play fight” and bother his peers to get peer attention.