Behavior support plan implementation checklist for DSPs

A free form from Special Learning for house managers, program supervisors and QIDPs. Use it to watch a direct support professional carry out a person's existing behavior support plan, mark each step, give feedback the same shift and track it over time. The steps are never ours: copy them from the plan in its author's words. How often to observe is set by your state, funder and agency. This form does not replace your licensing rule or the plan's author.

Who, when and what routine

Date, start and end time	
Setting	
Observer (name and role)	
DSP observed (name or initials)	
Person supported (initials or your own ID). Their preference about being observed, in their words	
Plan observed, and date of the plan	
Plan author (name and phone). Call them when a step cannot be done as written	
Routine or situation observed	

Marks: Y = done as written. N = not done as written. NA = did not come up. Copy each step from the plan in its author's words; do not shorten, reword or add steps. Add a note for every N and NA.

A. Steps before: proactive and antecedent steps

Step as written in the plan	Y	N	NA	Notes
Section A: Y ___ N ___ NA ___ Percent as written = Y ÷ (Y + N) × 100 =				%

B. Steps for teaching: replacement skills and teaching steps

Step as written in the plan	Y	N	NA	Notes
Section B: Y ___ N ___ NA ___ Percent as written = Y ÷ (Y + N) × 100 =				%

C. Steps for response: what to do when it happens

If the situation did not come up, mark NA. A step you did not get to see is not counted for or against the DSP.

Step as written in the plan	Y	N	NA	Notes
Section C: Y ___ N ___ NA ___ Percent as written = Y ÷ (Y + N) × 100 =				%

Where this comes from: Vollmer, Sloman and St. Peter Pipkin (2008), Behavior Analysis in Practice. Integrity is typically the percentage of opportunities for which the procedure was implemented correctly; looking at individual components lets feedback be specific.

D. Data recording steps

Step as written in the plan	Y	N	NA	Notes
Section D: Y ___ N ___ NA ___ Percent as written = Y ÷ (Y + N) × 100 =				%

Overall

Total Y across A to D ___ Total N ___ Total NA ___	
Overall percent as written = Y ÷ (Y + N) × 100	%
Anything the person showed or said about their supports today (share with the plan author)	

When a step cannot be done as written

Which step, and what got in the way	
Plan author called (name, time, what they said) *Do not make up a new step. A change to a plan is the author's to make.*	
Supervisor told (name, time)	
Change made in the plan itself (date, by whom) *Update the written plan before the next observation.*	

If anyone is in danger, follow your emergency procedures first. This form never replaces your emergency plan or the person's own safety and rights.

Where this comes from: NADSP Code of Ethics. DSPs are asked to seek guidance from supervisors, managers or policies when unsure of the correct course of action.

Same-shift feedback

Give feedback in private, after the routine, the same shift. Focus on what the DSP did, not on the person supported. Praise correct steps first and most, then pick one step to practice and rehearse it on the spot. Instruct, model, rehearse, give feedback.

What went well (be specific) *Name the steps and what you saw.*	
One step to practice *Say it in the plan's words, show it, then ask the DSP to try it now.*	
Practiced on the spot? What did you say and what did they do?	
Next observation (date, time, routine) *Write it on the calendar before you leave.*	
DSP's comments, questions or ideas	
Observer initials and date	
DSP initials and date	
Supervisor informed (initials and date)	

Where this comes from: Parsons, Rollyson and Reid (2012), Behavior Analysis in Practice; Vollmer, Sloman and St. Peter Pipkin (2008), Behavior Analysis in Practice; Fiske (2008), Behavior Analysis in Practice. Behavioral skills training is instructions, modeling, practice and feedback; feedback has a positive and a corrective form; data review focuses on staff behavior.

Tracking grid across observations

One line per observation. Enter the percent for each section, and the overall percent, from pages 1 to 3. Put one DSP on each block of rows, or add a column for who. Look for a trend over weeks, not one day.

DSP (name or initials)										
Person supported (initials or ID) and plan date										
Date	**Observer**	**DSP**	**Routine**	**A %**	**B %**	**C %**	**D %**	**Overall %**	**Feedback same shift?**	**Next obs.**

Percent = Y ÷ (Y + N) × 100, with NA left out. If every step in a section was NA, write NA. Your rule, funder and the plan author decide the target. If the percent slips, go back to observing more often and add a short refresher; if a step is missed across several observations, ask the plan author whether it is clear, possible and still right for the person.

Where this comes from: Fiske (2008), Behavior Analysis in Practice; Vollmer, Sloman and St. Peter Pipkin (2008), Behavior Analysis in Practice. Data review with graphs of staff performance; booster training to prevent drift. Our grid is the plainest version.

How to run an observation, how often, and how to give feedback

Seven steps

1. Before you start, get the current plan from the plan author, the person's record or the place your agency keeps it, and copy its steps for the routine into the blank rows in the plan's own words. Do not shorten, reword or add steps. If a step is unclear, stop and ask the plan author before you observe.
2. Tell the DSP what you will do and why: you are checking that the plan is clear and works for the team, not catching anyone. Where you can, tell the person supported and ask what they would like you to know; write what they say. Follow your agency's policy on how people are told about observations.
3. Choose a routine where the plan's steps will come up. Vollmer and colleagues suggest scheduling observations "during periods when the behavior is most likely to occur" to get more chances to see the steps.
4. Watch quietly and mark each step as it happens: Yes if it was done as written, No if it was not, N/A if the situation did not come up. Add a short note for every No and N/A. Do not coach in the middle unless someone's safety needs you to step in; if it does, follow your emergency procedures first.
5. Add up each section and the overall percent. Count Yes divided by Yes plus No, times 100, and leave out N/A.
6. Give feedback the same shift, in private, after the routine (see below), fill in the feedback box and put the next observation on the calendar before you leave.
7. Enter the result on the tracking grid. If the same step is a No across several observations, ask the plan author whether the step is clear, possible in this setting and still right for the person.

How often

When	What the sources say
Right after training or a plan change	Observe often at first. Fiske's review: "Initially, frequent observations may be required following teacher training," and "initially, daily feedback may be necessary to attain high levels of treatment integrity."
When the percent is high and steady	Fade. The review adds that observations "can be faded if treatment integrity remains high and stable," and that fading "to weekly and biweekly feedback may result in greater maintenance."
Keep feedback going	The review says "performance feedback is necessary to maintain high treatment integrity levels over time." Observation does not end when the percent reaches your target.
Watch for drift, and add a refresher	If the percent slips, go back to more frequent observation and a short refresher. Vollmer and colleagues suggest "periodic booster training sessions."
Check your own rule	Your state, funder or agency may set a minimum, or may say "periodic." Minnesota's example asks for "periodic performance evaluations" based on direct observation. This page does not set one.

The ranges above come from school-based research and are not a rule for any home or program. Vollmer and colleagues also say monitoring should be simple, "using efficient methods such as intermittent sampling rather than continuous monitoring."

Checklist

☐ I have the current plan, and its steps for this routine are copied into the form in the plan's own words.

☐ I know who wrote the plan and have their name and number on the form.

☐ The DSP knows what I will do and why, and the person supported has been told in the way our agency's policy says.

☐ I picked a routine where the plan's steps will come up.

☐ I marked every step Yes, No or N/A, with a short note for each No and N/A.

☐ I worked out the percent for each section and overall, leaving out N/A.

☐ I gave feedback the same shift, in private: what went well, one step to practice, rehearsed on the spot.

☐ Any step that could not be done as written went to the plan's author the same day, and I did not make up a replacement.

☐ The result is on the tracking grid and the next observation is on the calendar.

What the sources say, and one next step

These are examples of how different the sources are. None of them sets one frequency for observing DSPs, and we found no national rule that does. Use your own licensing rule, your funder's contract and the plan author's instructions; our state finder links each state's DSP training rule and agency.

Source	What it says
Federal, ICF/IID only: training.	Staff get "initial and continuing training that enables the employee to perform his or her duties effectively, efficiently, and competently," and must be able to demonstrate the skills to implement each client's individual program plan (42 CFR 483.430(e)).
Federal, ICF/IID only: who implements.	A client's individual program plan "must be implemented by all staff who work with the client, including professional, paraprofessional and nonprofessional staff," except for facets that only licensed personnel may implement, and the plan must be made available to all relevant staff (42 CFR 483.440(c), (d)).
Federal, ICF/IID only: safeguards.	Interventions to manage behavior are to be used "with sufficient safeguards and supervision to ensure that the safety, welfare and civil and human rights of clients are adequately protected," and "must be incorporated into the client's individual program plan" (42 CFR 483.450(b)).
Minnesota (example, HCBS license holders).	The license holder must keep evidence of staff competency, including "periodic performance evaluations … of the direct support staff person's ability to perform the job functions based on direct observation," and staff must be instructed on the person's support plan "and how to implement those plans."
Ohio (example, behavioral support strategies with restrictive measures).	Each person providing services under a strategy that includes restrictive measures "shall successfully complete training in the strategy prior to serving the individual," and such measures are to be implemented "with sufficient safeguards and supervision to ensure the health, welfare, and rights of individuals."
NADSP Code of Ethics (professional ethics, not a legal rule).	DSPs commit to "seek guidance from supervisors, managers, or policies when unsure of the correct course of action," and to "work with the person and their team to find alternatives and advocate for removing unnecessary restrictions and limitations in support plans."

State finder: https://special-learning.com/for-organizations/behavioral-health/state-required-dsp-training-hours/

Where each part comes from

Sources read November 16, 2026 (the eCFR text is current as of November 12). The form layout, marks, percent convention, tracking grid, feedback box and checklist are Special Learning's; the steps in a plan are its author's; the quoted lines are as published. Minnesota and Ohio are examples only. None of these organizations has reviewed or endorsed this form.

42 CFR 483.430(e). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-42/chapter-IV/subchapter-C/part-483/subpart-I/section-483.430
42 CFR 483.440(c) and (d). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-42/chapter-IV/subchapter-C/part-483/subpart-I/section-483.440
42 CFR 483.450(b). https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-42/chapter-IV/subchapter-C/part-483/subpart-I/section-483.450
Fiske (2008), Behavior Analysis in Practice. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2846589/
Vollmer, Sloman and St. Peter Pipkin (2008), Behavior Analysis in Practice. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2846587/
Parsons, Rollyson and Reid (2012), Behavior Analysis in Practice. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC3592486/
NADSP Code of Ethics. https://nadsp.org/resources/the-nadsp-code-of-ethics/
Minnesota Statutes 245D.09, subdivisions 3 and 4a (example). https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/245D.09
Ohio Administrative Code 5123-2-06(F) (example). https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/rule-5123-2-06

One next step

If your staff support autistic people, the Level 1 ABA Online Training Course for groups introduces autism and behavior-support foundations. $99 per learner · One-time purchase · Each learner has 12 weeks of access from the day they activate their code · Free 7-day trial of the first 2 sessions.

Related free tools: Find your state's DSP training rule · DSP supervision log template · DSP competency checklist · ABC data sheet · Crisis plan template · DSP incident report template · DSP training and HR toolkit