



Utah Parent Center
Special needs, extraordinary potential

Information Sheet

What is a Crisis Plan at School?

Some students have behavioral intervention plans (BIPs) as part of their IEPs. As part of that process a crisis plan can be developed. It is an action plan that is needed for times when a student may be at risk of harm to self or others. This should be developed by the IEP team including individuals knowledgeable about the child and include someone trained in mental health crisis response. Crisis plans should be individualized and reviewed regularly by the IEP team.

Safe crisis management procedures (crisis cycle) are needed and should be planned thoroughly and in advance. All applicable school personnel working with a student prone to such escalations should be trained in how to deal with a crisis. It is at the height of the crisis cycle that the primary concern is to keep the student and others safe until the student has de-escalated.

When developing a crisis plan, the IEP team should consider any school or district policies and procedures for responding to a student who is experiencing a crisis. In some cases, a child's crisis behaviors may be viewed as violation of the school's discipline policy. In these instances, the IEP team should plan on discussing whether the child's crisis may trigger a school disciplinary action and whether the behavior is a direct result of the student's disability.

What should a crisis plan include?

A crisis plan defines what a student's crisis looks like. It includes clear steps the school will take to provide support for your student during a crisis including knowing who to contact for assistance, how to work together with the youth during the crisis, and how to know when the crisis is over.

A crisis plan:

- Is used when the student may be at risk of harm to self or others
- Focuses on immediate response to the risk of the student's harmful behaviors or actions
- Can include support from a trained mental health crisis response provider
- Is more effective when developed using positive strategies and with the input and support of the student when the student is calm
- Identifies when parents should be notified.

The development of a positive behavior intervention plan or a crisis plan is an important addition to the IEP for students who experience mental health or behavior challenges at school. If a student is not served on an IEP or Section 504 plan, a crisis plan can still be developed. However, such repeated behaviors should trigger the child find process to evaluate if there is a disabling condition involved.

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The crisis plan may involve emergency safety interventions such as physical restraint or seclusionary time out. However there are very specific guidelines on the use of these interventions parents with which parents should be familiar. To find out more about these interventions, check our website on the behavior link.

Other resources:

[Crisis Prevention And Management Planning](#)

The website includes a toolkit with information and ideas for working with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

[Police Intervention: Crisis Intervention Team Utah](#)

Crisis Intervention Teams (CIT) are teams of specially trained law enforcement officers. These officers are trained in tactics to effectively deal with a person experiencing a mental health crisis, as well as how to interact on an everyday basis with individuals who have mental illness.

[Free Community Crisis Response Program](#)

UNI has teamed up with Salt Lake County and OptumHealth SLCo to provide free crisis response and hospital diversion programs that aim to keep all our family members, friends, and neighbors safe. The community crisis service programs are designed to provide community members with a full range of options to help solve the crisis in the best setting possible.



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[LRBI Technical Assistance Manual: Positive Behavioral Supports & Selection of Least Restrictive Behavioral Interventions, Utah State Board of Education, 2015.](#)

[Utah State Board of Education Special Education Rules](#)