



## BRAIN FIRST PARENTING

# OVERVIEW: FUNCTIONAL NEUROBEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT

Fit and accommodations for people with neurobehavioral conditions

This grid is a **Functional Neurobehavioral Assessment (FNA)** and was developed by Diane Malbin (© FASCETS). It provides a structure for systematically exploring the fit between person and setting, and managing the confusion and complexity associated with the variability of brain-based conditions. The value of this grid is to help clarify where there is a poor fit, identify and build on strengths and create appropriate accommodations, prevent future problems, and improve outcomes.

The grid may be used with people of all ages in all settings—home, school, office, clinic, on the job and elsewhere.

**Setting:** The home, school, or community environment that is being assessed for “fit.”

**Chronological age & Developmental Age:** Since there is typically a significant difference between chronological age and developmental level of functioning, recognizing level of functioning is central for understanding the person and planning appropriate accommodations.

brain first  
P A R E N T I N G

EILEEN DEVINE



## BRAIN FIRST PARENTING

# OVERVIEW: FUNCTIONAL NEUROBEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT

Fit and accommodations for people with neurobehavioral conditions

**Column 1 - Task or expectation:** This asks the question, “What does the person need to do in order to be successful in this setting? What are the expectations for “appropriate behaviors?” This is otherwise known as task analysis.

**Column 2 - Brain tasks:** Column two asks the question, “What does the brain need to be able to do in order to successfully do the task in column one?” This column takes practice to learn to fill out since it requires identification of cognitive tasks that are typically taken for granted.

**Column 3 - Primary characteristics:** To complete this column, refer to the neurobehavioral screening tool. Does this person have difficulty with the cognitive task in column two? For example, if column two identified “fast auditory pace”, and the person was a “5” on the screen for slow cognitive pace, this provides a visual comparison between assumed abilities and neurobehavioral symptoms. In the following case example, there is a poor fit. The grid also clarifies where there is a good fit.

**Column 4 - Developmental age (estimate):** Developmental level of maturity often varies by task. Factoring actual developmental age rather than chronological age into the analysis is central for understanding and developing appropriate accommodations.



## BRAIN FIRST PARENTING

### OVERVIEW: FUNCTIONAL NEUROBEHAVIORAL ASSESSMENT

Fit and accommodations for people with neurobehavioral conditions

**Column 5 - Secondary characteristics:** Where there is a difference between columns two and three, secondary defensive behaviors are normal reactions to chronic pain and frustration and indicate a poor fit between task and ability. When there is a poor fit between columns two and three, secondary behaviors are common. When there is a good fit between columns two and three, there are typically no secondary symptoms in that area.

**Column 6 - Strengths:** Strategies build on strengths. Learning style, interests and talents are strengths on which to develop person-specific techniques and accommodations.

**Column 7 - Accommodations:** The first three columns provide a structure for task analysis, articulating assumptions about brain function and identifying neurobehavioral symptoms of brain dysfunction. Accommodations that create a good fit between person and setting and build on strengths emerge from understanding and are usually simple, inexpensive and effective..