



Glossary of Terms

Accommodations – Changes in curriculum or instruction that do not substantially modify the requirements of the class or alter the content standards or benchmarks. Accommodations are determined by the IEP team and are documented in the student IEP.

Achievement Test – Test that measures competency in a particular area of knowledge or skill; measures mastery or acquisition of skills.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) – Federal law requiring accommodations for people with disabilities in the community and workplace.

Asperger's Syndrome – Was first described by German doctor, Hans Asperger, in 1944. Children with Asperger's have a qualitative impairment in social interactions with marked delays in nonverbal behaviors (i.e., gesturing, facial expression, body posture); impairments in establishing peer relationships; absence of "spontaneous seeking to share enjoyment, interests or achievements with others"; and delays in social reciprocity. Other characteristics that may be present include preoccupation with one restricted area of interest; inflexibility or rigidity, sticking to a set, sometimes nonfunctional routine; stereotypical and repetitive motor movements; sensory problems; movements clumsy and awkward; or preoccupation with parts or objects.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) – Persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that is more frequent and severe than is typically observed in individuals at a comparable level of development and that interferes with developmentally appropriate social/academic functioning.

Autism – A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before the age of three, that adversely affects an individual's educational performance. Other characteristics associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. Children with Pervasive Developmental Disorders (PDD) or autism vary widely in abilities, intelligence and behaviors.

Behavior Disorder (BD) – A disability with one or more behavioral characteristics that are: 1) exhibited at either a much higher or much lower rate than is appropriate for one's age; 2) documented as occurring over an extensive period of time in different environmental settings within the school and community; and 3) interfering consistently with the student's educational performance and is not the result of intellectual, sensory, cultural or health factors that have not received appropriate attention.

Continuum of Service – The range of supports and services that must be provided by a school district that allow students with disabilities to be provided a free appropriate public education.

Due Process – A procedure guaranteed by federal law, for resolving disputes regarding special education services.

Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) – Special education and related services provided to children from birth to age 5.

Extended School Year Services – Special education and related services provided to a qualified student with disabilities beyond the normal school year, in accordance with the student’s Individual Education Plan and at no cost to the parent of the child. The need for Extended Services is determined by the student’s IEP team.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) – Special education and related services are provided to students with disabilities by the Local Education Agency (LEA) – and Area Education Agency (AEA) at public expense and under public supervision and direction at no cost to the student’s parents.

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) – A process of attempting to understand the purpose, motivation and correlates of a problem behavior. The result of the process is the development of an appropriate behavior support and management plan.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – Federal law that grants entitlement for special education services to children with disabilities.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) – The annually written record of an eligible individual’s special education and related services. The IEP describes the unique educational needs of the student and the manner in which those educational needs will be met.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) – A written plan for providing early intervention services to an eligible individual and to the individual’s family.

Learning Disability (LD) – A disability in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations. This includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, and developmental aphasia. The term does not apply to individuals who have learning problems that are primarily the result of physical or mental disabilities, behavior disorder, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – A federal mandate that to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities be educated with children who are not disabled.

Modification – Changes in curriculum or instruction that substantially change the requirements of the class or substantially alter the content standards or benchmarks.

Occupational Therapy (OT) – A special education related service which is usually focused on the development of a student’s fine motor skills and/or the identification of adapted ways of accomplishing activities of daily living when a student’s disabilities preclude doing those tasks in typical ways (e.g. modifying clothing so a person without arms can dress himself/herself).

Physical Therapist (PT) – A licensed health professional who applies principles, methods and procedures for analyzing motor or sensorimotor functions to determine the educational significance of the identified areas including areas such as mobility and positioning in order to provide planning, coordination, and the implementation of strategies for eligible individuals.

Related Services – Services that are required to assist an individual with disabilities to benefit from special education, including but not limited to: transportation, OT, PT, medical care.

School Psychologist – A trained professional who assists in the identification of needs regarding behavioral, social, emotional, educational and vocational functioning of individuals; analyzes and integrates information, and consults with school personnel and parents regarding planning, implementing and evaluating individuals and families.

School Social Worker – A trained professional who supports the educational program of individuals by assisting in identification and assessment of the individual's educational needs including social, emotional, behavioral and adaptive needs; provides intervention services including individual, group, parent and family counseling; provides consultation and planning; serves as liaison among home, school and community.

Severely Disabled – Individuals with any severe disability including those who are profoundly multiply disabled.

Special Education (SPED) – Specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of an eligible individual, includes the specially designed instruction conducted in schools, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings. Special education provides a continuum of services in order to provide for the education needs of each eligible individual regardless of the nature or severity of the educational needs.

Speech-language Pathologist (SLP) – A trained professional who analyzes speech and language comprehension and production to determine communication competencies and provides intervention strategies and services related to speech and language development as well as disorders of language, voice, articulation, and fluency.

Transition Services – A coordinated set of activities that promote movement from school to post school education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation. Transition goals are determined by the IEP team beginning at age 14 and are based on student and family vision, preferences, and interests.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) – Federal program that provides transition supports for eligible students who receive special education services in high school. Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation is determined by the IEP team during the student's junior year in high school. For more information contact your child's special education teacher or guidance counselor.