

Special Education Terms

Adapted Physical Education (APE): Specially designed physical education program, using accommodations designed to fit the needs of students who require developmental or corrective instruction in PE.

Accommodations: Changes that allow a person with a disability to participate fully in an activity. Examples include, extended time, different test format, and alterations to a classroom.

ADD/ADHD: Attention deficit disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder are medical conditions characterized by a child's inability to focus, while possessing impulsivity, fidgeting and inattention.

Anxiety in Children: Defined as extreme agitation, filled with tension and dread. Anxiety is different than fear. Children with anxiety may or may not qualify for special education. Those who need modifications to their school day can achieve this through a 504 plan.

Assessment or Evaluation: Term used to describe the testing and diagnostic processes leading up to the development of an appropriate IEP for a student with special education needs.

Asperger's Syndrome: A type of pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) that involves delays in the development of basic skills, including socializing, coordination and the ability to communicate.

Autism: A brain development disorder characterized by impaired social interaction, communication and by restricted and repetitive behavior. Signs usually begin before a child is 3 years old.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): Special education term used to describe the written plan used to address problem behavior that includes positive behavioral interventions, strategies and support. May include program modifications and supplementary aids and services.

Bipolar Disorders: Characterized by cycles of mania alternating with depression. It is difficult to diagnose children with this disorder and often controversial.

Blindness: Condition defined by lacking visual perception due to physiological or neurological factors.

Cerebral Palsy: A series of motor problems and physical disorders related to brain injury. CP causes uncontrollable reflex movements and muscle tightness and may cause problems in balance and depth perception. Severe cases can result in mental retardation, seizures or vision and hearing problems.

Community Advisory Committee (CAC): A committee whose membership includes parents of school children, school personnel and representatives of the public. This committee advises school administration and local school boards regarding the plan for special education, assists with parent education and promotes public awareness of individuals with special needs.

Complaint Procedure: A formal complaint filed with the County or State Board of Education if a district violates a legal duty or fails to follow a requirement under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. (IDEA)

Cumulative File: The records maintained by the local school district for any child enrolled in school. The file may contain evaluations and information about a child's disability and placement. It also contains grades and the results of standardized assessments. Parents have the right to inspect these files at any time.

Deafness: Hearing impairment so severe that a child is impaired in possessing any linguistic information through hearing.

Designated Instruction Services (DIS): Instruction and services not normally provided by regular classes, resource specialist programs or special day classes. They include speech therapy and adaptive physical education.

Differential Standards for Graduation: Standards for graduation that may be modified for students with exceptional needs.

Disability: Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

Due Process: Special education term used to describe the process where parents may disagree with the program recommendations of the school district. The notice must be given in writing within 30 days. IDEA provides two methods for resolving disputes, mediation or fair hearing.

Early Intervention: Programs for developmentally delayed infants and toddlers through 35 months of age; designed to help prevent problems as the child matures.

Emotional Disturbance (SED): Term used to describe a diagnosable mental, behavioral or emotional disorder that lasts for a significant duration that meets the criteria within the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.

Extended School Year Services (ESY): An extended school year is a component of special education services for students with unique needs who require services in excess of the regular academic year. Extended year often refers to summer school.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA): A problem solving process for addressing inappropriate behavior.

Hearing Impairment: Full or partial decrease in the ability to detect or understand sounds.

Home/Hospital Instruction: Students with verified medical conditions, which prevent them from attending school, may receive services on a temporary basis in the home or hospital with a physician's referral.

Inclusion: Term used to describe services that place students with disabilities in general education classrooms with appropriate support services. Student may receive instruction from both a general education teacher and a special education teacher.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004): The original legislation was written in 1975 guaranteeing students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education and the right to be educated with their non-disabled peers. Congress has reauthorized this federal law. The most recent revision occurred in 2004.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): Special education term outlined by IDEA to define the written document that states the disabled child's goals, objectives and services for students receiving special education.

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE): A school district is required by law to conduct assessments for students who may be eligible for special education. If the parent disagrees with the results of a school district's evaluation conducted on their child, they have the right to request an independent educational evaluation. The district must provide parents with information about how to obtain an IEE. An independent educational evaluation means an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is

not employed by the school district. Public expense means the school district pays for the full cost of the evaluation and that it is provided at no cost to the parent.

Individualized Education Program Team: Term used to describe the committee of parents, teachers, administrators and school personnel that provides services to the student. The committee may also include medical professional and other relevant parties. The team reviews assessment results, determines goals and objectives and program placement for the child needing services.

Individualized Family Service Plan: (IFSP) A process of providing early intervention services for children ages 0-3 with special needs. Family based needs are identified and a written plan is developed and reviewed periodically.

Individualized Transition Plan (ITP): This plan starts at age 14 and addresses areas of post-school activities, post secondary education, employment, community experiences and daily living skills.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): The placement of a special needs student in a manner promoting the maximum possible interaction with the general school population. Placement options are offered on a continuum including regular classroom with no support services, regular classroom with support services, designated instruction services, special day classes and private special education programs.

Local Education Agency (LEA): Term used to describe a school district participating in a SELPA.

Local Plan: A plan developed by a SELPA and submitted to the State Department of Education for approval. The document outlines the plan for delivery of support services to eligible students living within the geographic boundaries of the plan.

Mainstreaming: Term used to describe the integration of children with special needs into regular classrooms for part of the school day. The remainder of the day is in a special education classroom.

Manifestation Determination: Within 10 school days of any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability because of violation of school code, the IEP team must review all relevant information in the student's file to determine if the conduct in question was caused by the child's disability or if the conduct was a direct result of the school district's failure to implement the child's IEP.

Mental Retardation (now referred to as Intellectually Disabled): This term has recently been changed. This disorder is characterized by below average cognitive functioning in two or more adaptive behaviors with onset before age 18.

Multiple Disabilities: An IEP term used to define a combination of disabilities that causes severe educational needs that require multiple special education programs such as mental retardation with blindness.

Non-public School (NPS) Districts contract with non-public schools when an appropriate placement cannot be found within the scope of the public education setting. Non-public school placement is sought only after efforts to find appropriate placement in public schools have been exhausted.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder(OCD): OCD is an anxiety disorder that presents itself as recurrent, persistent obsessions or compulsions. Obsessions are intrusive ideas, thoughts or images while compulsions are repetitive behaviors or mental acts that the child feels they must perform.

Occupational Therapists: Provide consultation and support to staff to improve a student's educational performance related to fine motor, gross motor and sensory integration development.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD): A child who defies authority by disobeying, talking back, arguing or being hostile in a way that is excessive compared to other children and this pattern continues for more than six months may be determined to have ODD. ODD often occurs with other behavioral problems such as ADHD, learning disabilities and anxiety disorders.

Orthopedic Impairment: Term used to define impairments caused by congenital anomaly, impairments by diseases and impairments by other causes.

Other Health Impaired: Term used to describe limited strength, vitality and alertness that results in limited ability in the educational environment. Impairment could be a result of chronic health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder, epilepsy, heart condition, hemophilia, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever and sickle cell anemia.

Parent Consent: Special education term used by IDEA that states you have been fully informed in your native language or other mode of communication of all the

information about the action for which you are giving consent and that you understand and agree in writing to that action.

Physical Therapists: Provide consultation and support to staff to improve a student's educational performance related to functional gross motor development.

Private School: There are new laws regulating the rights of students with disabilities whose parents place them in private schools. When a student is enrolled in private school and has academic difficulties, the school where the student attends needs to inform the parent and the local public school district of the student's difficulties. The district of residence may assess the student to determine if the student qualifies for special education. If they do qualify, the district of residence is responsible for writing an Individualized Education Plan

Residential and Private Placements: Part B of IDEA does not require a school district to pay for the cost of education for your disabled child at a private school or facility if the school district made free appropriate public education available to your child and you chose to place your child in private placement.

Resource Specialists: Provide instructional planning and support and direct services to students who needs have been identified in an IEP and are assigned to general education classrooms for the majority of their school day.

Resource Specialist Program (RSP): Term used to describe a program that provides instruction, materials and support services to students with identified disabilities who are assigned to general classroom for more than 50% of their school day.

School Psychologist: Assist in the identification of intellectual, social and emotional needs of students. They provide consultation and support to families and staff regarding behavior and conditions related to learning. They plan programs to meet the special needs of children and often serve as a facilitator during an IEP meeting.

Sensory Processing Disorder: A complex brain disorder that causes a child to misinterpret everyday sensory information like movement, sound and touch. Children with SPD may seek out intense sensory experiences or feel overwhelmed with information.

Specific Learning Disability: Special education term used to define a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language spoken or written that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical equations.

Speech and Language Impairments: Communication disorders such as stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment or voice impairment.

Speech and Language Specialists: Assesses students for possible delayed speech and language skills and provides direct services in the area of phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. They are also available regarding hearing impairments and amplification.

SSDI: Social security disability insurance benefits are provided to qualified individuals who cannot engage in substantial gainful work activity because of a disability and who have paid into the system or has a parent who has paid into the Social Security system.

SSI: Supplemental Security Income benefits are provided to qualified individuals who cannot engage in substantial gainful work activity because of a disability and who fall below certain assets and income levels.

Special Day Class (SDC): Term used to describe a self contained special education class which provides services to students with intensive needs that cannot be met by the general education program, RSP or DIS program. Classes consist of more than 50% of the student's day.

State Schools: Most states operate state run residential schools for deaf and blind students.

Student Study Team (SST): A group that evaluates a child's performance, makes recommendations for success and develops a formal plan. The team includes the classroom teacher, parents, and educational specialists. They may make a recommendation for a special education evaluation.

Tourette's Syndrome: Disorder that includes multiple motor and one or more vocal tics, which occur many times per day, nearly daily. If a child has Tourette's syndrome, symptoms tend to appear between the ages of 3-10 years old.

Traumatic Brain Injury: An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment. Applies to open or closed head injuries.

Transition IEP: IDEA mandates that at age 16, the IEP must include a statement about transition including goals for post-secondary activities and the services needed to achieve these goals. This is referred to an Individual Transition Plan or (ITP).

Turner's Syndrome: This rare genetic disorder affects females and is characterized by the absence of an X chromosome. Characteristics include small stature, limited development of sexual characteristics, low hairline and abnormal eye and bone development.

Visual Impairment: Impairment in vision that even with correction adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Vision Specialists: Provide consultation and support to staff and direct instructional support to students with visual impairments. They provide functional vision assessments and curriculum modifications including Braille, large type and aural media.

Workability Program: These programs focus on preparing high school students with disabilities for successful transition to employment, continuing education and quality adult life with an emphasis on work based learning opportunities.