

Special Education Acronyms

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
AG	Annual Goal
AU	Autism
BLST	Building Level Support Team
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DDD	Division of Developmental Disabilities
ED	Emotional Disability
ELL	English Language Learner
ESY	Extended School Year
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
HI	Hearing Impaired
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
LEA	Local Education Agency
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
MD	Multiply Disabled
MDSSI	Multiply Disabled-Severe Sensory Impairment
MET	Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team
MIMR	Mild Mental Retardation
MOMR	Moderate Mental Retardation
OCR	Office for Civil Rights
OHI	Other Health Impaired
OI	Orthopedic Impairment
OT	Occupational Therapy
PMD	Preschool-Moderate Delay
PSD	Preschool-Severe Delay
PSL	Preschool-Speech/Language
PT	Physical Therapy
SEA	STate Education Agency
SLI	Speech/Language Impaired
SPED	Special Education
SMR	Severe Mental Retardation
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
TTY	A telecommunication device for the deaf
VI	Visually Impaired

Special Education Terms

academic: refers to subjects such as reading, math, social studies, science, etc.

achievement tests: a test which measures what a child has already learned

adaptive physical education: modified activities that allow a child with a disability to participate in a program with the same or similar objectives as the regular physical education program

advocate: someone who takes action to help someone else (as in "educational advocate"); also, to take action on someone's behalf

appeal: a written request for a change in a decision; also, to make such a request

appropriate: able to meet a need; in special education it usually means the most normal setting possible

assistive technology: a device or service required if "educationally" relevant and necessary to enable a child to be educated in the least restrictive environment

1. assistive technology device: any item, piece of equipment, or product system used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability; and

2. assistive technology services: any services that directly assist a child with a disability or others, as appropriate, in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device

at risk: a term used with children who have, or could have, problems with development that may affect later learning

attention span: extent to which a person can concentrate on a single task

auditory perception: the ability to interpret or organize the sensory data received through the ear, an example would be the ability to differentiate between the sounds of the words leaf and leave

child find: state education agency (SEA) and local education agency (LEA) procedures for locating children with disabilities who are not receiving special

education services (the unserved), or who are not receiving the appropriate services (the under served)

consent: what parents may give after they have been fully informed of all the information regarding the activity the district wants to implement. This information must be provided to the parents in their native language or mode of communication. Parental consent is voluntary and may be revoked.

continuum of alternative placements: a variety of placements available to meet the individual needs of children with disabilities; the continuum must include instruction in regular classes, special education classes, special schools, home instructions, instruction in hospitals and institutions, and instruction in other settings. The federal regulations require that the placement decision must be made on an individual basis not the availability of program or lack of a continuum of alternative placements. (Also see least restrictive environment (LRE).)

developmental history: the progress in the steps or stages of growth of a child (ages birth to 18 years) in such skills as sitting, walking, and talking

disability: the result of any physical or mental condition that affects or prevents one's ability to develop, achieve, and/or function in an educational setting at a normal rate

due process (procedure): action that protects a person's rights; in special education, this applies to action taken to protect the educational rights of students with disabilities

eligible: able to qualify to receive special education services

evaluation: a collecting and bringing together of information about a child's learning needs, which may include social, psychological, and educational evaluations used to determine assignment to special programs or services; a process using observation, testing, and test analysis to determine an individual's strengths and weaknesses to plan his or her educational services. Parental consent for initial evaluation must be obtained for this process

evaluation team: a team of people from different areas of expertise who observe and test a child to find out his or her strengths or weaknesses

extended school year: additional special education and related services for a child with a disability to supplement the normal school year which are provided as part of a free appropriate public education (FAPE)

free appropriate public education (often known as FAPE): one of the key requirements of IDEA 97, which states that an education program be provided to all eligible children (regardless of disability) without cost to families; the exact meanings of "appropriate" are not defined, but other references within the law imply the most "normal" setting available

full inclusion: the child with a disability is a full member of a regular education class with no additional assignment to any special class. Under full inclusion, however, the child need not be in the classroom 100% of the time

IDEA: abbreviation of the title of Public Law 101-476, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (See Public Law 101-476 for more information).

identification: the process of locating and identifying children needing special educational services

individualized education program (IEP): a written education plan for an eligible child with disabilities developed by a team of professionals (teachers, therapists, etc.) and the child's parents; it is reviewed and updated yearly and describes how the child is presently doing, what the child's learning needs are, and what services the child will need. (For children ages up to 3 years, the Individualized Family Service Plan is used.)

least restrictive environment (LRE): to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled

level of performance: precisely (accurately, clearly) describes the child's performance in academic areas, non-academic areas, communication, daily living skills, etc.

location: refers to the particular school, classroom, or teacher in which/by whom a child's I.E.P. will be implemented

mainstreaming: refers "to the provision of opportunities for students labeled as disabled who are in special education settings to spend a portion of their time in general education." (source: Lipsky and Gartner, Beyond Separate Education: Quality Education for All.)

mediation: a formal intervention between parents and a school system to achieve reconciliation, settlement, or compromise

Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET): a meeting following the child's comprehensive evaluation, involving a group of knowledgeable persons,

including the parent, where the results of the comprehensive evaluation are discussed and eligibility for special education is determined

Occupational therapy: a rehabilitative process directed by an occupational therapist where purposeful activities are employed as a basis for improving muscular control, may focus on fine motor development and/or the upper half of the individual's body; may be a related service for children with disabilities if it is determined as necessary for an appropriate education to be received

physical therapy: the treatment of disabilities by using massage, exercise, water, light, heat, etc., all of which are mechanical rather than medical in nature. Physical therapy is practiced by a professionally trained physical therapist under the referral of a physician; in school it may be a related service if it is necessary in order for a child with disabilities to meet educational needs

placement: the classroom, program, level of service, and/or therapy that is selected for a student with special needs

policy/policies: rules and regulations; as related to early intervention and special education programs, the rules that a state or local school system has for providing services for and educating students with special needs

prior written notice: a written document the district gives to the parents of special education students when the district proposes or refuses to initiate a change in the identification, evaluation, placement, or provision of free appropriate public education. This document must include 1) a description of the action proposed or refused and why that action was taken; 2) any other options considered in taking that action and why those were refused; 3) which tests, evaluations, or records the school used to support that action; 4) a description of any other factors involved in taking the action; and 5) a full written explanation of procedural safeguards

programs: in special education, a service, placement, and/or therapy designed to help a child with special needs

special education: see special education programs and services

special education programs/services: programs, services, or specially designed instruction for eligible children ages three through twenty-one with special needs. These programs/services include special learning methods and/or materials in the regular classroom, special classes and programs, instruction at home, in hospitals, and/or institutions, or other settings if the learning or physical problems require them. These services also include related services to meet the special needs of eligible children at no cost to the parent. Special education

services are those needed in order for the child to benefit from his/her education.

special needs (as in a child with "special needs"): a term to describe a child who has disabilities or one who is at risk for developing disabilities and who requires special services or treatment in order to make progress

standard deviation: a unit used to measure the amount by which a particular score differs from the Mean (average) of all the scores in the sample (persons used to take the test before it is used with the public). Different tests have different standard deviations.

state education agency (SEA): the agency or office within each state that oversees special education requirements and coordinates special education programs and services for public school systems in the state.

surrogate parent: a person appointed by the court to function in the role of parent for a child only on special education matters when the natural parent cannot be identified or located. The person has all the same rights as a natural parent for special education procedures.

transition services: a set of activities which prepares a student with a disability for the move from school to post-school activities such as employment, post-secondary education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. Transition services, included annually in the IEP for students by age sixteen and earlier when required, are based on the student's needs, preferences, and interests. Transition activities must include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and post-school living objectives, and can include daily living skills training and vocational education.

visual perception: the identification, organization, and interpretation of sensory data received by the individual through the eye; for example, in school it includes the ability to differentiate between the letter d and the letter b