

## Glossary of Special Education Related Terms

**Achievement Testing:** measures what a child has already learned in areas such as reading, math, and spelling or written and oral language.

**ADL - Activities of Daily Living (ADL):** daily tasks necessary to care for oneself such as dressing or eating.

**APE - Adapted Physical Education:** a physical education program designed to meet the special needs of individual students with disabilities who need modifications to the school's regular physical education program, or a specially designed physical education program.

**Advocate:** a person who speaks on behalf of himself/herself or others to protect his/her rights and ensure access to services to which the individual is entitled.

**Annual Goal:** a measurable outcome written in the IEP (along with related short term objectives) for each area of identified need that the student can reasonably achieve in one year by meeting each of the related short term objectives. Progress toward meeting the objectives related to each annual goal must be documented and shared with parents at least quarterly.

**Annual Review:** meeting of the IEP Team held at least annually to review a child's progress and to develop and use an IEP, including goals, objectives and services, to determine appropriate placement for the next year.

**Appeal:** a written request to change a decision or the act of making a request to change a decision.

**Appropriate:** able to adequately address/meet identified needs.

**Assessment:** the process of securing information, which may include results of such tests as a psychological and/or educational evaluation and family/teacher input and observations, to determine eligibility for special education services, and to plan for the type and extent of special education to be provided for a child who qualifies for services.

**AT - Assistive Technology:** any device, product, or piece of equipment that improves functional capabilities (such as walking, hearing, seeing, speaking, or learning) of a child or adult with disabilities.

**ATS - Assistive Technology Services:** assist an individual or family in selecting, acquiring, maintaining, or using AT.

**ASD - Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD):** is a developmental disorder characterized by abnormal or impaired development in social-communication skills and restricted and/or repetitive patterns of behavior.

**BIP - Behavior Intervention Plan:** Positive strategies, program modifications and supplementary aids/supports that address a student's disruptive behaviors to allow for continued education in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

**Case Manager:** a person (frequently the Special Educator for a student who qualifies for an IEP or the Special/General Educator, Guidance Counselor or other school staff for a student who qualifies for services under Section 504), who acts as a coordinator for all of the services provided for a student. School psychologists and school social workers also serve as case managers/liaisons for any students who are supported in out-of-district placements.

**Child Find:** a system of identifying children age 3 through 21 years of age who may have a disability and be in need of special education services.

**Cognitive Testing:** tests are designed to measure a person's intelligence and mental ability. Some of the specific areas measured by cognitive ability tests include problem-solving, verbal ability, numerical ability, reasoning, memory, and general intelligence.

**CSE – Committee on Special Education:** is a multidisciplinary team, appointed by the Board of Education. The CSE is responsible for students with disabilities from ages 5-21. The CSE is authorized to identify students in need of services by determining eligibility, developing an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), placing the student in the least restrictive environment in which they can succeed and provide appropriate services to meet the child's educational needs.

**CPSE – Committee on Preschool Education:** is responsible for identifying and arranging for the delivery of Special Education services for preschool children with disabilities from ages three to five. The CPSE is responsible for guiding parents in a process that includes evaluation and, if eligible, the recommendation for placement in approved programs and services for each preschool student with a disability. The educational programs and services for preschool children with disabilities are the responsibility of the school district in which the student resides in accordance with New York State Education law, Article 89.

**CCLS – Common Core Learning Standards:** A shared set of evidence based national standards developed through state led initiatives. Common Core is designed to have fewer, simplified standards. They were created by the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers. Officials from 48 states participated in the process to develop the standards over several years.

**Consent:** written permission from parents, which is required for all evaluations, and for the first IEP to be supplemented.

**Developmental Delay:** a delay in the usual steps of growth and development for children from birth through 18 years old.

**Disability:** the result of a physical or mental condition that prevents an individual from developing, achieving or functioning within a normal range.

**Due Process Hearing:** a formal procedure to resolve a dispute between parents and the school system about identification, evaluation or educational placement/program of a child.

**Early Intervention:** services or programs designed to identify and treat developmental problems in children from birth through 36 months of age.

**Education Records:** records covered under the definition of education records in part 99 of this title (the regulations implementing the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974).

**Educational Disability:** After the existence of a disability has been established, the IEP Team must use and document using a variety of sources such as achievement tests, teacher and parent input, physical condition of the child, adaptive behavior, etc. to determine if a child has a disabling condition affecting learning and is in need of special education and/or related services.

**Eligibility:** The IEP Team uses a variety of sources (see Educational Disability) to determine whether a child has an educational disability and qualifies for special education services according to the guidelines specified in special education law.

**Expressive language:** Skills required to produce language for reliable communication with others; speaking and writing are expressive language skills

**Evaluation:** includes use of existing information along with tests and procedures used initially to determine whether a child has a disability and if the child qualifies, the type and extent of special education services needed by the child.

**ESY - Extended School Year:** a small percentage of special education students qualify for extended school year. These services are explained to parents at every annual review regardless of whether their child has a severe or mild disability. ESY is an extension of specific services beyond the 180-day school year provided to children who meet at least one of the criteria as stated in special education law.

**Fine Motor Skills:** Functions that require small muscle movements such as writing, tying shoes, and buttoning a shirt.

**FAPE - Free Appropriate Public Education:** the right to a free public education which meets the specific educational needs of a child with a disability as guaranteed by IDEA.

**FBA - Functional Behavior Assessment:** a systematic collection of data that identifies conditions under which an inappropriate behavior is likely to occur, the motivation for the behavior and what the behavior communicates for a student.

**Gross Motor Skills:** Functions that require large muscle movements such as running, jumping, or swimming.

**Home/Hospital Instruction:** provided to students who are unable to attend school for a specific time period due to a medically condition. It is provided to the student to continue academic work and remain current with classroom instruction while absent from school.

**Identification:** the process of finding and identifying children needing special education services.

**Inclusion:** an education philosophy in which a child receives special education services that meet his/her educational needs to the maximum extent possible within the general education setting and school that the child would attend if he/she did not have a disability.

**Independent Evaluation:** an evaluation, such as psychological or educational testing usually arranged and paid for by parents or their insurance. Team members must consider - although they may not necessarily agree with - the results of a private evaluation as long as the evaluator meets certain school criteria, such as specific licensing requirements.

**IEP Individualized Educational Program:** a written document, reviewed annually, including a child's current level of performance and needs, long term goals and short term objectives, which describes the special education services (including related services, and supplementary aids and services). An IEP will be written by CSE for any child who qualifies for special education services. The IEP should also include the date services are to begin, the criteria for evaluation of progress toward each short term objective (to be documented at least quarterly) and the extent to which the child will participate in academic and non-academic general education programs.

**IFSP - Individualized Family Service Plan:** a written plan for infants and toddlers under 3 years of age, describing a child's developmental levels, family information, early intervention services that the child will be receiving including when and where the services will be provided, and naming the service coordinator assigned to the child and his/her family. Note: By 24 months of age the IFSP should include a Transition Plan of steps to be taken to make a smooth transition at 3 years old when the child will no longer be eligible for services in the early intervention system.

**IDEA Individuals with Disabilities Education Act:** a federal law which was reauthorized in 1997 that guarantees that all children with disabilities are provided with a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE), and that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected.

**ICT – Integrated Co-taught Class:** are specially designed classes and instruction provided to group of students with disabilities and without disabilities. These classes are taught by both a special education teacher and a general education teacher.

**IQ - Intelligence Quotient:** a measure obtained from psychological testing that indicates a child's potential for learning.

**LRE Least Restrictive Environment:** the setting that gives the child as much contact as possible with non-disabled children of the same age while still meeting his/her educational needs.

**Mediation:** the process of having a trained person, a mediator, try to help parents and the school system reach an agreement about a child's special education program and services.

**Modifications:** changes to curriculum, instruction and assessment that significantly alter the expectations for the student.

**Multidisciplinary:** describes a team approach involving specialists in more than one area. To get a complete picture of a child's needs, for example, he/she might be evaluated by a special educator, a (SLP) speech-language pathologist and an (OT) occupational therapist.

**Nonpublic Placement:** Parents may choose to apply for their child with disabilities to attend a nonpublic school but still access some special education services from the local public school system through the IEP process.

**OT Occupational Therapy:** instruction in skills such as coordination and control of fine motor movements to handle activities of daily living (ADL) provided by an occupational therapist (OT).

**OHI - Other Health Impaired:** Means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment that is due to chronic or acute health problems and adversely affects a student's educational performance.

**Personal Identification Information:** information includes: the name of the student, the student's parent, or other family member; the address of the student; and a personal identifier, such as the student's social security number or student number.

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**PT - Physical Therapy:** services provided by a physical therapist (PT) to address needs in areas of gross motor development such as strength, flexibility, motion and endurance.

**Placement:** determined after the IEP has been completed (and often mistakenly referred to only as the class or school facility where a student in special education goes to be educated); placement encompasses all aspects of the individualized program for a student with disabilities including: general and special education, related services, supplementary aids and services, the general educator(s), special educator, therapists, specialists and other components of the special education program. The classrooms and the school where the student is educated are just part of the placement for a student with disabilities.

**Positive Behavioral Supports:** interventions intended to reduce an inappropriate behavior and teach a student alternative ways to communicate needs.

**Pragmatics:** Language use to meet various needs or functions (e.g., asking, describing, telling), social language.

**Procedural Safeguards:** procedures to protect the rights of children with disabilities and their parents according to the provisions in the IDEA.

**Receptive language:** Understanding spoken language through listening or reading.

**Re-evaluation:** when the IEP team looks at available information to determine what additional tests, observations, etc. are necessary to document continued eligibility for special education and/or related services, and to determine what constitutes an appropriate educational program for the student. This must take place at least every 3 years in New York State.

**Referral:** the process of requesting a screening to determine if a child should be evaluated to find out if there is a need for special education services.

**Related Services:** services (which are written in the IEP) that must be provided for a child who qualifies for special education in order to benefit from his/her educational program, for example, transportation, speech, occupational or physical therapy, psychological services, audiology, etc.

**Residential Placement:** a highly restrictive special education placement requiring 24 hours of special education intervention every day.

**Screening:** a review of existing information to decide if a child may have a disability and should be evaluated to determine if there is a need for special education services.

**Section 504:** a civil rights law from The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits any agency that receives federal money from discriminating against an individual on the basis of disability. The law requires "reasonable accommodation" of a disability, and Section 504 may be used to access special education services that a student may not necessarily qualify for under the IDEA.

**Self-advocacy:** The development of specific skills and understandings that enable students to explain their disabilities to others and cope positively with the attitudes of peers, parents, teachers and employers.

**Self-monitoring:** The mental act of knowing when one does/does not understand what one is reading, learning or doing.

**Service Coordinator:** also called a Case Manager, the individual selected by an early intervention team and named in the IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) to coordinate early intervention services and integrate the family into the process.

**Short Term Objectives:** specific, measurable steps written in the IEP and implemented to assist in achieving annual goals. Student progress in meeting the objectives should be reviewed, and progress documented and shared with parents at least as frequently as parents of nondisabled students.

**Special Education:** specifically designed instruction, related services, and supplementary aids and services provided for a child determined to have an educational disability under the IDEA in order to meet the student's unique educational needs. The 13 disability categories include learning disabilities, speech/language impairments, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, multiple disabilities, hearing impairments, orthopedic impairments, visual impairments, autism, deafness, combined deafness/blindness, traumatic brain injury, other health impairment.

**Speech impaired (SI):** A disability category for students who have difficulty understanding or using language that impacts their ability to access the curriculum.

**Speech Therapy (ST):** a planned program provided by a Speech and Language Therapist/Pathologist (SLP) to correct or improve problems with communication, language and/or voice disorders.

**State Education Agency (SEA):** responsible for monitoring local education agencies and for making sure that they follow state and federal laws. In New York State the SEA is the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

**Students with Disabilities:** students who have been evaluated in accordance state procedures and identified as having temporary or long-term special educational needs arising from cognitive factors; emotional factors; physical factors; or any combination of these. The student's ability to meet general education standards is impaired to a degree whereby the services available in the general education program alone are inadequate in preparing them to achieve their educational potential. The evaluation will consider which of the 13 educational disabilities the child may have.

**Transition:** The change from secondary school to postsecondary programs, work and independent living typical of young adults; other periods of major change (early childhood to school or from restrictive to mainstreamed settings).

**Triennial Review:** at least every 3 years in New York State the IEP team must look at available information to determine what additional tests, observations, etc. are necessary to document continued eligibility for special education and/or related services, and to determine what constitutes an appropriate educational program for a student receiving special education supports.