

Terms to Know

Accommodations: Tools and procedures that provide equal access to instruction and assessment for students with disabilities. Designed to “level the playing field” for students with disabilities, accommodations are generally grouped into the following categories:

- Presentation (e.g., repeat directions, read aloud, use of larger bubbles on answer sheets, etc.)
- Response (e.g., mark answers in book, use reference aids, point, use of computer, etc.)
- Timing/Scheduling (e.g., extended time, frequent breaks, etc.)
- Setting (e.g., study carrel, special lighting, separate room, etc.).
-

Americans with Disabilities Act: Federal law that protects persons with disabilities from discrimination in the operations of public businesses and governments.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): A plan to address problem behavior that includes, as appropriate, positive behavioral interventions, strategies, and supports; program modifications; and supplementary aids and services that may be required to address the problem behavior.

Child with a disability: A child who has a disability as defined in one of the 13 disability categories in IDEA and who needs special education and related services because of the disability; or a child aged 3 through 9 who is experiencing developmental delay.

Child find: Ongoing activities undertaken by states and local school districts to locate, identify, and evaluate all children residing in the state who are suspected of having disabilities so that a free appropriate public education (FAPE) can be made available to all eligible children, including all children in public and private schools, including religious schools.

Developmental Delay: A disability category states may use for certain students aged three through nine as a way to provide early services for students suspected of having a disability. If used, the definition of developmental delay is determined by the state and may include a child whose development, as measured by appropriate diagnostic tests and procedures, lags behind peers in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development, and who, because of such delays, needs special education and related services.

Early intervention services: Services to infants and toddlers provided under Part C of IDEA. Part C established the Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, a federal grant program that assists states in operating a comprehensive statewide program of early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities, aged birth through age 2 years, and their families. Early intervention services include multidisciplinary evaluation of needs of children and family-directed identification of the needs of each family as set out in an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).

Due Process Complaint: A written complaint filed by a parent or a school district involving any matter relating to the identification, evaluation, educational placement or provision of a free, appropriate, public education to a student with a disability. Due process complaints must be filed within two years of the matter in dispute.

Terms to Know

Due Process Hearing: A formal, quasi-legal procedure before an impartial hearing officer or administrative law judge (or panel of judges) who is not an employee of the state educational agency or school district. Both the parents and the school district present arguments and evidence.

Eligibility: The determination that a student is a child with a disability.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): Special education and related services that are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge to the parent, and that meet the standards of the state education department. Special education and related services must be provided in conformity with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as required by IDEA.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA): A problem-solving process for addressing student problem behavior. FBA relies on a variety of techniques and strategies to identify the reasons for a specific behavior and to help IEP teams select interventions that directly address the problem behavior.

Functional skills: Skills needed for independent living, such as cooking, comparison shopping, working with or managing money, using public transportation, and knowing how to be safe in the community.

General education curriculum: The body of knowledge and range of skills that all students in the state are expected to master.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): A written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised according to the requirements of IDEA.

Informed consent: Procedure to ensure that the parent:

- Has been fully informed of all information related to the proposed activity (in his native language, or other mode of communication)
- Understands and agrees in writing to carrying out the activity for which his consent is sought
- Understands that giving consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time
- Understands that revoking consent will not apply to an activity that has already occurred
- Informed consent is required for an evaluation, a reevaluation and for the initial delivery of special education services.
-

Intervention: A change in instructing the student in the area of learning difficulty to try to improve learning and achieve adequate progress.

Least Restrictive Environment: To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are to be educated with children who are not disabled. Special classes, separate schooling, or other ways of removing children with disabilities from the regular educational environment should only occur when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes cannot be achieved satisfactorily with the use of supplementary aids and services.

Terms to Know

Mediation: A confidential, voluntary process that allows parties to resolve disputes without a formal due process hearing. An impartial mediator helps the parties to express their views and positions and to understand the other's views and positions. The mediator's role is to facilitate discussion and help parties reach an agreement – not to recommend solutions or take positions or sides.

Parent: A natural, adoptive or foster parent; an individual acting in the place of a natural or adoptive parent; an individual who is legally responsible for the child; a guardian; or a surrogate parent.

Postsecondary education: Formal education or training beyond high school, including college, university, vocational school and trade school.

Prior Written Notice: A written notice that the school must provide to the parents of a student with a disability within a reasonable time if they wish to:

- Evaluate the student
- Determine whether the student is eligible for special education services
- Change the student's evaluation or educational placement or educational plan (IEP)
- Refuse the parents' request to evaluate their child or change their child's educational plan (IEP) or placement.

Related services: Supportive services that are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. Related services include transportation, developmental and corrective services, speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation (including therapeutic recreation), counseling services (including rehabilitation counseling), orientation and mobility services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. Related services also include school health services, school nurse services designed to enable a child with a disability to receive a free appropriate public education as described in the child's IEP, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training.

Response-to-Intervention (RTI): A comprehensive, multi-step process that closely monitors how the student is responding to different types of services and instruction.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: A federal law that requires a school district to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to each child with a disability in the district's jurisdiction.

School district: The term "school district" and "school" are used to refer to the entity that has legal authority, control and responsibility for public education in a city, county, town (or combination of these), or other subdivision of a state.

Special Education: Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and instruction in physical education.

Terms to Know

Specially designed instruction: Ways that special education professionals adapt the content, methodology (approaches to teaching certain grade level content), or the delivery of instruction to address the unique needs that result from the child's disability. Specially designed instruction should also ensure that the eligible child has access to the general curriculum so that he or she can meet the educational standards of the school district that apply to all children.

Specific Learning Disability: A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include a learning problem that is primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of mental retardation, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Supplemental Aids and Services: Aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate. Examples of supplemental aids and services might be assistive technologies such as a computer or adapted physical education.

Transition services: A coordinated set of activities that:

- Improves the academic and functional skills of the student in order to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities such as post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation;
- Is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account his or her strengths, preferences, and interests; and
- Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives and, when appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Vocational Rehabilitation Agency: A publicly funded state agency that provides direct and indirect services to youth with disabilities as they transition from school to work, in order to maximize their employability, independence and integration into the workplace and the community.