

Common Special Education Terms and Definitions

Accommodations: An accommodation changes the way a student receives information or is tested on the information without changing the learning goal or standard. Another way of thinking about accommodations is that they change *how* a student learns but not what they learn. An example of an accommodation is allowing a student with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) to take breaks during a test. They are still taking the same test with the same objectives, but how they accomplish the task is different.

Annual goals: The IEP document defines the academic and functional skills the IEP team decided that a student with disabilities can achieve within the one year term of the IEP. These goals are geared toward helping students with disabilities take part in the general education classroom. IEP goals need to be realistic and measurable.

Annual Review: A yearly meeting of the IEP team for the purpose of discussing a student's needs and performance by reviewing progress toward goals and looking at new data like work samples and recent testing. The IEP will be updated to reflect the current needs and performance of the student.

Assessment or Evaluation: A term used to describe the testing and fact finding done prior to the IEP to determine the child's needs and determine if they qualify for Special Education Services.

Assistive technology (AT): Any device, equipment or software that helps your child work around her issues. AT can help your child learn, communicate and function better in school. AT ranges from simple tools (like highlighters) to high-tech software (like apps that reads text aloud).

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): is a document that is attached to the current IEP that describes the problem behavior, includes the functional analysis, and includes the strategies that will be used to modify the problem behavior.

Disability: Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. There are 14 qualifying disabilities:

- Autism
- Deaf-blindness
- Deafness
- Developmental delay
- Emotional disturbance
- Hearing impairment
- Intellectual and developmental disability
- Multiple disabilities
- Orthopedic impairment
- Other health impairment
- Specific learning disability
- Speech or language impairment
- Traumatic brain injury/Acquired brain injury
- Visual impairment, including blindness

Due Process: Special education term that is used to describe the process where parents may disagree with all or parts of the IEP that the school district is recommending (notice must be given in writing within 30 days) or when services have not been rendered as stated in the IEP (notice must be given in writing within 2 years). IDEA provides 2 methods for resolving disputes, mediation or fair hearing.

Early Intervening Services (EIS): A set of coordinated services for students in kindergarten through grade 12 who are not currently identified as needing special education or related services, but who need additional academic and behavioral support to succeed in a general education environment.

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Early Intervention: Services provided to children 0-36 months that are at risk of having a disability or have been diagnosed with a disability. The purpose of early intervention is to help prevent problems and/or lessen developmental gaps as the child grows up. It is a preventative step.

Extended School Year Services (ESY): 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. The IEP team determines, on an individual basis, that the extended school year services are necessary for the provision of FAPE to the child.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): A federal law that regulates the management of student records and disclosure of information from those records, with its own administrative enforcement mechanism.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): Under the IDEA, FAPE is defined as an educational program that is individualized to a specific child, designed to meet that child's unique needs, provides access to the general curriculum, meets the grade-level standards established by the state, and from which the child receives educational benefit. FAPE is provided at the public's expense, without charge to the parents.

Functional Behavioral Assessment/Analysis (FBA): A functional analysis is a problem solving process that looks at a child's problem behavior. It looks beyond the behavior itself.

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 setting.

Inclusion: This is a term used to describe services that place students with disabilities in the general education classroom with appropriate supports services. Children 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 student's goals, objectives and services that will be provided by the school district for students with disabilities.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Team: Required Team members: Parent/Guardian, regular education teacher, special education teacher, Local Education Agency (LEA) Representative, individual to interpret instructional implications of evaluation, other Individuals as needed (such as Occupational Therapists, Speech Pathologists, counselors) and the child, if appropriate.

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE) – An evaluation done by qualified evaluators who are not employed by the school district. Parents can request an IEE when they do not agree with test results from the school districts evaluations. If the school chooses the IEE provider then the parents are not responsible for the cost. If parents seek their own IEE outside of school recommended agencies then it is the parent's responsibility to pay for the evaluation.

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Intervention: A specific skill-building strategy implemented and monitored to improve a targeted skill and achieve adequate progress in a specific area. Interventions differ from accommodations and modifications in that they teach new skills to help students overcome specific deficits or ineffective response patterns.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): The placement of a student with disabilities in a manner that promotes the maximum possible interaction with the general education population. Placement options are offered on a continuum that vary from least restrictive to most restrictive: general education classroom without support, general education classroom with support, designated instruction services (such as Resource class or speech therapy), special day classes (which range from mild/moderate to moderate/severe) and private education programs.

Local Education Agency (LEA): A school district.

Local Education Agency (LEA) Representative: A representative of the local educational agency who is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, special education, is knowledgeable about the general education curriculum and is knowledgeable about and authorized by the local educational agency to commit the available resources of the local educational agency. Typically, the LEA Representative is a principal, assistant principal, special education director or teacher.

Manifestation Determination: Within 10 school days of any decision to change the placement of a student with disabilities 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 student's disability or if the conduct was a direct result of the school district's failure to implement the student's IEP.

Modifications: A modification changes the learning goal or objective. This goes beyond changing how the student learns or is tested and effectively changes *what* they are actually learning. A modification could change the instructional level, the content or curriculum covered, the performance criteria (objective), or the assignment structure. An example of a modification would be reducing the amount of spelling words a student is required to learn or changing an essay assignment into a poster project.

Nonacademic Settings/Services: May include meals, counseling services, athletics, transportation, recess, special interest groups/clubs, recreational activities, and health services

Occupational Therapy/Therapist (OT): Provide consultation and support to staff to improve a student's education performance related to fine motor, gross motor and sensory integration development.

Parent Consent: A special education term that means the parent has been fully informed regarding the action of the school system for which parental consent is being requested. The IDEA definition of consent is:

- (a) The parent has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought, in his or her native language, or through another mode of communication;

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(b) The parent understands and agrees in writing to the carrying out of the activity for which his or her consent is sought, and the consent describes that activity and lists the records (if any) that will be released and to whom; and

(c)(1) The parent understands that the granting of consent is voluntary on the part of the parent and may be revoked at any time.

(c)(2) If a parent revokes consent, that revocation is not retroactive (i.e., it does not negate an action that has occurred after the consent was given and before the consent was revoked).

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

Procedural Safeguards Handbook: A handbook developed to provide parents, adult student with disabilities, educators and other with information about parent/child rights in the special education process. These rights are called "procedural safeguards".

Related Services: Means transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, including rehabilitative counseling, orientation and mobility services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. Related services also include school health services and school nurse services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training. For full definitions of all of these related services, please refer to the New Hampshire Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities - pages 59-61.

School Psychologist: Assist in the assessment and 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.

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI): Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate, to the needs of an eligible child the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability and to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum.

Speech and Language Pathologist: Provide consultation and support to staff to improve a student's educational performance related to a full range of communication disorders, including those involving language, articulation (speech sound disorders), fluency, voice/resonance, and swallowing.

Supplementary aids and services: Means aids, services and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and non-academic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

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Transition Plan: This plan is part of the student's IEP and starts at age 14. The plan addresses areas of post-school activities, post-secondary education, daily living skills, employment, and community experiences.

Triennial Review or Reevaluation: A comprehensive evaluation process conducted at least every three years, or sooner if needed, to determine the special education eligibility of the student. The student will be assessed to determine his/her needs, abilities and/or learning difficulties.

Written Prior Notice (WPN): A notice provided to parents/guardians that includes a description of the action proposed or refused by the school district or by the parent.