

Special Education Glossary of Terms

**NOTE: The following definitions have been compiled from a variety of sources, including projects funded by the U.S. Department of Education.*

Accommodations - Adjustments made in the way tests are administered for some students with disabilities.

Action Plan - Steps to be taken to accomplish the goals of a school plan.

Admissions and Release Committee (ARC) - A group of individuals responsible for developing, reviewing or revising the Individual Education Program for a child with a disability. Composed of the child's parents, child or youth if appropriate, regular education teacher of the child or youth; special education teacher of the child or a special education teacher who is knowledgeable about the child's suspected disability; representative of the LEA knowledgeable about the general curriculum and the availability of resources, an individual who can interpret the evaluation results, an individual who can interpret the instructional implication of evaluation results; an individual who has knowledge or special expertise regarding the child, related service personnel, as appropriate.

Adverse Effect - The progress of the child is impeded by the disability to the extent that the educational performance is significantly and consistently below the level of similar age peers.

Advocate - A person who speaks on behalf of another individual or group to bring about change.

Alternate Assessment - A means of assessing students for school accountability with the most severe disabilities who cannot participate even with accommodations in the regular curriculum: could include portfolios, attainment tasks and transition attainment record checklists that are specially designed for these students.

Amendment - A change, revision, or addition made to a law.

Annual Goal - Statement describing the anticipated growth of a student's skill and knowledge written into a student's yearly Individualized Education Program.

Assessment - 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.

Assistive Technology Device - Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially, off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with disabilities. The term does not mean a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of such a device.

Assistive Technology Service - Any service that directly assists a child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device.

Assessment Team - A team of people from different areas of expertise who observe and test a child to find out his or her strengths and weaknesses.

Business Day - Monday through Friday except for federal and state holidays, unless a holiday is specifically included in the designation of business day.

Buckley Amendment - see Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. A federal law allowing parent or adult students to see student records, but protecting privacy by requiring others to have permission.

Caseload for special classes - The number of children with disabilities assigned to a teacher of exceptional children for the purpose of providing individualized specially designed instruction and related services in a special class setting.

Child with a Disability - A child with autism, deaf-blindness, developmental delay, emotional-behavior disability, hearing impairment, mental disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, or visual impairment which has an adverse effect on the child's educational performance and who, as a result, needs special education and related services.

Child Find - A state and local program mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to identify individuals with disabilities between the ages of birth and twenty-one and to direct them to appropriate early intervention or educational programs. In Kentucky, Child Find is called Child Quest.

Cognition - A term that describes the process people use for remembering, reasoning, understanding, and judgment.

Core Academic Subjects - "Means English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history and geography.

Corrective Action Plan (CAP) - A written improvement plan describing activities and timelines, with persons responsible for implementation, developed to correct identified areas of noncompliance.

Counseling - Advice or help given by someone qualified to give such advice or help (often psychological counseling).

Course of Study - A multiyear description of coursework from the student's current school year to the anticipated exit year designed to achieve the student's desired post school goals.

Day - Means calendar day unless otherwise indicated as business day or school day.

Developmental Delay (DD) - a child within the ages of three (3) through eight (8) has not acquired skills, or achieved commensurate with recognized performance expectations for his age in one (1) or more of the following developmental areas; cognition, communication, motor development, social-emotional development, or self-help-adaptive behavior. Development delay includes a child who demonstrates a measurable, verifiable discrepancy between expected performance for the child's chronological age and current level of performance.

Disability - In Section 504 and ADA, defined as impairment that substantially affects one or more major life activities; an individual who has a record of having such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

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.

Early Intervening Services - Services intended to give struggling students needed support as soon as a student's needs become apparent.

Early Intervention (EI) - Providing services and programs to infants and toddlers (under age three) with disabilities in order to minimize or eliminate the disabilities as they mature.

Education Professional Standards Board - A 17-member board appointed by the governor; a majority of its members are classroom teachers; created to establish requirements for obtaining and maintaining a teaching certificate, to evaluate college and school district programs for preparing school personnel, and to issue and revoke teaching certificates.

Education records - Records as defined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

English as a second language - refers to programs for non-English speaking students.

Evaluation - The process of collecting information about a students' learning needs through a series of individual tests, observations, and talks with the student, the family, and others. Also, the process of obtaining detailed information about an infant or toddler's developmental levels and needs for services. May also be called **Assessment**.

Expulsion - Punishment which prohibits a student from attending school, usually for the remainder of the school year.

Extended school services - Means specifically designed instruction and related services that are provided to a child with a disability beyond the normal school year in accordance with the child's IEP at no cost to the parents.

Families Educational Rights and Privacy Act (The Buckley Amendment) (FERPA) - is a federal law, enacted in 1984. It gives all parents of students under the ages of 18 and all students over the ages of 18 or attending post-secondary schools, the right to see, correct and control access to student records.

Family Involvement - is a collective effort requiring representation of all cultural, ethnic and racial groups in the community in sufficient numbers so each has a real voice yet no one voice dominates the decision making. The family voice in the decision making must be as strong as that of other partners. Family experiences and perspective collectively drive service planning, implementation and evaluation.

Family Resource/Youth Services Centers (FRYSC) - Centers established in or near schools where at least 20 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price meals. Family resource centers serve elementary schools; youth services centers serve middle and high schools. Centers provide resources and referrals for students and families.

Free Appropriate Public Education - (FAPE) - means special education and related services that are provided at public expense and under public supervision and direction. Meets the standards of the State educational agency. Includes preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the state; are provided in conformity with an individual education program that meets the requirement of state regulations.

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) - A process to determine the underlying causes or functions of a child's behavior that is keeping the child from learning or causing him to disrupt his peers' learning. For example, is the child using the behavior to get attention? To escape from a situation that he/she finds overwhelming? Included in the assessment is identification of when the behavior does and does not occur (what the antecedents are), what the child receives in return for the behavior (the consequences), and possible ways of replacing those behaviors.

Functional Goals - Goals that are designed to meet the needs of a child that result from the child's disability and enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum or meet the child's other educational needs resulting from his disability.

Functional Performance - How the child's disability affects his involvement and progress in the general education curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum used for children without disabilities). Or, for preschool children, how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities.

IDEA (Individuals With Disabilities Education Act) Public Law (P.L.) 108-446 - a law, originally passed in 1975, requiring that an education program be provided for all school-aged children (regardless of disability) without cost to families; the exact requirements of "appropriate" are not defined, but other references within the law imply the most "normal" setting available.

Identification - The process of locating and identifying children needing special services.

Independent Educational Evaluation - An evaluation performed by a certified and/or licensed professional examiner who is not employed by the school system responsible for the education of the child.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) - A written education plan for a school-aged 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 and who will provide them. (For children ages birth through 2 years, the IFSP is used.) **IEP Team** - the people who work together to develop the IEP.

Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) - A written statement for an infant or toddler (ages birth through 2 years old) developed by a team of people who have worked with the child and the family; the IFSP must contain the child's level of development, strengths, and needs, major goals or outcomes expected, services needed, date of the next evaluation, and the starting date of the present IFSP. The IFSP should identify the needs of the child's family.

Individual Transition Plan (ITP) - a plan for transition from school to adult life, to be included in the written IEP, that is developed at the annual review meeting following a student's 14th birthday. It addresses four areas: employment, post-secondary education and training, independent living, and community participation.

Interpreting Services - Refers to children who are deaf or hard of hearing who need oral transliteration services, cued language transliteration services, sign language transliteration and interpreting services, and transcription services such as communication access real-time translation (CART) C-Print and Type Well and special interpreting services.

Kentucky Administrative Regulation (KARS) - regulations that assure uniformity in providing specially designed instruction and related services to children and youth with disabilities that conforms with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 - The law enacted by the 1990 General Assembly in response to a 1989 Supreme Court Decision declaring Kentucky's schools inequitable, inadequate, and unconstitutional.

LEA (Local Education Agency) - a school district.

Lead Agency - the agency (office) within a state or territory in charge of overseeing and coordinating early childhood programs and services.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - an educational setting or program that provides a student with disabilities the chance to work and learn to the best of his or her ability; it also provides the student with as much contact as possible with children without disabilities, while meeting all of the child's learning needs and physical requirements.

Limited English Proficient - An individual between the ages of 3-21 who attends an elementary school or secondary school, who was not born in the United States or whose native language is not English, who may be a Native American, Alaska Native, or a resident of the outlying areas, or a migratory child whose native language is not English. The individual's difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English may not permit the individual to be proficient on state assessments.

Manifestation Determination - a decision made by the IEP team and other qualified personnel about whether a child's behavior was a product of his or her disability. If a child's behavior is a manifestation of the disability, the school must discipline that student differently than if the behavior is not a manifestation of the disability.

Mediation - A process which is intended to assist parents and professionals resolve disagreements regarding an IFSP or IEP. Must be voluntary, cannot be used to deny or delay right to a due process hearing; must be conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques.

Modifications - Substantial changes in what the student is expected to demonstrate; includes changes in instructional level, content, and performance criteria, may include changes in test form or format; includes alternate assessments.

Native Language - Means the language normally used by that individual, or, in the case of a child, the language normally used by the parents of the child.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 - Federal legislation making changes in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA); holds Title 1 schools accountable for helping all groups of students achieve; addresses qualifications of classroom teachers and aides; addresses preparation, training and recruitment of teachers; established a Reading First grant program; addresses school safety; addresses needs of students with limited English proficiency.

Occupational Therapy - a therapy or treatment provided by an occupational therapist that helps individual developmental or physical skills that will aid in daily living; it focuses on sensory integration; on coordination of movement; and on fine motor and self-help skills, such as dressing, eating with a fork and spoon, etc.

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.

Parent Training and Information Programs - programs that provide information to parents of children with special needs about acquiring services, working with schools and educators to ensure the most effective educational placement for their child, understanding the methods of testing and evaluating a child with special needs, and making informed decisions about their child's special needs.

Physical Therapy - treatment of (physical) disabilities given by a trained physical therapist (under doctor's orders) that includes the use of massage, exercise, etc. to help the person improve the use of bones, muscles, joints, and nerves utilized in gross motor activities.

Placement - the classroom, program, and/or therapy that is selected for a student with special needs.

Planning and Placement Team (PPT) - a group of certified and/or licensed professionals who represent each of the teaching, administrative and pupil personnel staffs and who, with the parents, are equal participants in the decision making process to determine the specific educational needs of a child and to develop, review and revise a child's Individual Educational Program (IEP).

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 its students with special needs.

Physical Therapist (PT) - A professional who is devoted to improving a person's physical abilities through activities that strengthen muscular control and motor coordination.

Prior Written Notice - Informs parents of their rights. It is a form that the school must use to tell parents why they're doing what they're doing or why they're not doing what they're doing—they must tell parents in writing.

Private Therapist - any professional (therapist, tutor, psychologist, etc.) not connected with the public school system or with a public agency.

Program(s) - in special education, a service, placement, and/or therapy designed to help a child with special needs.

Psycho-social (development) - the psychological development of a person in relation to his or her social environment.

Pupil Personnel Staff (Director, Supervisor or Coordinator) - employees of a board of education who are assigned to the task of implementing or supervising special education programs, assessments, establishment of pupil behavior management programs, and consultations with teachers.

Psychologist - A specialist in the field of psychology, usually having a Master's degree or Ph.D. in psychology.

Public Agency - an agency, office or organization that is supported by public funds and serves the community at large.

Related Services - transportation and developmental, corrective, and other support services that a child with disabilities requires in order to benefit from education; examples of related services include: speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, counseling services, interpreters for the hearing impaired, and medical services for diagnostic and evaluation purposes.

Response To Intervention - A process schools may use to identify students with specific learning disabilities. It involves universal screening for learning difficulties, providing instruction and interventions matched to students' needs, frequent progress monitoring, and using data on students' responses to make educational decisions.

Resolution Session - A mandatory meeting that the school district must convene within 15 days of receiving the parents' due process complaint. The resolution session includes parents, members of the IEP team relevant to the complaint, a representative of the school district who has decision-making authority.

School-Based Decision Making - A system of governance at each school composed of the principal, three teachers and two parents who make decisions regarding the day-to-day running of the school, including calendars, instructional materials, hiring of the principal, extracurricular programs and other items.

School Health Services and School Nurse Services - Means health services that are designed to enable a child with a disability to receive FAPE as described in the child's IEP. School nurse services are services provided by a qualified school nurse. School health services are services that may be provided by either a qualified school nurse or other qualified person.

School Psychologist - a specialist in the field of psychology with an advanced degree (M.A. or Ph.D.) and training who specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of school-related problems in children. Duties typically include individual pupil assessment, establishment of pupil behavior management programs, and consultations with teachers.

School Social Worker - a professional who provides a vital communication link between school personnel and the family of a child with a disability. Frequently involved in parent contact, parent interviews, contact with support service personnel within the community, individual pupil evaluation, and school-home pupil programming and follow-up.

Scientifically Based Research - Means research that applies rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable, valid knowledge about education activities and programs. Includes research that employs systematic, empirical methods that draw on observation or experiment, involves rigorous data analyses to test hypotheses and justify conclusions, relies on methods that provide reliable and valid data across evaluators and observers, and studies that are accepted by a peer-reviewed journal or approved by a panel of independent experts through rigorous, objective, and scientific review.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (A Civil Rights Act) - guarantees equal opportunities in education and employment for all people with disabilities. It ensures that no child with a disability can be excluded from a free, appropriate public education regardless of his or her disability.

Service Plan - Means a written statement that describes the special education and related services the LEA will provide to a parentally-placed child with a disability enrolled in a private school who has been designated to receive services.

Special Education - Means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.

Special Education Coordinator - the person in charge of special education programs at the school, district, or state level.

Special Education Programs/Services - programs, services or specially designed instruction (offered at no cost to families) or children over 3 years old with special needs who are found eligible for such services; these include special learning methods or materials in the regular classroom, and special classes and programs if the learning or physical problems are serious.

Special Needs - a term to describe a child who has disabilities or who is at risk for developing disabilities who requires special services or treatment in order to progress.

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 so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children.

Speech/Language Therapy - a planned program to improve and correct speech and/or language or communication problems in people who are not thought to be able to improve without such help.

Supplementary Aides and Services - Aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

Teacher Aide - A person hired to assist a teacher and help students in the classroom; not required to have a teaching certificate; works under teacher supervision; same as a paraprofessional.

Transition - The process of moving from one situation to another. Frequently used to mean moving from preschool programs into elementary school or from school to work and the community.

Transition Services - Means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed to be within a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation.

Transportation - Related service about travel; includes specialized equipment (i.e., special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps) if required to provide special transportation for a child with a disability.

Triennial Review - Every three years, a student in special education must be given a completely new evaluation/assessment to determine the student's progress and to make a new determination of eligibility for continued special education services.

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.

Vocational rehabilitation (VR) - A set of services offered to individuals with disabilities designed to enable participants to attain skills, resources, attitudes, and expectations needed to compete in the interview process, get a job, and keep a job.

Weapon - Means a “dangerous weapon” as defined in the United States Code.

