

# **Special Education Glossary**

## **Access to the General Curriculum**

Under IDEA, students with disabilities must have the opportunity to learn and be assessed on the same curriculum as that provided to students without disabilities.

## **Accommodations**

Practices and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for students with disabilities without altering the curriculum content.

## **Adapted Physical Education (APE)**

A physical education (PE) program developed for students with disabilities who are not able to participate in the regular PE program with accommodations or modifications.

**Adaptive Behavior (AB)** program is a highly structured classroom setting designed for students with emotional and behavioral difficulties. The purpose of the class is to help students learn school behaviors, which will enable them to be successful in a less restrictive classroom setting (i.e., resource class or general education class). Although the primary focus is on teaching appropriate behaviors, academic instruction is also emphasized. Instruction is individualized according to student's behavioral and academic functioning levels in accordance with their Individual Education Plans.

## **Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA)**

A civil rights law that protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination and calls for the elimination of barriers in the workplace, schools, and other settings.

## **ARD Committee (Admission, Review and Dismissal)**

In Texas, the name for the IEP Team, which includes:

- The student's parents
- At least one general education teacher
- At least one special education teacher/provider

- A district representative
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results
- Anyone else with special knowledge or expertise at the discretion of parents or the school district
- The student when appropriate (required to be invited and participate age 14)

### **Assistive Technology**

Any item, piece of equipment, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability.

Common examples of assistive technology include, but are not limited to, computer keyboards with large keys, communication boards, electronic communication devices, and books on tape. The term does not include a medical device that is surgically implanted, or the replacement of that device.

### **Autism Supplement**

The Texas Administrative Code (TAC 89.1055(e)) lists 11 strategies that must be considered when developing a student with autism's IEP.

### **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)**

A written plan to address behavioral concerns impeding the child's learning or that of others. It is part of a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that includes positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies to address the behavior.

### **Child Find**

IDEA requires the State have procedures and policies to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in Texas, and who are in need of special education and related services, are identified, located and evaluated by school districts. This includes children in private school or being homeschooled.

### **Career and Technical Education (CTE)**

The programs dedicated to preparing young people to manage the dual roles of family member and wage earner. CTE programs enable students to gain entry-level employment in a high-skill, high-wage job and/or to continue their education.

**Communication Disorder**

An impairment in the ability to receive, send, process and comprehend concepts or verbal, nonverbal and graphic symbol systems. It includes stuttering, impaired articulation, language impairment, and voice impairment.

**Consent**

Written informed parental consent is required before the local educational agency (LEA) evaluates a child for special education services for the first time, provides special education services for the first time, and reevaluates the child to determine the continued eligibility for special education services. Informed parental consent need not be obtained prior to reevaluation if the LEA can demonstrate it has taken reasonable measures to obtain such consent and the child's parent has failed to respond. Written consent is also needed before the LEA can release personally identifiable information from a child's education records, with certain exceptions as provided in federal law including when releasing to other school officials with a legitimate educational interest and to another LEA because the child intends to or has enrolled in the LEA. Consent is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time.

**Differentiated Instruction**

A process used to recognize the varying background knowledge, readiness, language, learning preferences, and interests of a student. The intent of differentiated instruction is to maximize each student's growth and individual success.

**Disciplinary Action**

The investigation, adjudication, or imposition of sanctions by an educational agency or institution with respect to an infraction or violation of the internal rules of conduct applicable to students of the agency or institution.

**Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP)**

Established under the Safe Schools Act to serve students who have committed disciplinary offenses. A DAEP provides for the educational and behavioral needs of students in a setting other than a student's regular classroom, either on or off-campus.

**Due Process**

A formal legal process that is similar to a civil court hearing used to solve disagreements concerning the identification, evaluation, educational placement or the provision of a free appropriate public education to a child with a disability. An impartial hearing officer, similar to a judge, provided by the Texas Education

Agency conducts the hearing, hears evidence from all parties, and makes a legally binding decision.

### **Dyslexia**

Texas Education Code (TEC) §38.003 defines dyslexia and related disorders in the following way: *Dyslexia means a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity. These individuals typically read at levels significantly lower than expected despite having normal intelligence. Although the disorder varies from person to person, common characteristics are difficulty with phonological processing, spelling, and/or rapid visual/verbal responding.*

### **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 and appropriate public education (FAPE) to a student with a disability. Due process complaints must be filed within one year of the matter in dispute.

### **Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)**

Programs and services provided to infants and toddlers with a disability or developmental delays from birth through age two, administered under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). In Texas, the Department of Health and Human Services is responsible for administering ECI.

### **Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)**

Early Childhood Special Education is a state and federally mandated program for young children with disabilities ages 3-5. Eligible children with disabilities, ages 3-5, are entitled to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B, Section 619 in the least restrictive environment (LRE) in accordance with their individual needs. Children who meet eligibility criteria may receive Early Childhood Special Education services in a variety of settings such as a pre-kindergarten classroom, in the home, or in community settings such as Head Start and pre-school.

### **Education Records**

Records that are directly related to a student and maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution.

### **Education Service Center (ESC)**

Provides training, technical assistance, administrative support, and an array of other services as determined by the legislature, the commissioner of education, and the needs of local school districts and charter schools. Most often associated with small and medium-sized districts, the ESCs have a long history of providing assistance to all districts, including metropolitan and large suburban districts.

### **Educational Diagnostician**

A qualified examiner who primarily serves as a member of a multidisciplinary team and works closely with parents, teachers, and other school personnel in using a wide variety of instruments to assess and diagnose learning problems and evaluate academic skills of students.

### **Emergent Bilingual**

The 2015 update to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It was originally passed in 1965 as a part of the "War on Poverty," which emphasized equal access to education and established high standards and accountability. The law authorized federally funded education programs to be administered by the states.

### **Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

The 2015 update to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). It was originally passed in 1965 as a part of the "War on Poverty," which emphasized equal access to education and established high standards and accountability. The law authorized federally funded education programs to be administered by the states.

### **Evidence-Based Practices (EBP)**

Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) are practices, strategies, and/or programs whose effectiveness is supported by rigorous research which indicates that the practice, strategy, and/or program works.

**Extended School Year Services (ESY)** services is an individualized instructional program for eligible students with disabilities that is provided beyond the regular school year. The need for ESY services must be determined on an individual basis by the admission, review,

and dismissal (ARD) committee. The individualized education program (IEP) developed for ESY must include goals and objectives.

### **Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The federal law that protects the confidentiality of a student's records in all public schools and local education agencies.

### **Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

An educational right of children with disabilities in the United States that is guaranteed by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

FAPE guarantees the following:

- (Free) All eligible students with disabilities will be educated at the public's expense, except for incidental fees incurred by all students;
- (Appropriate) An education that is individualized to meet the student's needs, as outlined in his or her IEP;
- (Public) Students with disabilities have the right to be educated in the public school system, under supervision of the public; and
- (Education) As with all students, a child with disabilities will receive an education that prepares him or her for future education, employment and independent living.

### **Frequency**

How often the child with a disability receives a service, as in the number of times per day or week. If the service is less than daily then the conditions for the provision of services must be clearly specified within the admission, review, and dismissal documents using a weekly reference; e.g., one hour per week, 30 minutes every two weeks. Frequency for Early Childhood Intervention is the number of days or sessions that a service will be provided within a specific period of time.

### **Full Individual and Initial Evaluation (FIE)**

A comprehensive evaluation that consists of data gathered from multiple sources for each student being considered for special education and related services. It is a part of the district's overall general education referral or screening system. Prior to referral, students experiencing difficulty in the general classroom are to be considered for all support services available to all students, such as tutorial, remedial, compensatory, response to scientific, research-based intervention, and other academic or behavior support services.

**Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)**

A problem-solving process for addressing student problem behavior that uses techniques to identify what triggers a given behavior(s) and to select interventions that directly address them.

**Functional Skills**

Other needs of a student caused by the disability that affects their ability to learn. These may include skills needed for independent living, socialization, communication, etc.

**Inclusion**

The process of integrating children with disabilities into the academic and social activities of regular schools and general education classrooms.

**Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)**

An evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the LEA responsible for the education of the child being evaluated. A parent has a right to request an IEE, at public expense, when the parent disagrees with an evaluation conducted or obtained by the LEA. The IEE must meet the same criteria the LEA uses for its own evaluations.

The LEA does not have to pay for the IEE if it can show at a due process hearing that the LEA's evaluation is appropriate or if it can show that the IEE does not meet the LEA's criteria. The parent always has the right to get an IEE at the parent's expense.

Regardless of who pays for it, the ARD committee must consider any IEE that meets its criteria.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)**

A written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised by the ARD Committee. It includes the child's unique needs, educational and functional goals developed to meet those needs and the aids and services required to attain those goals. For a more in-depth look at the contents of the IEP.

**Intervention**

Additional instruction, teaching strategies, and techniques that enable a struggling student to improve his or her:

- academic performance in the area that he or she is having learning difficulties, and/or
- behavior(s) that are preventing him or her from accessing the curriculum.

### **Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)**

The IDEA requires that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, be educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occur only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

### **Local Education Agency (LEA)**

A public board of education, or other public authority, legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for such combination of school districts or counties as are recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

### **Manifestation Determination Review (MDR)**

Within ten school days of any decision to change the placement of a child with a disability, due to a violation of the code of conduct, the IEP team must meet and conduct a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR). When conducting an MDR, the team must review all relevant information in the child's file, including the IEP, any teacher observations, and any relevant information provided by the parents to determine:

- if the conduct was caused by, or directly related to, the child's disability, or
- if the conduct was the direct result of the local education agency's failure to implement the IEP. If so, the IEP team must complete a Functional Behavioral Assessment and develop or revise a Behavioral Intervention Plan to address the conduct.

### **Measurable Annual Goals**

IEP goals that a student can reasonably accomplish within a year. The



goals should be specific, measurable, action-oriented, relevant and time-bound.

### **Modifications**

Adaptations in a child's IEP developed to meet the child's unique needs that involve a change in the curriculum taught or a lowering of performance expectations of the child with regard to the curriculum. Children who receive a modified curriculum can still access the general education curriculum in a general education classroom, if appropriate.

### **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)**

Earlier reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) designed to hold schools accountable for the performance of students who are struggling to learn. It is based on the premise that setting high standards and establishing measurable goals can improve individual outcomes in education.

### **Occupational Therapy (OT)**

A related service that emphasizes the acquisition of or compensation for functional performance skills that may be needed by children with disabilities during their educational experience. Examples are fine motor skills which include small, finely coordinated hand movements; visual perceptual skills which include the ability to understand and interpret what is seen; visual motor skills which include the ability to coordinate visual and motor skills, and/or self-care skills which include feeding, dressing, hygiene, and toileting skills for increasing independence in necessary life skills.

### **Parent Training and Information (PTI) Centers**

Nonprofit organizations funded by OSEP to carry out programs to ensure that parents of children with disabilities receive training and information to help improve results for their children. In Texas, you can find your local PTI Center through the Partners Resource Network.

### **Personal Graduation Plan**

Texas state law requires a school principal to designate a guidance counselor, teacher, or other appropriate individual to develop and implement a personal graduation plan for each student in junior high, middle school, or high school who does not perform satisfactorily on the statewide assessment, or who is not likely to receive a high school

diploma before the fifth school year following the student's enrollment in

### **Physical Therapy (PT)**

A related service provided to qualifying children with disabilities that focuses on the child's ability to move as independently as possible and may include exercises designed to develop strength and endurance, range of motion and flexibility. grade 9 (as determined by the district).

### **Placement**

The location of the instructional arrangements/settings based on the individual needs and individualized education program of an eligible child receiving special education services.

### **Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS)**

An approach to school discipline practices that addresses challenging behaviors through prevention-based interventions and positive behavior strategies that are not harmful or demeaning to the student.

### **Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)**

A statement in the IEP detailing the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including how the child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. The statement must include:

- the child's competencies, including strengths and weaknesses;
- measurable data;
- the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child;
- the results of the initial evaluation or most recent evaluation of the child; and
- the academic, developmental, and functional needs of the child.

PLAAFPs should be comprehensive and always written first when developing an IEP, as it will drive the creation of measurable goals, accommodations/modifications, and placement/LRE. It should include a combination of qualitative and quantitative data - including, but not limited to, observations, benchmarks, progress monitoring data, standardized tests, and evaluations.

For preschool children, the statement must describe how the disability affects the child's participation in age appropriate activities. For children with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate achievement standards, the statement must include a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives.

For more information about comprehensive PLAAFPs, visit Texas Project FIRST.

### **Prior Written Notice**

Must be given (in writing) to the parents of the child whenever the local educational agency (LEA) proposes to initiate or change, or refuses to initiate or change, the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child, or the provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) to the child.

The school must include in the prior written notice:

- a description of the actions the school proposes or refuses to take;
- an explanation of why the school is proposing or refusing the action;
- a description of each evaluation procedure, assessment, record, or report the school used in deciding to propose or refuse the action;
- a statement that you have protections under the procedural safeguards of IDEA;
- an explanation of how to get a copy of this Notice of Procedural Safeguards;
- contact information for individuals or organizations that can help you in understanding IDEA;
- a description of other choices that your child's ARD committee considered and the reasons why those choices were rejected; and
- a description of other reasons why the school proposes or refuses the action.

The school must give you prior written notice at least five school days before it proposes or refuses the action unless you agree to a shorter timeframe. The notice must be written in language understandable to the general public and must be translated into your native language or other mode of communication, unless it clearly is not feasible to do so.

### **Procedural Safeguards**

A document that explains the parent's legal rights, under state and federal law, to be involved in and make decisions about their child's education. The document is often referred to as the "Notice of

Procedural Safeguards" or "Procedural Safeguards Notice," because its purpose is to notify parents of their legal rights.

The Procedural Safeguards must be provided to parents, at a minimum, one time per year, or upon:

- initial referral or parental request for evaluation;
- receipt of the first special education complaint filed with TEA;
- receipt of the first due process hearing complaint in a school year;
- a decision being made to take disciplinary action that constitutes a change in placement; or
- request by a parent.

### **Public Expense**

When the local educational agency either pays for the cost of an evaluation or ensures that the evaluation is otherwise provided at no cost to the parent.

### **Related Services**

Transportation, and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as may be required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education, and includes the early identification and assessment of disabling conditions in children. Related services include, but are not limited to:

- audiology services;
- interpreting services;
- psychological services;
- physical and occupational therapy;
- counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility service.

### **Response-to-Intervention (RTI)**

An early intervention model for addressing the learning needs of all students through a continuum of services, which provide:

- high quality instruction and scientific, research-based, tiered intervention strategies aligned with individual student need;
- frequent monitoring of student progress to make results-based academic or behavioral decisions; and
- data-based school improvement.

**Restraint**

The use of physical force or a mechanical device to significantly restrict the free movement of all or a portion of a child's body. There is currently no federal law governing the use of restraint on children with disabilities. For a state-by-state summary of the laws on restraint click [here](#).

**Review of Existing Evaluation Data (REED)**

As a required element of any initial evaluation, or subsequent reevaluation conducted under the IDEA, the IEP team must review any recent evaluations, information provided by parents, assessments (by teacher district or State) and observations by teachers and/or service providers. A REED may be completed outside of an ARD meeting.

**School Psychologist (formerly LSSP)**

An individual who has completed a supervised school psychology internship of which 600 hours are in the school setting, is licensed or certified in school psychology by the state in which the individual works, or in the absence of such state licensure or certification, possesses national certification by the National School Psychology Certification Board.

**Scientifically Based Research (SBR)**

Federal law requires that educators must use instructional methods that have been proven effective through "scientifically based research." These are teaching methods that have been carefully studied, documented, and proven to have worked for other students, based on extensive data collection.

Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB), SBR is defined as "*research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic, and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs.*"

Under IDEA 2004, the term is used interchangeably with "peer-reviewed research."

**Seclusion**

A "behavior management technique" which involves placing a child in

a locked box, closet or room that is designed solely to seclude a person and contains less than 50 square feet of space. As with restraint, there is currently no federal law regulating the use of seclusion as a behavior management technique. For a state-by-state summary of the laws on restraint & seclusion, [click here](#).

### **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

A federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals on the basis of disability. The law applies to public elementary and secondary schools, as well as to other entities.

### **School Day**

For purposes of determining the timeline for an initial admission, review, and dismissal committee meeting, school day does not include a day that falls after the last instructional day of the spring school term and before the first instructional day of the subsequent fall school term.

### **Serious Bodily Injury**

Bodily injury which involves a substantial risk of death, extreme physical pain, protracted and obvious disfigurement, or protracted loss or impairment of the function of a bodily member, organ, or mental faculty.

### **Shared Services Arrangement**

An agreement between two or more school districts and/or Education Service Centers (ESCs) to share personnel or services.

### **Short-Term Instructional Objectives/Benchmarks**

Statements in an IEP that describe small steps a student must learn or master before he/she can accomplish the “measurable annual goals” set for him/her.

### **Special Education**

Specially designed supports and services, provided at no cost to parents & caretakers, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.

It is important to note that special education is not a place or location. Students are not “in” special education, but rather “receive” special education supports and services.

### **Specially Designed Instruction**

Adaptations in the content, methodology or delivery of instruction designed to address the unique needs of each child with a disability. Specially designed instruction should ensure that the child has access to the general curriculum so that he or she can meet the educational standards that apply to all children.

### **Specific Learning Disability (SLD)**

The IDEA defines SLD as: "*A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations*" (20 U.S.C. 1401(30)).

The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and developmental aphasia.

### **Speech Language Pathologist (SLP)**

The state certified professional responsible for the diagnosis, prognosis, prescription, and remediation of speech, language, and swallowing disorders. A speech language pathologist evaluates and treats children and adults who have difficulty speaking, listening, reading, writing, or swallowing. The overall objective of speech language pathology services is to optimize individuals' ability to communicate and swallow, thereby improving quality of life.

### **Summary of Performance (SOP)**

Upon graduation, a student with a disability must receive a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance that includes recommendations to assist the student in meeting his or her postsecondary goals.

### **Supplemental Educational Services (SES)**

In Texas, these include free tutoring opportunities, in addition to the instruction that occurs during the regular school day. These services take place outside of the school day, either before school, after school, or on weekends. Any Title I campus in Stages 2-5 of mandated improvement must offer Supplemental Educational Services (SES) to all students from low-income families.

**Supplementary Aids and Services**

Aids, services, and other supports that are provided in general education classes or other education-related settings, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate.

**Vocational Educational Training (VET)**

A set of services offered to individuals with disabilities designed to enable participants to attain skills, resources, and expectations needed to compete in the interview process, as well as obtain & maintain employment. Work related services are individualized and may include specific activities of daily living skills, training, assistive devices, job placement assistance, and other services.