

SPECIAL EDUCATION GLOSSARY

Accommodation	An accommodation eliminates obstacles that would interfere with a student's ability to perform or produce at the same standard of performance expected of general education students. Allowing extended time to take the same test everyone else in class is taking is an example. So is oral reading of the text of the test. The standard of performance the student is expected to meet on the activity or test is the same as the rest of general education students in that class.
Accountability	The notion that people (e.g., students or teachers) or an organization (e.g., a school, school district, or state department of education) should be held responsible for improving student achievement and should be rewarded or sanctioned for their success or lack of success in doing so.
Achievement test	A test to measure a student's knowledge and skills in a particular academic area (e.g. reading)
ACT	A set of college admissions tests. Most colleges now accept either the SAT or the ACT for admissions purposes.
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act. A Federal law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in the areas of employment, public transportation, services provided by state and local government, services and accommodations offered by private businesses, and telecommunication access for people with communication impairments.
Adaptive Physical Education	Physical education that is designed to be safe and successful for students with disabilities; ideally taught by a certified adaptive physical education teacher.
Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)	An individual state's measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards. Adequate yearly progress is the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts, and schools must achieve each year, according to federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation. This progress is determined by a collection of performance measures that a state, its school districts, and subpopulations of students within its schools are supposed to meet if the state receives Title I federal funding.
Advocate	A person who speaks up and/or acts on behalf of another person—A person knowledgeable about special education issues and procedures who assists a parent. An advocate can be another parent of a child with disabilities or work with a community agency that specifically assists parents on special education issues and procedures.
Anecdotal Records	A collection of reports and/or observations of a child's behavior.
Assessment	Assessment is the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do; the process culminates when

Assistive Technology (AT)	assessment results are used to improve future learning. Any item or piece of equipment that is designed and used to help a child compensate for an impairment (voice synthesizer, Braille writer, computer, etc.).
At-risk Student	Students may be labeled 'at-risk' if they are not succeeding in school based on information gathered from school performance, test scores, attendance, or discipline problems.
Auditory Perception	The ability to receive sounds accurately and understand what they mean when combined into words.
Baseline Data	Documentation and data indicating the level of a targeted skill or behavior <i>prior to</i> new or modified attempts at intervention.
BIP	Behavioral Intervention Plan (sometimes referred to as a Behavior Management Plan or a Behavior Support Plan). A BIP includes practical and specific strategies and positive supports designed to increase or reduce certain behaviors.
Case Manager	The individual assigned to coordinate and facilitate services for a child who has an IEP.
Child Find	A system developed to locate and identify children eligible for intervention services or special education services. School districts are legally responsible to develop Child Find procedures.
Cognition	The mental processes people use for remembering, reasoning, understanding, and using judgment; the ability to think and make sense out of what is seen, heard, felt, and experienced, in order to solve problems. The various thinking skills and processes are considered cognitive skills.
Collaboration/Consultation	To work together. Two or more equal partners voluntarily working side by side with mutual respect and cooperation to reach a common goal through shared decision making. It can also be referred to as a process in which one or more professionals assists other individuals to address a problem a child may be experiencing.
Confidentiality	The protection, by law, of personal information found in records about a child and family that cannot be shared without written parental consent. Being careful and using good judgment in reporting only the information that is relevant about the child when disclosing personal information to school personnel.
Congenital	A condition existing at birth.
Criterion-referenced Tests	Tests or observations that compare a child's performance on a particular task to a standard established for that specific task and not to other children.
Developmental Delay	Classification for children with or without established diagnosis who perform significantly behind developmental norms. A measurable delay means that a significant difference exists between the child's age-expected level of development (adjusted for prematurity, if applicable) and the child's current level of functioning.

Due Process	This is a formal, legal way to resolve a dispute between parents and the school system about a child's educational program.
Educational Evaluation	The procedures used to determine whether a child has an educational disability and the nature and extent of special education and related services the child needs.
ELL	English Language Learner
Emerging Skills	As children learn, they may use a new skill some, but not all of the time. A skill observed at least some of the time is said to be emerging.
ESY	Extended School Year services. Services provided to children who do not make reasonable educational progress during the school year without services during the summer.
Evaluation	Term applies to the assessment data and other information collected from a variety of sources that is used to determine a child's eligibility for, or dismissal from, special education services. Evaluation also determines what kinds of supports and services a child should receive.
Expressive Language	What is said or written to communicate an idea or a question. Skills required to produce language for communication with other individuals. Speaking and writing are expressive language skills. Sign language is also considered an expressive language skill.
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education. This is a fundamental right of children identified as requiring special education services under PL 94-142.
FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment. FBA is a process for gathering information that can be used to determine why a person is exhibiting challenging behavior and what is needed to change the behavior.
Fine Motor	Movement of the smaller parts of the body, such as the toes, the hands and fingers to grasp, using the tongue and lips, etc.
Fine Motor Coordination	Purposeful, coordinated movements of the hand and eye to achieve specific movements, such as writing, sorting, etc.
Functional Skills	Skills that will be immediately useful to the child and will be used relatively frequently in the child's typical environment.
General Education	Regular education; educational services provided to the general population of students
Generalize	To transfer and use information and skills learned in one environment to another environment. For example, the student is able to apply the same procedures used in the school cafeteria to a public cafeteria.
Goal	The general statement on the Individualized Education Program (IEP) that states what teaching or what a service is expected to accomplish. The level of educational achievement accepted as reasonable and desirable within a specific time period (a long-term or annual goal).
Home School	The neighborhood school, the local public school; the school a child would attend if he/she did not have a

	disability.
IAA	The Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) is the yardstick the state uses to measure the learning of students with significant cognitive disabilities. Students with severe disabilities take the IAA if participation in the state's regular assessments – the Illinois Standards Achievement Test or the Prairie State Achievement Examination – is not appropriate, even with accommodations.
IDEIA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (also known as IDEA or IDEA 2004). This is the most recent reenactment of the federal law that guarantees all children with disabilities the right to a free appropriate public education.
IEP	Individualized Education Program. The legally binding, annual document that describes what special education and related services your child is to receive.
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan. This document describes what services an infant or toddler less than three years of age, and his or her family will receive. It is developed in collaboration with the family and professionals.
IEP <i>Team</i>	This multidisciplinary team is made up of regular and special education teachers, other professionals, and the parents of the child. The team is responsible for identifying and evaluating children with disabilities who are in need of special education; developing, reviewing their progress on, or revising an IEP; determining the student's placement; and determining that the child is no longer a child with a disability.
Independent Educational Evaluation	Assessment procedures conducted by a qualified individual who is not employed by the public agency responsible for the education of the student.
Intelligence Quotient (IQ)	A measurement of thinking (cognitive) ability for comparing an individual with others in the same age group; the ability to learn from experience and apply this learning in the future to solve problems and make judgments. An intelligence quotient of 100 is usually considered average; IQ scores compare the ability of the person assessed against that of others who are of a similar age.
Intervention	An intervention refers to the strategies employed by members of the school team to address an identified problem in child learning or behavior, including attempts to teach or improve targeted skills.
ISBE	Illinois State Board of Education. The state agency that is responsible for monitoring local education agencies and for making sure that these agencies follow state and federal laws.
LEA	Local Education Agency. The public, local school responsible for educating your child.
Learning Style	The way in which an individual learns new material. Learning style is usually defined in terms of the sensory modalities (visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic)
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment. All children with disabilities have a right to be educated in the least

	restrictive environment, with supports and services, in which their IEPs can be implemented. This means that a child should be in classes with non-disabled peers to the extent that it is possible to do so, while continuing to make appropriate progress on his IEP goals and objectives.
Manifestation Determination	An IEP team decision as to whether a child's inappropriate and/or dangerous behavior is a direct result of that child's identified impairment(s). A manifestation determination may be required after a student has been removed from school as a disciplinary action.
Manipulatives	Objects used or handled by students (e.g., pegs, puzzle pieces, blocks).
Mediation	This is the process of having a trained person try to help parents and the school system reach an agreement.
Modeling	Providing a demonstration of an expected behavior.
Modification	A modification changes the standards of performance (what is expected to be known). An example would be to read the test and to reword or re-explain the question to the student. Also included: changing multiple choice answers from 4 to 3 options, having a different spelling list, or setting a different grading scale for a student. All of these actually make the activity or test, etc. easier than what is expected from others in the class.
Monitor	To oversee a child's program to ensure that progress is being made and to suggest adaptations or modifications as needed.
Motor Planning	The ability to organize sensory information in order to planned carry out the appropriate sequence of movements required to complete a task.
Multidisciplinary Team	A team of professionals from different disciplines who collaborate to assess various areas of development and formulate plans to maximize individual students' academic and social growth.
NCLB	The federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, signed into law by President Bush in January 2002, up for reauthorization in 2007. Requires that all students be tested in reading and math annually in grades three through eight, and once in high school.
Nonverbal Ability	Having skill to perform a task that does not involve using words. Lack of oral or verbal communication skills; inability to talk.
Norm	A sample of a large number of people's behavior against which a particular behavior can be compared; the average.
Norm-referenced Tests	A test which compares an individual student's performance to the average performance for that student's age or grade. A score on such tests reflects the degree to which a student performs above or below the average in the skill area assessed.
Observable Behavior	Behavior that can be seen, heard or felt.
Occupational Therapy	A therapy or treatment provided by an occupational

	therapist that helps an individual's developmental or physical skills used in daily living; focuses on self-help skills such as dressing and eating, and sensory and perceptual-motor integration; also includes the design and adaptation of materials, equipment and environment.
OT Paraprofessional	Occupational Therapy/Occupational Therapist A trained assistant to a teacher, often referred to as a teacher aide or paraeducator. An individual who works under the supervision and direction of a licensed teacher or related services personnel.
Physical Therapy:	A therapy or treatment provided by a physical therapist (under a doctor's orders) that include the use of massage, exercise, etc., to help the person improve the use of bones, muscles joints, and nerves.
PL 94-142	Public Law 94-142 is also known as EHA The Education of Handicapped Children Act. It states that children with special needs have the right to a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. It was a movement toward civil rights for children with special needs.
PL 99-457	This law extended all the rights of PL 94-142 to infants and preschool age children. It also mandated an IFSP (Individual Family Service Plan).
Present Level of Performance	Information regarding a child's current abilities and skills that is noted in the IEP.
Procedural Safeguards	Rights and protections to ensure unbiased early intervention/special education services for children and families. It also outlines the recourse for parents who are in disagreement with decisions made at the local level (e.g., mediation, due process hearing, complaints, etc.)
Prompting	Using cues to build desired behavior. Verbal prompting often involves saying a single sound or word to help a child remember what to say or do. Physical prompting that involves physical assistance or touch can be helpful to initiate a motor or self-help skill. Prompts should be reduced gradually (faded) until they can be eliminated.
PT Receptive Language	Physical Therapy/Physical Therapist The ability to understand the intent and meaning of someone's effort to communicate; the ability to attach meanings to words, based on experience.
Reconvene Reevaluation	To meet again; to ask for another case conference. Special education evaluations that occur subsequent to the initial evaluation. The school is required to reevaluate a student at minimum every three years.
Reinforcer	An event or consequence (reward) that increases the likelihood of a behavior being repeated.
Related Services	Transportation and developmental, corrective and other support services that a student with disabilities requires in order to benefit from special education. Some examples of related services include: social work services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, speech/language services, interpreters for students with hearing

Reliability	impairments, assistive technology, etc. Extent to which a test measures a given performance consistently. The degree to which it is dependable, stable, and relatively free from errors of measurement.
Screening	An abbreviated or brief evaluation of a child to determine if a full or complete evaluation is necessary. If any delays are suspected, the child may be referred for a more comprehensive evaluation that would determine whether the child had a disability and needed special education. It is often a part of a program called "Child Find."
SECTION 504	A federal law that prohibits any agency that gets federal money from discriminating against a person on the basis of disability. A 504 plan can be written for students who have an identified disability but are not in need of special education services. A 504 plan is a legally binding document that outlines basic accommodations and/or modifications the school must make for the student. Accommodations may range from providing a wheelchair ramp to administering medication to giving a child more time on a test. Students with 504 Plans are not considered special education students.
Self-Care/Self-Help	The capacity to take care of personal needs; drinking from a cup, getting dressed, making choices, becoming independent.
Self-Esteem	How a student feels about himself/herself and others (either positively or negatively).
Sensory Integration	The ability of the central nervous system to receive, process and learn from sensation (such as touch, movement, sight, sound, smell, and the pull of gravity) in order to develop skills. An occupational therapist may be of assistance in identifying sensory integration deficits and providing interventions.
Sensory Overload	The condition that occurs when one or more senses have been overstimulated beyond the child's level of tolerance. It may occur as a result of too much noise, light, or movement.
SLP	Speech Language Pathologist
Social History	A student's recorded interactions with and responses to other people (e.g., family, relatives, caregivers, etc.).
Social Skills	How a child responds and interacts with others.
Social-Emotional	Growth in self-concept and social skills; from smiling when familiar faces come near to expressing feelings; self-esteem.
Specially Designed Instruction	Modifications or changes in instructional methods, techniques, materials, etc., needed to help a child meet his/her IEP goals and objectives.
Speech/Language Pathologist (SLP)	The specialist trained to provide speech and language therapy (a speech therapist).
Speech/Language Therapy	A planned program to improve and correct speech and/or language or communication problems.
Standardized Tests	A test given to a group of students under uniform

Transition Plan	<p>conditions (the same instructions, time limits, etc.). Tests that are administered in a specifically described standard way, scored in a particular way, and then compared with the performance of a standard group. This is a special plan separate from the IEP that documents goals and objectives for a student so that aid him/her in making the transition from school to work. These plans are typically created in the high school years.</p>
Transition	<p>Changing from one environment to another (e.g., changing schools, classrooms, programs); also moving from one activity to another within the classroom.</p>
Validity	<p>The extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure or what the test giver needs it to measure.</p>
Visual Discrimination	<p>The ability to differentiate between and among various shapes, sizes, colors, numbers, and letters.</p>
Visual Perception	<p>Ability to discern likeness and differences in colors, shapes, objects, words (visual discrimination).</p>
Visual-Motor	<p>Ability to coordinate the eyes with the movement of the hands and the process of thinking.</p>