

Glossary of Special Education Terms

Tennessee Department of Education has specific definitions for disabilities that qualify a child for special education services.

To view these definitions please go to

<http://tennessee.gov/education/speced/assessment.shtml>

Accommodations- Changes in curriculum or instructions that do not substantially modify the requirements of the class or alter the content standards or benchmarks. Accommodations are determined by the IEP team and are documented in the student IEP.

Achievement Test- test that measures competency in a particular area of knowledge or skill; measures mastery or acquisition of skills

Adaptive Behavior- a sort of “practical intelligence.” It is usually measured by scales that identify how well a person manages within his or her own environment

(APE) Adapted Physical Education- a diversified program of developmental activities, games, sports, and rhythms suited to the interests, capabilities and needs of children with disabilities who may not successfully engage in a regular physical education program.

(AYP) Adequate Yearly Progress- the minimum level of improvement that states, school districts and schools must achieve each year. It is an individual state’s measure of yearly progress toward achieving state academic standards required by NCLB.

Advocate- an individual who is not an attorney, who assists parents and children in their dealing with school districts regarding the children’s special education programs.

Age of Majority/Transfer of Rights- When a student with a disability reaches the age of 18, all rights accorded to a parent transfer to the student. The parent and student must be informed of the transfer of rights at least one year prior to the student’s 18th birthday.

Alternative Assessments- ways other than standardized tests, to get information about what students know and where they may need help For example, oral reports, projects, portfolios or collections of works, demonstrations, performances, and experiments

(AEP) Alternative Education Placement- An alternative classroom setting used to improve classroom behavior and address needs that cannot be met in a regular classroom setting.

(ADA) Americans with Disabilities Act- Federal law requiring accommodations for people with disabilities in the community and workplace

Annual Goals- a required component of an IEP. Goals are written for an individual student and can be set for a maximum of one year.

ASL- American Sign Language

Assessments- ways to find out what students know, and to show teachers and schools areas where they need to improve. Parents, community activists, students, and educators should understand, review, and help improve assessment systems. Paper tests are most common, but there are many other methods.

(AT) Assistive Technology- Any item, piece of equipment, or product that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Assistive technology needs are determined by the IEP team.

Assistive Technology Service- Any service that directly assists an eligible individual in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Grant Wood AEA provides Assistive Technology Services for the Iowa City Schools.

(BIP) Behavior Intervention Plan- A plan that includes positive strategies, program modifications, and supplementary aids and supports that address a student's disruptive behaviors and allows the child to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Community-Based- A standard by which special education services may be judged. Skills are taught at varied locations in the community rather than in the classroom in order to facilitate generalization and application.

Continuum of Service- The range of supports and services that must be provided by a school district that allow students with disabilities to be provided a free appropriate public education.

Consent- Requirement that the parent be fully informed of all information that relates to any action that school wants to take about the child, that parent understands that consent is voluntary and may be revoked at any time.

(CRT's) Criterion-Referenced Tests- measure how well a student has learned a specific skill or subject. They are not tests that produce a number quotient, but show what a student can or cannot do

Curriculum-based assessment- A methodology of increasing importance in special education in which a child's progress in the curriculum is measured at frequent intervals.

(DD)Developmental Delay- children aged three (3) through nine (9) who are experiencing developmental delays in one or more of the following areas: physical, cognitive, communication, social or emotional, or adaptive development.

Delay- development that does not occur within expected time ranges

Diagnostic Test- a test that diagnoses or locates the areas of weaknesses or strengths

Due Process- A procedure guaranteed by federal law; designed to be a fair, timely and impartial procedure for resolving disputes that arise between parents and school districts regarding the education of students with disabilities.

(EI) Early Intervention- Also known as Early Childhood Special Education; Special Education and related services provided to children under the age of 5.

ED- Emotional Disturbance (see TN Dept of Ed website)

(ESL) English as a Second Language- programs take children whose first language is not English out of regular classrooms to study English

Expressive language- Ability to communicate by using words, writing or gestures.

(ESY) Extended School Year- Special education and related services provided to a qualified student with disabilities beyond the normal school year, in accordance with the student's Individual Education Plan and at no cost to the parent of the child. The need for Extended Services is determined by the student's IEP team.

Fine Motor- functions that require tiny muscle movements. For example: writing or typing

(FAPE) Free Appropriate Public Education- Special education and related services are provided to students with disabilities by the Local Education Agency (LEA) - and Area Education Agency (AEA) at public expense and under public supervision and direction at no cost to the student's parents.

(FBA) Functional Behavior Assessment- A process of attempting to understand the purpose, motivation and correlates of a problem behavior. The result of the process is the development of an appropriate behavior support and management plan.

Grade Equivalent- The average raw score for all children in the same school. That is, the average raw score of all third graders was ten correct on the math test, then, this raw score is converted into a grade equivalent score of 3.0 (meaning grade three, zero months). They provide a very rough estimate of a child's mastery of academic work or capacity to learn.

Gross motor- functions that require large muscle movements. For example: walking, jumping

High Stakes Testing- A test for which important consequences are attached to the results for students, teachers, schools, districts, and/or states. Consequences may include promotion, graduation, rewards, or sanctions.

Inclusion- a special education approach that stresses education students with disabilities, regardless of the type of severity of that disability, in the regular classrooms of their neighborhood schools.

(IEE) Independent Educational Evaluation- An evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner, who is not employed by the school district at the public's expense.

(IEP) Individualized Education Program- The annually written record of an eligible individual's special education and related services. The IEP describes the unique educational needs of the student and the manner in which those educational needs will be met.

IEP Team (also called Multidisciplinary Team or M-Team)- develops the IEP. By law, the team should include parent(s), regular teacher, special education teacher, special services providers, school district representative, person knowledgeable about evaluating the child's disability, others invited by the parent or school district, and in some cases, the student.

(IDEA) Individuals with Disabilities Education Act- Federal law that grants entitlement for special education services to children with disabilities; guarantees all children with disabilities access to a free and appropriate public education

(IFSP) Individualized Family Service Plan- A written plan for providing early intervention services to an eligible individual and to the individual's family.

(IQ) Intelligence Quotient- a way of expressing the results, through a score, of an intelligence test.

(LEA) Local Education Agency- A public board of education or other public authority within a state that maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district or other political subdivision of a state.

(LRE) Least Restrictive Environment- The IDEA requires that, to the maximum extent appropriate, school districts must educate students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE), i.e., in the regular classroom with appropriate aids and supports (referred to as “supplementary aids and services”) along with their non-disabled peers in the school they would attend if not disabled, unless a student’s individualized education program (IEP) requires some other arrangement.

Manifestation Determination Review- a meeting of the IEP team, when a child with a disability acts out in school, or violates a school rule. It is an investigation of whether or not the behavior is related to his/her disability (manifestation of the disability). Behaviors are a manifestation of a child’s disabilities if those behaviors are caused by, or related to, the student’s disabilities or if the disabilities impact the student’s ability to understand the consequences of their behavior. Meeting must be done if the student is suspended 10 or more days in a school year.

Mediation- A voluntary dispute resolution process

(MR) Mental Retardation- significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affects a child’s educational performance. **While the education system still uses the term “mental retardation” for eligibility purposes, the most appropriate term is **intellectual disability**.

Modification - Changes in curriculum or instruction that substantially changes the requirements of the class or substantially alters the content standards or benchmarks.

(NCLB) No Child Left Behind Act of 2001- the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965. The act contains President George W. Bush's four basic education reform principles: stronger accountability for results, increased flexibility and local control, expanded options for parents, and an emphasis on teaching methods based on scientifically-based research.

(NRT's) Norm-referenced tests- compare each student's score to the scores of students who took the same exam before. Questions are usually based on the content of nationally-used textbooks, not what is taught locally, so students may be tested on things local schools do not teach. Examples: CAT, CTBS, MAT

(OT) Occupational Therapy - A special education related service which is usually focused on the development of a student's fine motor skills and/or the identification of adapted ways of accomplishing activities of daily living when a student's disabilities preclude doing those tasks in typical ways (e.g. modifying clothing so a person without arms can dress himself/herself).

(OSEP) Office Of Special Education Programs- An office of the U.S. Department of Education whose goal is to improve results for children with disabilities (ages birth through 21) by providing leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts

Other Health Impaired- having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, due to chronic or acute health problems such as a heart condition, asthma, hemophilia, leukemia, diabetes, which adversely affect a child's educational performance

(PT) Physical Therapist - A licensed health professional who applies principles, methods and procedures for analyzing motor or sensorimotor functions to determine the educational significance of the identified areas including areas such as mobility and positioning in order to provide planning, coordination, and the implementation of strategies for eligible individuals.

PL- Public Law

Placement- the setting in which the special education service is delivered to the student. It must be derived from the student's IEP.

Portfolio Assessment- An organized collection or documentation of student-generated or student-focused work typically depicting the range of individual student skills.

Prior Written Notice- required written notice to parents when school proposes to initiate or change, or refuses to initiate or change, the identification, evaluation or placement of a child

Procedural Safeguards Notice- the rights provided to parents and school districts in the special education process. Include: written prior notice, mediation, due process.

Proficiency- means mastery or the ability to do something at grade-level

Psychological Evaluation- Assessment of an individual, usually consisting of the administration of a battery of psychological tests, an interview, and a behavioral observation

Pull-Out Programs- remove a child from a regular classroom for part of the school day for remedial services or enrichment

Receptive Language- ability to attach meanings to words, gestures, based on experience

Referral- notice to a school district that a child may be in need of special education. A referral sets certain timelines into place

Regression- the amount of loss of skills a child experiences over an instructional break

Related Services - Services that are required to assist an individual with disabilities to benefit from special education, including but not limited to: transportation, OT, PT, medical care.

Remedial services or Remediation- provides extra support and instruction to students identified as performing below grade-level in reading, writing or mathematics

Resource Room Placement- a special education placement for less than half a child's school day

(RTI) Response To Intervention- Response to Intervention is a process whereby local education agencies (LEAs) document a child's response to scientific, research-based intervention using a tiered approach. In contrast to the discrepancy criterion model, RTI provides early intervention for students experiencing difficulty learning to read. RTI was authorized for use in December 2004 as part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Under IDEA 2004, school districts can use this model (also called the Three-Tiered Model) as an alternative to the discrepancy model to determine whether a student has a learning disability

(SEA) State Education Agency- A state education agency is the agency primarily responsible for the state supervision of public elementary and secondary schools.

Section 504- provision of the rehabilitation Act of 1973, which prohibits recipients of federal funds from discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Self-advocacy - The development of specific skills and understandings that enable children and adults to explain their specific learning disabilities to others and cope positively with the attitudes of peers, parents, teachers, and employers.

Short-Term Objectives- a requirement of the IEP. Each annual goal must have at least one short-term objective.

Social-Emotional- growth in self-concept and social skills...smiling at familiar faces, expressing feelings, making friends

Standardized Tests- Test which have norms reflecting a larger population, usually age or grade based norms reflecting the performance of children throughout the country

(SPED) Special Education- specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of an eligible individual, includes the specially designed instruction conducted in schools, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings. Special education provides a continuum of services in order to provide for the education needs of each eligible individual regardless of the nature or severity of the educational needs.

(SLD) Specific Learning Disability- (see TN Dept of Ed website)

(SLP) Speech-language Pathologist - A trained professional who analyzes speech and language comprehension and production to determine communication competencies and provides intervention strategies and services related to speech and language development as well as disorders of language, voice, articulation, and fluency.

Supplement Aids and Services- Accommodations that could permit a student to profit from instruction in the least restrictive environment.

(TBI) Traumatic Brain Injury- an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, which adversely affects educational performance. The term does not include brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma

Transition Services - A coordinated set of activities that promote movement from school to post school education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living or community participation. Transition goals are determined by the IEP team beginning at age 14 and are based on student and family vision, preferences, and interests.

(UDL) Universal Design for Learning- provides a framework for creating flexible goals, methods, materials, and assessments that accommodate learner differences.

(VR) Vocational Rehabilitation- Federal program that provides transition supports for eligible students who receive special education services in high school. Referral to Vocational Rehabilitation is determined by the IEP team during the student's junior year in high school. For more information contact your child's special education teacher or guidance counselor.

*Terms and definitions were obtained from the following sources:

Parent Information Center

<http://www.parentinformationcenter.org/sped/definitions/glossary/index.html>

LD Online

<http://www.ldonline.org/glossary>

Texas Behavior Support Initiative

<http://www.txbsi.org/docs/SPECIAL%20EDUCATION%20TERMS.doc>

Tennessee Department of Education

<http://state.tn.us/education>