

Frequently Used Educational Terms

Accommodations: Techniques and materials that don't change the basic curriculum but facilitate learning and communication.

Achievement Tests: Measures of acquired knowledge in academic skills (reading, math, writing, and science, etc.).

Advocacy: Recognizing and communicating needs, rights, and interests on behalf of a child.

ARD Committee: A multidisciplinary (individuals with different training and/or expertise) team that makes decisions for a child with disabilities who is receiving special education services; includes, but is not limited to: a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a school administrator, any related service therapist(s) working with the child, diagnostician (or evaluator), and the parent.

Assessment: Process of identifying strengths and needs to assist in educational planning through methods such as observation, record review, interviews, and tests.

Assistive Technology (AT): Any item, piece of equipment, or system that helps a child with a disability compensate for specific deficits.

Auditory Discrimination: Ability to identify differences between words and sounds that are similar.

Auditory Processing: Among children with normal hearing, the ability to understand spoken language.

Compliance Complaint: Complaint filed with the local school district or state department of education by a person who feels that an education law has been broken.

Due Process: Procedural safeguards that protect the rights of the parent and child under federal and state laws when resolving differences/disagreements with the school; can include voluntary mediation or a due process hearing.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): Entitles a child with a disability, to be enrolled in public school, to be educated (to the extent possible) with peers without disabilities, and to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Federal law that provides for special education and related services to eligible children with disabilities.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written plan to meet the unique educational needs of a child with a disability who requires special education services.

Informed Consent: An agreement, in writing, from the parent(s) that they have been informed, understand, and agree to the proposed special education decision(s); is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): The educational placement of a child with disabilities that allows for the maximum interaction possible with peers without disabilities.

Modification: A change in the delivery, content or instructional level of curriculum.

Out-of-level Testing: When a student is assessed using a level of a test developed for students in another grade. Below-grade-level testing is generally what's meant when the term "out-of-level testing" is used.

Primary Language: Language that the child first learned or that is spoken in the home.

Procedural Safeguards: Legal requirement that ensure parents and children will be treated fairly and equally in the decision-making process about special education.

Referral: Written request for an assessment to determine if the child is a “*child with a disability*”, who needs special education and related services.

Related Services: Specific developmental services identified through an assessment, as necessary for a child to benefit from special education services (speech/language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, etc.); sometimes called specialized instructional services, or support services and delivered by trained therapists.

Retention: The practice of having a student repeat a certain grade-level (year) in school.

Section 504 (of the Rehabilitation Act): Anti-discrimination law. Requires a specially designed plan of modifications and accommodations for a child with a health, physical, mental, or learning impairment, who does not meet the more stringent requirements for special education services.

Self-Advocacy: Child’s ability to explain specific learning needs and seek necessary assistance or accommodations for themselves.

Special Education: Specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of an eligible child with a disability enrolled in public school, whose educational needs can’t be met through modification of the regular instructional program; provides for a range of options for services.

Transition: Process of preparing a child for movement from one educational program to another; such as from elementary school to middle school, or from school to adulthood.

Visual Processing: Among kids with normal sight, the ability to interpret visual information.



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