

Frequently Used Educational Terms

Accommodations - Services or supports used to enable a student to fully access the subject matter and instruction.

An accommodation does not alter the content or expectation; instead it is an adjustment to instructional methods.

Advocacy - Identifying 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. An ARD (Admission, Review, and Dismissal) Committee includes, but is not limited to: the parent(s), a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a school administrator, any related service providers working with the child, and the diagnostician (or evaluator).

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) - Products, equipment, and systems that enhance learning, working, and daily living for persons with disabilities.

Child Find - The responsibility of the school district to locate, identify, and evaluate children with disabilities in their district.

Compensatory Services - Services or education provided to a child to make up for those not provided or for some other deficit found in a child's program.

Compliance Complaint - A 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 - A hearing conducted by a State Department of Education hearing officer to resolve a dispute between parents and a school district regarding special education. A due process hearing is designed to be a fair, timely and impartial procedure for resolving disputes.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) - FERPA is a federal law protecting the privacy of students and parents by requiring that personally identifiable information contained in school records must be kept confidential unless parents give consent to the release.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) - The guaranteed right of



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children with disabilities to receive an education that meets their unique needs at no cost to parents.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) - IDEA is a 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. The IEP contains information about the student's disability, skills they need to learn, services the school will provide, and where learning will take place.

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 It is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - The requirement that children with disabilities be educated to the maximum extent possible with children who are not disabled while meeting all their learning and physical needs.

Modification - A change in what a student is expected to learn and demonstrate. Modifications may include changes in instructional level, content, performance criteria, test format, or alternative assignments.

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

Procedural Safeguards - Legal requirement that ensure parents and children will be treated fairly and equally in the decision-making process about special education. Procedural Safeguards include: prior written notice, informed parental consent, mediation, and due process.

Referral - Written request for an assessment to determine if the child is a child with a disability who needs special education and related services.

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

Related Services - Any support services a student needs to benefit from special education services. Examples of related services include occupational therapy, physical therapy, transportation, etc.

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 their own 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 Services - A coordinated set of activities for a student that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, continuing and adult services, independent living, or community participation.



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