



Disability Awareness Resource Packet

Developed by
Career and Technical Special Populations Training and
Resource Center

<http://ctsp.tamu.edu/disabilityawareness>



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Disabilities – Definitions

ADHD

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) is a neurobiological disorder. Typically children with AD/HD have developmentally inappropriate behavior, including poor attention skills, impulsivity, and hyperactivity. These characteristics arise in early childhood, typically before age 7, are chronic, and last at least 6 months. Children with AD/HD may also experience problems in the areas of social skills and self-esteem.

Autism

Autism (sometimes called “classical autism”) is the most common condition in a group of developmental disorders known as the autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). Autism is characterized by impaired social interaction, problems with verbal and nonverbal communication, and unusual, repetitive, or severely limited activities and interests. Usually evident by age three, autism affects a child's ability to understand language, play, and relate to others.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), formerly the Education of the Handicapped Act (P.L. 94-142), includes "hearing impairment" and "deafness" as two of the categories under which children with disabilities may be eligible for special education and related service programming. While the term "hearing impairment" is often used generically to describe a wide range of hearing losses, including deafness, the regulations for IDEA define hearing loss and deafness separately. Hearing impairment is defined by IDEA as "an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance." Deafness is defined as "a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification."

Deaf-Blindness

Deaf-blindness means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

Emotional Disturbance

According to the Code of Federal Regulations [Title 34, Section 300.7(b)(9)], emotional disturbance is a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance-- (A) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; (B) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (C)

Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; (D) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or (E) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Learning Disabilities

IDEA defines a learning disability as a "disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, and spell or to do mathematical calculations."

Mental Retardation

Mental retardation is a term used when a person has certain limitations in mental functioning and in skills such as communicating, taking care of him or herself, and social skills. These limitations will cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than a typical child. Children with mental retardation may take longer to learn to speak, walk, and take care of their personal needs such as dressing or eating. They are likely to have trouble learning in school. They will learn, but it will take them longer. There may be some things they cannot learn.

Orthopedically/Otherwise Health Impaired

Used in the special education context, physical disability or orthopedic impairment includes severe disabilities that adversely affect educational performance. There is a diverse range of disabilities in this category including such conditions as cerebral palsy, spina bifida, amputations or limb absences, and muscular dystrophy. The term special health impairment refers to a variety of health problems that dictate the need for special medical or educational services. Health impairments include convulsive disorders, cystic fibrosis, heart disease, sickle cell disease, hemophilia, asthma, rheumatic fever, cancer, AIDS, or any other chronic or acute health problem that limits strength, vitality, or alertness and adversely affects the student's educational development.

Severe/Multiple Disabilities

People with severe disabilities are those who traditionally have been labeled as having severe to profound mental retardation. These people require ongoing, extensive support in more than one major life activity in order to participate in integrated community settings and enjoy the quality of life available to people with fewer or no disabilities. They frequently have additional disabilities, including movement difficulties, sensory losses, and behavior problems.

Speech and Language Disorders

Speech and language disorders refer to problems in communication and related areas such as oral motor function. These delays and disorders range from simple sound substitutions to the inability to understand or use language or use the oral-motor mechanism for functional speech and feeding. Some causes of speech and language disorders include hearing loss, neurological

disorders, brain injury, mental retardation, drug abuse, physical impairments such as cleft lip or palate, and vocal abuse or misuse. Frequently, however, the cause is unknown.

Traumatic Brain Injury

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) is defined within IDEA as an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term applies to open and closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

Visually Impaired

Visual impairment is the consequence of a functional loss of vision. Eye disorders which can lead to visual impairments can include retinal degeneration, albinism, cataracts, glaucoma, muscular problems that result in visual disturbances, corneal disorders, diabetic retinopathy, congenital disorders, and infection.

Source: <http://www.onlineceus.com/resources/>

Special Populations

English Language Learners

The term English language learner (ELL), as used here, indicates a person who is in the process of acquiring English and has a first language other than English. Other terms commonly found in the literature include language minority students, limited English proficient (LEP), English as a second language (ESL), and culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD).

Gifted

The term "giftedness" has become generally associated with a child whose potential in one or more areas of skill would place him or her in the top 2-5% of children of the same age. The areas of skill can be traditionally academic, or creative, intrapersonal etc. IDEA states, "Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society".

Laws

IDEA 2004 – IDEA is an education act that provides federal financial assistance to State and local education agencies. This act and its mandates guarantee that special education and related services are provided to eligible individuals with disabilities in the age group 3 to 21 years.

ADA – The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination solely on the basis of disability in employment, public services, and accommodations.

FERPA – The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Students have specific, protected rights regarding the release of such records and FERPA requires that institutions adhere strictly to these guidelines.

PERKINS – A federal Act whose purpose is to develop more fully the academic and career and technical skills of secondary and postsecondary education students who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs.

SECTION 504 – Section 504 is a tenet of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act (1974). It is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs and activities, public and private, which receive federal financial assistance.

NCLB – The No Child Left Behind Law (NCLB) was signed in to law January 8, 2002. It is the latest revision of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). The overall purpose of the law is to ensure that each child in America is able to meet the high learning standards of the state where he or she lives. The specific goals of the law, as spelled out in the Federal Register issued on March 6, 2002, are:

- All students will reach high standards, at a minimum attaining proficiency or better in reading and mathematics by 2013-2014.
- By 2013-2014, all students will be proficient in reading by the end of the third grade.
- All limited English proficient students will become proficient in English.
- By 2005-2006, all students will be taught by highly qualified teachers.
- All students will be educated in learning environments that are safe, drug free and conducive to learning.
- All students will graduate from high school.

Glossary and Acronyms

“504”

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

“504 Plan”

An individualized plan developed for a student with a disability that specifies what accommodations and/or services they will get in school to “level the playing field” so they may derive as much benefit from their public educational program as their nondisabled peers. The plan follows from the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It also applies to extracurricular activities and non-student situations such as employment. Section 504 applies to all public entities receiving federal monies or federal financial assistance.

Academic Achievement

The level of actual accomplishment or proficiency one has achieved in an academic area, as opposed to one’s potential. For example: a student may have the tested potential to read on a 12th grade level but may only be reading on a 4th grade level.

Accommodation

(1) Physical: the response or adjustment the body makes to sensory input or stimulation (e.g., our eyes automatically accommodate depending on the distance of the object we are trying to read).
(2) Advocacy/legal: an alteration in the way material is presented, or in the environmental settings, or task demands and/or conditions as necessitated to “work around” interference from a disability.

Acting out

A term that is generally used when the observer believes that the child’s behavior is an expression of unconscious wishes or feelings. Frequently used in describing undesirable behavior.

Activities of Daily Living (ADL)

The basic skills and activities individuals engage in on a daily basis, including hygiene, dressing oneself, being able to feed oneself, communication skills, being able to get around (mobility/ambulation), etc.

ADA

Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

Adaptive Behavior

In general, behavior that enables the individual to “fit in” with their environment and peers.

Adaptive Learning Environments Program (ALEP)

An educational setting and program for students with learning and/or behavior disorders where the environment is adapted or altered to meet the needs/limitations of the students instead of trying to fit the students into the “traditional” environment.

Adaptive Physical Education

Physical education that has been modified (adapted) to meet the needs and disabilities of special needs children.

ADD or ADHD (also AD/HD)

Attention Deficit Disorder. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

ADL

Activities of Daily Living

Admission, Review, & Dismissal (ARD)

Admission, Review, & Dismissal. Another name for the local education agency committee that determines whether a student is in need of special education services, and if so, what services, etc. If the student is found eligible, then the committee is also involved in developing the needed individualized program for the student. The ARD usually has a special education administrator, the district's psychologist, and a few other professionals on it. The composition of the actual committee for any one student is a function of what school the student is in and what their needs are. The child's teacher and parents are part of the committee for the student.

Age-appropriate

At the right level for the chronological (actual) age of the child/student. The descriptor can be applied to materials, curriculum, modifications for the child, or to the student's behavior. For example, to say that a child is acting extremely immaturely is to say that he is not behaving in age-appropriate ways.

ALEP

Adaptive Learning Environments Program

Americans with Disabilities Act (of 1990) (ADA)

Public Law 101-336. A piece of federal legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in areas such as employment, public accommodation, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications; also applies to education. Similar in concept to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, but it applies to more employers/organizations as it is not restricted to those who receive federal funding.

ARD

Admission, Review, & Dismissal

Assessment

An assessment is an evaluation. It can be specific to one problem area academically, or it can include all academic areas, psychological functioning, peer relationships, etc. The methods of assessment may include objective testing using standardized tests, and/or observational methods, interviews, etc.

Assistive Device

Any object or “thing,” piece of equipment, or system that is used to enable an individual with a disability to function better. As examples: hearing aids for individuals with hearing loss, a Braille printer for someone who is blind, a notebook computer/keyboard for a student who has severely impaired handwriting, or voice dictation software for someone who can’t write or keyboard, etc.

Assistive Technology (AT)

The application of assistive devices and assistive services to enable the individual with disabilities to function better.

AT

Assistive Technology

Attention

The process of focusing -- usually applied to the context of focusing on relevant information while screening out distracters; the ability to stay on task.

Audiology

The science of hearing; the evaluation of aural (hearing) processes.

BD

Behavior Disorder

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

A formalized plan that targets specific behaviors for alteration and follows from a functional behavioral assessment. Usually appended to a student’s individualized educational plan (IEP), a public school district must attempt such a plan before changing a student’s placement to a more restrictive environment (unless there is an emergency situation). The plan is to be based on positive inducements, if possible. A behavior intervention plan should also include what environmental or proactive changes the staff will make to decrease the likelihood of the undesirable behavior or symptom.

BIP

Behavior Intervention Plan

CA

Chronological age

Career and Technical Education

Career and Technical Education is a planned program of courses and learning experiences that begins with exploration of career options, supports basic academic and life skills, and enables achievement of high academic standards, leadership, preparation for industry-defined work, and advanced and continuing education.

Case Management

A service usually seen only in cases where there are many needs or different services or providers requiring coordination and oversight. Case management can be provided by county agencies, at times, privately, or in schools by a member of the student's IEP team.

Center-based Services

When a child's entire educational program, including all related services, are provided in a separate location or special education school.

Charter School

A charter school is a public school that has been created by a group of teachers, parents, and/or a community-based organization. The school is usually sponsored by an existing local public school board, county or local board of education, state authority, or university, where the sponsoring organization/body has some responsibility for oversight of the school. The notion of a charter school is that the school is exempt from many laws governing public school districts; however, the school must demonstrate student achievement, or the charter won't be renewed at the end of the contractual period. Details on chartering and requirements vary from state to state. Since charter schools are public schools, the school receives a per student financial allocation; charter schools cannot charge tuition.

Child Find

A federal mandate that local educational agencies initiate programs to identify children in need of special education services. Each state must have a policy as to how they will accomplish this identification.

Child Protective Services (CPS)

An agency of the local government that is responsible for investigating allegations of child abuse or child neglect.

Chronological Age (CA)

Actual age, as measured in years, months, and days, as opposed to "mental age."

Consulting (or Consultant) Teacher

A teacher (usually certified in special education) who serves as support personnel by either providing direct services to the student in the classroom or by providing indirect services to the student by working with the teacher to help the teacher modify curriculum, materials, etc.

Continuum of Placements

The requirement that local education agencies have a range of settings available to educate students including the mainstream classroom, regular (mainstream) with push-in services,

mainstream with pull-out services, self-contained special classes, homebound instruction, and hospital settings. Note: some areas are trying to do away with all self-contained special classes as they move towards full inclusion.

COTA

Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant

CPS

Child Protective Services

Criterion-referenced Assessment

A method of assessment in which the individual's performance (or score) is compared to an established cutoff or criterion; the individual is not compared to others but to this standard or criterion.

Cross-categorical

One approach to grouping students in special classes that ignores their diagnoses or educational classification and groups them on the basis of the severity of their needs.

CTE

Career and Technical Education

DARS

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services

DD

(1) Developmental Disability. (2) Developmentally Delayed.

Deficit Model

Intervention strategies emphasizing remediation/accommodation of the deficits or weaknesses of the person or child. It's more a "fix the problem" model, providing services for the child's strengths and building on those.

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)

DARS administers programs that help Texans with disabilities to find jobs through vocational rehabilitation; ensures that Texans with disabilities live independently in their communities; and assists families in helping their children under age 3 with disabilities and delays in development to reach their full potential. The department includes the Division for Rehabilitation Services (DRS), the Division for Blind Services (DBS), the Division for Disability Determination Services (DDS), and the Division for Early Childhood Intervention (ECI).

Department of Social Services (DSS)

State and county agencies that provide needed services to the communities (e.g., child protection, adult services, financial assistance, etc.).

Developmental Disability (or Delay) (DD)

A handicap or impairment originating before the age of 18 that is expected to continue indefinitely and that constitutes a substantial disability.

Disability

This term has different definitions, some of which relate to a statute on the state or federal level. In a non-legal sense, a disability is any area of functioning in which the individual experiences difficulty (compared to “normal”) due to a physical or mental condition. A "disability" is often distinguished from a "handicap" by reference to the setting and environmental demands; for example, a person who uses a wheelchair for mobility is not “handicapped” in an employment setting that does not require her to walk or maneuver steps, whereas in another setting she might be “handicapped.” A person with a "disability" may also be “handicapped" due to society’s attitude "towards the disability (e.g., if society views people with neurobiological conditions as being “crazy” or somehow "less than" others, then the individual with such a known diagnosis may be considered “handicapped”).

DOE

Department of Education

DP

Due Process

DSS

Department of Social Services

Due Process (DP)

Procedural safeguards that protect a child’s (and the parents’) rights. The term comes from the U.S. Constitution (see the Bill of Rights, Articles V and XIV), and the concept traces back to the Magna Carta. In special education law, both IDEA and Section 504 describe procedural safeguards; each state may also give additional (but not fewer) safeguards. The "guts" of IDEA’s procedural safeguards are in Subpart E of IDEA.

Due Process Hearing

In special education disputes, a formal legal proceeding presided over by an impartial hearing officer (IHO) who listens to both sides of the dispute and renders a decision based upon the state's regulations or statutes.

Dyscalculia

Lack of ability to perform mathematical operations, usually associated with neurological dysfunction.

Dysgraphia

Extremely poor handwriting or the inability to perform the motor movements required for handwriting. The condition is often associated with neurological dysfunction.

Dyslexia

A type of learning disability that affects reading ability. More specifically, the individual may have problems remembering, recognizing, and/or reversing written letters, numbers, and words; might read backwards; and have poor handwriting. The term is frequently used when neurological dysfunction is suspected as the cause of the reading disability.

Dyspraxia

An inability to perform coordinated movements, although there is no apparent problem in the muscles or nerves. Can also be applied to speech and language functions.

EBD

Emotional/Behavioral Disorder

ED

Emotional Disturbance or Emotionally Disturbed

Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA)

Public Law 94-142. Federal legislation passed in 1975 that makes available a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all handicapped children in the United States. This piece of legislation was the forerunner to IDEA.

Education Records

Records directly related to a student and maintained by an educational agency or institution or by a party acting for the agency or institution. The definition of education records has legal significance in terms of the privacy of student records; see FERPA for a definition, as well as your state's regulations or statutes on this issue.

Education Service Center (ESC)

Affiliated with the Texas Education Agency, any teacher or educator in a school district can call upon a designated Education Service Center for help with CTE/Special Education activities. Each ESC has resources and a specialist related to different curriculum areas to aid teachers with instructional, evaluation, and curriculum needs. Every ESC has state-of-the-art computer labs and facilities that can be utilized for workshops and other professional purposes. In Texas, there are 20 ESCs.

EH

Emotionally Handicapped. Also known as Emotionally Disturbed.

EHA

Education for All Handicapped Children Act (now No Child Left Behind)

Emotional/Behavioral Disorder (EBD)

An educational or school-based term and not a specific diagnosis. It generally refers to a situation in which the student has significant or prominent problems adhering to the expected behavioral standards and/or in regulating their emotional state.

Emotional Disturbance or Emotionally Disturbed (ED)

1. A specific category/classification under IDEA. 2. In general, dysregulation or inability to maintain emotional state and behavior within a normal or accepted range of variation.

ESC

Education Service Center

ESY

Extended School Year

Exceptional

Refers to any student whose physical, mental, or behavioral performance deviates so substantially (higher or lower) from the average that additional services are necessary to meet the individual's needs. While all states are mandated to provide special education services to students who are substantially lower than the average level, not all states mandate services to those who are substantially higher than average.

Executive Functions

The higher-order cognitive control processes that enable us to sustain our focus, switch flexibly between tasks, inhibit responses, etc. "Executive dysfunction" refers to impairment in any of those functions. Symptoms of executive dysfunction might include the inability to multi-task or to go back and forth between papers and assignments, difficulty focusing in on what is important while tuning out irrelevant distracters, and/or the inability to organize one's time or materials, etc.

Expressive Language

The use of language to communicate and/or express one's ideas, feelings, etc. Can apply to spoken (oral) communication skills, written communications, or gestural (signing).

Extended School Year (ESY)

A longer school year than the standard 10-month program. Generally used in situations where the student's team feels that the student will regress (or lose progress) over the summer months if s/he doesn't have some ongoing educational services.

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Legislation passed in 1974 protecting the privacy of student records and assuring parents access to their child's educational records. Also known as the Buckley Amendment; Public Law 93-380.

FAPE

Free and Appropriate Public Education

FBA

Functional Behavioral Assessment

FC

1. Foster Care 2. Facilitated Communication.

FERPA

Family Education Rights and Privacy Act

Fine Motor

The use of small muscle groups for controlled movements, particularly in object manipulation. Fine motor skills would include holding a pen/pencil for handwriting, being able to pick up M & M's, etc.

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Usually referred to by its acronym, FAPE. Federal legislation (IDEA) mandates (requires) that students who qualify for special education services receive FAPE. The individual elements of FAPE are defined in IDEA, but the notion of what constitutes “appropriate” is often a source of conflict between parents and local education agencies, and is defined as much by case law as by the legislation. Historically, *Hendrick Hudson v. Rowley*, a 1982 U.S. Supreme Court decision, is cited as the definition of appropriate, but there have been other cases since then.

Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)

A collection of tools, scales, observations, and interviews that are tailored to the needs of a specific student whose behavior is particularly problematic and/or jeopardizes their educational placement. The purpose of the FBA is to determine under what conditions the (problematic) behavior occurs, what drives it, what reinforces (maintains) it, and what time of day or other patterns can be detected. This assessment is then used to create a Behavior Intervention Plan for the student.

FY

Fiscal year

Goal

Long-range ideal or target. In educational planning, a goal can be established for a student’s academic performance or social-behavioral functioning. A goal does not have to be specified in readily observable terms (e.g., Johnny will understand multiplication may be a goal term). See objectives.

Gross Motor

The use of large muscle groups to achieve balance, coordinated walking, running, skipping, jumping, etc. Typically, activities that involve the use of smaller muscles in more refined ways are referred to as fine motor.

Handicap

A limitation imposed on (or experienced by) an individual related to a disability or a perceived disability. Some people use this term interchangeably with disability. There are different meanings in legislation and in the attitudes of the individual using the term. In special education, the term “handicap” was originally used in the ground-breaking 1975 legislation (PL 94-142), but it was replaced by disability when IDEA was passed.

HI

Hearing Impaired.

Hearing Impaired

This term also has specific meaning as a category of classification under IDEA

Home Instruction

The most restrictive educational setting, as instruction is provided one-on-one in the child's home with a certified special education teacher. Related services can also be provided as part of a home instruction placement. The determination of home instruction is made by the student's IEP team. The minimum amount of time a student must receive instruction for on a daily basis is usually specified in state regulations. Home instruction should not be confused with home schooling.

Home Schooling

A choice by the parent to educate the child at home. The parent will have to demonstrate that they are providing the state-required curriculum; see individual state's laws for further requirements.

IAP

Individual Accommodation Plan; frequently used as synonymous with 504 Plan.

IDEA

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

IEE

Independent educational evaluation

IEP

Individualized Education Program

IEP Team

A team of individuals comprising school professionals, the child's parent(s), and any other individual(s) who have specialized knowledge of the child. The IEP team is responsible for developing the goals and objectives for the child and writing the program (IEP) that will serve as a road map" for the student's teachers and related "service providers"; they are also responsible for reviewing and revising the plan. The composition of who is on the IEP team is specified in IDEA at §300.344.

IFSP

Individualized Family Service Plan

IHO

Impartial Hearing Officer

Impartial Hearing Officer (IHO)

An individual who is duly appointed by a school district to act as decision-maker/judge when there is a dispute concerning the provision of special education services to a student with a disability and where the parents have implemented their due process rights by demanding an impartial hearing (sometimes referred to as a due process hearing). The IHO generally has some training in special education laws and is on a state-approved list.

Include, Inclusion

In special education, the term means to provide services to the student in the regular classroom (instead of pulling the student out for services or segregating them in special classes). In different areas, the term “inclusion” may take on additional meanings, such as modifying the curriculum downwards so that a student who would not be able to keep up with the school work of a “regular” class can be educated in the regular classroom.

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)

The use of professionals outside of the local education agency’s employ to assess a student for purposes of eligibility determination under IDEA or to determine the nature of the student’s needs and services. Under IDEA, parents have the right to request an IEE at public expense under certain circumstances. Parents can always arrange for their own outside evaluation at private expense; under those conditions, the educational agency is required to consider the outside evaluator’s report and recommendations.

Individual Accommodation Plan (IAP)

504 Plan

Individualized Education Program (IEP)

A written education plan for a school-aged child with disabilities developed by a team of professionals (teachers, therapists, etc.) and the child’s parents. The program is written for a student who is first found to be eligible under IDEA for special education. The multidisciplinary evaluations and assessments used to determine eligibility also guide the development of the IEP. An IEP must contain particular kinds of information, as specified in IDEA. This information includes the child’s present levels of performance (PLOP) in academic areas and social and behavioral domains. It must specify goals and objectives for all areas of deficit that are disability-related. It must include a statement of any supports or services that the student requires, showing how often they will be provided, for what duration, and in what setting. To the extent that the student’s needs cannot be met in the regular classroom, the IEP must indicate what proportion of the time the student will be in the mainstream setting.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

A plan of intervention for an eligible child (age birth through 2) and his/her family, similar in content to the IEP, which has been developed by a team who has worked with the child and family. IDEA specifies what must go into a IFSP.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA)

PL 108-446 (formerly known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act – PL 94-142). IDEA was amended in 1997 and reauthorized in 2004; it is usually just referred to as IDEA. This piece of federal legislation is the heart of entitlements to special education. IDEA also empowers parents as partners in their special needs child's educational planning.

Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

A score obtained from an intelligence test that provides a measure of mental ability in relation to age. The most popular intelligence test for children, the WISC-III, is normed so that an IQ of 100 represents average.

Itinerant Teacher

1. A teacher who travels around a school district to several schools (or several school districts) and schedules children for teaching periods. This is most often found where there is relatively little need for a particular specialty within the district, and the professional is shared among schools or districts. 2. A teacher who regularly visits a student who is unable to attend school (for whatever reasons) in his or her home or in a hospital setting to provide tutorial instruction.

LD

Learning Disability (also: Learning Disorder, Learning Disabled, Learning Disabilities)

LEA

Local education agency

Learning Disability or Learning Disorder (LD)

A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. The term includes, but is not limited to, conditions such as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; mental retardation; emotional disturbance; or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantages.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

The usual or most typical environment possible for instruction, treatment, and/or living. When applied to education, the least restrictive environment is the regular (mainstream) classroom. For students who have disabilities, the student's IEP team will determine what is the least restrictive environment that will enable the student to function and benefit from their educational program. One of the considerations in determining LRE is that the proposed setting or placement provides the student with contact with children without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate (while meeting all of the child's learning needs and physical requirements). Consideration and the requirement of LRE is an important component under IDEA.

Local Education Agency (LEA)

A school district, board of education, or other public authority under the supervision of a state educational agency having administrative control and direction of public elementary or secondary schools, or any other public educational institution or agency having administrative control and direction of a vocational education program. In basic English: whoever's responsible for overseeing your child's education on the local level.

LRE

Least restrictive environment

Mainstream

The usual educational placement of a child, frequently used synonymously with regular education. To mainstream a special education child is to place him/her in a regular class rather than in a self-contained special class. The extent to which a special education child is mainstreamed is determined by the student's IEP team, which considers least restrictive environment and how to enable the student to benefit from the special education services and supports.

Major Life Activities

Functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

Manifestation Determination (or Hearing)

A meeting held to determine if a student's misbehavior is related to his or her known disability and if appropriate supports were in place for the student.

Manual Dexterity

The coordination and nimbleness of the hands and fingers needed to complete fine motor tasks.

MBD

Minimal brain damage

MDC

Multidisciplinary conference

Multidisciplinary conference

The multidisciplinary conference (MDC) is the follow-up meeting after the school district has completed the evaluation of your child. The purpose of the meeting is to inform the parents of the results of the school's evaluation and the recommendations of the multidisciplinary team.

MDE

Multidisciplinary evaluation

Mental Age

A child's age-equivalent score on tests of mental ability. Mental age may or may not be equivalent to chronological age.

Mental Retardation (MR)

An individual is considered to have mental retardation based on the following three criteria: intellectual functioning level (IQ) is below 70-75; significant limitations exist in two or more adaptive skill areas; and the condition is present from childhood (defined as age 18 or less).

MH

1. Mental Health. 2. Multiple Handicapped.

Minimal Brain Damage (or Dysfunction) (MBD)

A medical term used to indicate a delay or mild neurological disorder in the ability to perform sensory or motor functions appropriately. Sometimes used as synonymous with soft neurological signs

Modality (also known as learning style)

The type of pathway by which information is received in the brain, processed, or by which learning and/or performance occur. Some children have strong preferences for one modality over another (e.g., one child may do better with visually presented material while another child may be do better when presented with auditory material).

Modifications

Only students on IEPs may receive modifications. Modifications are substantial changes in what a student is expected to learn and demonstrate. These changes are made to provide a student with opportunities to participate meaningfully and productively in learning. Modifications include change in the following areas: instructional level, content, and performance criteria.

Multidisciplinary Evaluation (Assessment) (MDE)

MDE is an approach to evaluations or assessment that involves different professional disciplines (e.g., teacher, psychologist, occupational therapist, etc.) so that different perspectives and a more comprehensive picture is obtained. In school settings, a multidisciplinary evaluation may incorporate physical, neurological, cognitive, speech and language, psychosocial development, and self-help skills.

Multiple Handicap (or Multiple Handicapped, or Multi-handicapped, or Multiple Disabilities) (MH)

In special education: a category of classification under IDEA. Usually used when there are two or more distinct disabilities that, taken together, make educating the child more complex or difficult than trying to address either disability separately.

Non-categorical

A classroom (or service system) that doesn't use diagnostic labels to classify the types of disabilities the children have.

NVLD

Non-Verbal Learning Disability

Non-Verbal Learning Disability

A non-verbal learning disability describes a situation in which the underlying cause of a student's learning difficulties is believed to be a generalized weakness in the ability to process nonverbal information. Typically, such a student performs quite well verbally but struggles to understand or remember information which is presented visually. This is not due to poor vision but is related to an assumed weakness in the brain's ability to fully or efficiently process nonverbal information.

Objectives

Short- or intermediate-term goals that are expressed in quantifiable and measurable terms. In special education, objectives are the specific measures and targets that will permit the team to assess whether the student is reaching the more broadly stated goal. For any one goal, then, there may be a variety of specific objectives.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

A therapeutic modality/service where the therapist specializes in upper extremity (arm) function, including fine motor control and handwriting. Occupational therapists also deal in activities of daily living, and some get involved in cognitive (memory) rehabilitation and/or sensory integration issues.

OCR

Office of Civil Rights (of U.S. Department of Education)

OHI

Other Health Impairment (classification category under IDEA)

Other Health Impairment

According to IDEA, an Other Health Impairment is defined as:

Other health impairment means having limited strength, vitality or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that:

- (i) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, and sickle cell anemia; and
- (ii) adversely affects a child's educational performance [34 C.F.R. 300.7(c)(9)].

OT (or OTR)

Occupational Therapist (or Occupational Therapist, Registered)

PE

Physical Education

Perception

A person's ability to consciously recognize and interpret what is seen, heard, or felt. More specifically, the process of organizing or interpreting the raw data (stimuli) obtained through the senses.

Perceptual-Motor

An individual's ability to interpret stimuli received through the senses and to then perform appropriate movements or motor actions in response to those stimuli.

Physical Therapy (PT)

A therapeutic modality/service where the therapist specializes in gross motor skills such as walking, running, jumping, balance issues, etc.

Pragmatic

In speech therapy, pragmatic generally refers to the use of language in social contexts, including rules that govern language functions and forms of messages when communicating; day-to-day practical applications of language and communication.

Prosody

Rhythm and intonation of speech.

PT

Physical therapy

Public Law 94-142

The Education for all Handicapped Children's Act of 1975; the forerunner of IDEA

Pull-out

A term applied to services or supports that remove a student with a disability from their regular classroom to a separate class or location to access the service or support, in contrast to push-in services.

Push-in

A term applied to services or supports that are delivered to the student with a disability in their regular classroom, in contrast to pull-out services.

Related Services

As defined in IDEA, related services are: transportation and developmental, corrective, and other support services that a child with disabilities requires in order to benefit from education.

Examples of related services include: audiology and speech therapy, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, counseling services, interpreters for the hearing impaired, and medical services for diagnostic and evaluation purposes. Note that the definition says "include" -- the list is not exhaustive or exclusive.

Resource Room

A room separate from the regular classroom where students with disabilities can receive specialized assistance. Most states have regulations specifying the maximum number of students that can be in the resource room at any particular time (e.g., no more than 5 students with one certified special education teacher). If the Resource Room is being provided under an IEP, the amount of time per day/week is specified in the program. States also generally regulate the

minimum amount of time that a student must be given Resource Room by making it part of the IEP (e.g., minimum of three 45-minute sessions per week, etc.). Parents need to keep in mind that Resource Room is usually a pull-out service, but just saying “Resource Room” doesn’t tell you what the student is supposed to be doing in the room with the teacher -- that is for the program or plan to determine, and the parents are part of the program/planning team for their child.

Section 504

A part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Public Law 93-112. This section states that no program or agency receiving federal funds can exclude, deny benefit to, or discriminate against any person on the basis of handicap. This document is the cornerstone of many of the student’s rights.

SED

1. Serious (or Severe) Emotional Disturbance (or Disorder). 2. State Education Department.

Sensorimotor

Involving a combination of sensory inputs and motor outputs.

Sensory Integration (SI)

Neurologic processes involved in interpreting and using sensory input. If there are disturbances in integration, sounds may be perceived as louder than normal, touch may be perceived as painful, etc.

Serious (or Severe) Emotional Disturbance (or Disorder) (SED)

In education, refers to a category of classification under IDEA.

SI

1. Speech impairment. 2. Sensory integration.

SLD

1. Specific Learning Disability. 2. Specific Language Disability.

SLI

Speech and Language Impaired

SLP

Speech and Language Pathologist

SpecEd

Special education

Special Education (SpecEd)

Instruction specifically designed to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability, including classroom instruction, instruction in physical education, home instruction, and

instruction in hospitals and institutions.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

A classification under IDEA: 1. General. The term means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. 2. Disorders not included. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of mental retardation; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

SPED (or SpEd)

Special Education

Speech and Language Impaired (SLI)

A category under IDEA, this generally refers to a communication disorder that adversely (negatively) impacts educational performance.

Stay Put

The pendency provision in some due process situations whereby "the student's placement and program stays put" or the same while the dispute is resolved.

Tactile

Having to do with the sense of touch; touchable. The term "haptic" refers to active touch/exploration.

Transition

In everyday speech, a transition is a change. In its educational sense, it can refer to a student making a transition from one activity to another or from one class to another. In its special education sense, it refers to preparing the student for post-high school life. Under IDEA, there must be a transition component in an annual IEP for a student with a disability that considers what the student's goals are and what services or assistance they require to meet those goals. For example, a student who will be incapable of driving may need to learn to use public transportation as a transition skill so they will be able to get to college or a job post-high school. The age at which a transition component must be in the IEP is specified by state and federal regulations.

Resource Agencies in Texas

Texas Education Agency - Special Education Division - <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/>

Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services (DADS) -

<http://www.dads.state.tx.us/services/index.cfm>

Provides a comprehensive array of aging and disability services, supports, and opportunities that are easily accessed in local communities.

Texas Division for Disability Determination Services (DDS) -

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/services/dds.shtml>

Makes disability determinations for Texans with severe disabilities who apply for Social Security Disability Insurance and/or Supplemental Security Income.

Texas School Health and Related Services -

http://www.tea.state.tx.us/index2.aspx?id=7915&menu_id=2147483656

Offers services including: assessment, audiology, counseling, school health services, medical services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, psychological services, speech therapy, and special transportation.

Texas Health Steps - <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/thsteps/default.shtm>

The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) service for comprehensive and preventive child health care for individuals younger than 21 years old.

Medicaid in Texas - http://www.hhsc.state.tx.us/medicaid/med_info.html

Information on services covered by the state Medicaid program, including medical and transportation services.

Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) -

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/cshcn/default.shtm>

Program that provides services to children with extraordinary medical needs, disabilities, and chronic health conditions. The CSHCN Services Program's health care benefits include payments for medical care, family support services, and related services not covered by Medicaid, CHIP, or private insurance.

Social Security Administration (SSA) Dallas Region Office – <http://www.ssa.gov/dallas/>

Advises SSA customers in Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas on how they may contact their local office to obtain information on Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) – <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/>

The Texas Workforce Commission is the state government agency charged with overseeing and providing workforce development services to employers and job seekers of Texas. For employers, TWC offers recruiting, retention, training and retraining, and outplacement services as well as valuable information on labor law and labor market statistics. For job seekers, TWC offers career development information, job search resources, training programs, and as appropriate, unemployment benefits.

Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities - <http://www.txddc.state.tx.us/>

The Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities is a 27-member board dedicated to ensuring

that all Texans with developmental disabilities - about 411,500 individuals - have the opportunity to be independent, productive, and valued members of their communities. Using a variety of methods, the Council works to ensure that the service delivery system provides comprehensive services and supports that meet people's needs, are easy to access, and are cost effective. They also work to improve people's understanding of disability issues.

The Arc of Texas - <http://www.thearcoftexas.org/>

The Arc of Texas is a nonprofit, volunteer organization in the state committed to creating opportunities for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to be included in their communities and to make the choices that affect their lives. The Arc supports families, advances public policies, provides training programs, and builds a statewide network of advocates.

Texas Parent to Parent (P2P) – <http://web.archive.org/web/20070128014513/www.txp2p.org/>

Texas Parent to Parent is a nonprofit organization that was created by parents for families of children with disabilities, chronic illness, and other special needs throughout the state of Texas. P2P offers families a place to access information and resources, a one-on-one match with a trained Supporting Parent Volunteer, and someone to call or email for help in determining the next step in a parent's journey of raising a child with a disability or special need.

Useful Websites

Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)

Overview-

This publication provides general information about ADHD.

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/adhd-listing.shtml>

For Parents-

Provides information about the symptoms and causes of ADHD and detailed tips for parents of children with ADHD.

<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/children/parents/behavior/118.html>

Autism

Overview-

Provides a wealth of information about all aspects of Autism and Autism spectrum disorders.

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.htm>

For Parents-

Produced by the Autism Society of America, this site provides information on numerous issues that families face with autism.

http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=life_fam

In Texas-

This site lists state resources, workshops, and regional contacts for individuals in Texas.

<http://autism.esc2.net/links.asp>

Deaf and Hard of Hearing**Overview-**

This resource provides diverse information related to deafness and hearing-related topics.

<http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing/>

Provides links to numerous sites that address various aspects of hearing disorders and deafness.

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/hearingdisordersanddeafness.html>

For Parents-

This article, produced by the American Society of Deaf Children, addresses what a parent should do in the event that they believe their child may be deaf or hard of hearing.

http://www.deafchildren.org/resources/7_I%20Suspect%20my%20Baby%20has%20a%20Hearing%20Loss.pdf

In Texas-

This website is produced by the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services and details the services the office provides.

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/dhhs/index.shtml>

Emotional Disturbance**Overview-**

This PDF provides an overview of emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders that are defined as an emotional disturbance.

<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs5.pdf>

English Language Learners (ELLs)**Overview-**

This is the website for the Office of English Language Acquisition, part of the U.S. Department of Education. It addresses current programs and initiatives and also includes current contacts, reports, and resources.

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html>

For Parents-

Declaration of Rights for Parents of English Language Learners Under No Child Left Behind-

<http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/decofparentrights.doc>

In Texas-

This website, developed by the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition and Language Instruction Educational Programs, addresses several facets of ELLs in Texas including demographics, education policies, and federally funded programs.

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/t3sis/state/texas/>

Gifted & Talented (GT)**Overview-**

This fact sheet, developed by the National Association for Gifted Children, provides an overview of 'gifted' and provides links to sites for more detailed information.

<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=574&ir>

For Parents-

ABCs of Gifted includes an immense amount of parent-friendly information regarding parenting a gifted and talented child.

<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=956>

In Texas-

The Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented site addresses GT resources for educators, parents, and students.

<http://www.txgifted.org/>

Learning Disabilities (LD)**Overview-**

LD OnLine seeks to help children and adults reach their full potential by providing accurate and up-to-date information and advice about learning disabilities and ADHD -

<http://www.ldonline.org/index.php>

For Parents-

A wealth of information on understanding learning disabilities, negotiating the special education process, and helping the child and parents: -

1. <http://www.nclld.org/in-the-home/parenting-issues>
2. <http://www.ldanatl.org/aboutld/parents/index.asp>

In Texas-

Provides comprehensive diagnostic educational evaluations for ages 4-18, college students, and adults; parent and educator resources; teacher training; and adult services:

<http://www.thelearningcenterofnt.org/>

The Learning Disabilities Association of Texas: <http://www.ldat.org/>

Mental Retardation/Intellectual Disabilities

Overview-

A fact sheet that provides basic information and statistics about mental retardation
<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs8.pdf>

For Parents-

A parent-friendly resource that addresses ways that parents can obtain more information about mental retardation and how to best support their child.
<http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/children/parents/special/birth/549.printerview.html>

In Texas-

This page of links transports the user to a vast array of websites that addresses mental retardation and appropriate resources.
http://www.gcmhmr.com/helpful_links.aspx

Orthopedically/ Otherwise Health Impaired (OHI)

Overview-

The article addresses the definition of orthopedic impairments, special considerations in assessing students with physical disabilities, and educational considerations that can assist these individuals.
<http://www.parentpals.com/gossamer/pages/Detailed/689.html>

An article that addresses the various conditions that can be classified as OHI
<http://ncinfo.iog.unc.edu/pubs/electronicversions/slb/slbsum02/article2.pdf>

For Parents-

A parent-focused site that provides information about other health impairments.
<http://www.napcse.org/exceptionalchildren/otherhealthimpairments/>

Severe/Multiple Disabilities

Overview-

This fact sheet provides basic information on severe/multiple disabilities.
<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs10.pdf>

Speech and Language Disorders

Overview-

A basic fact sheet that addresses the characteristics and future implications for individuals with speech and language disorders.
<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs11.pdf>

For Parents-

This resource addresses the development of hearing and talking in children and how parents can best help their children.

<http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/23.htm>

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)**Overview-**

Addresses the basic aspects of traumatic brain injury

<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/tbi/tbi.htm>

For Parents-

This fact sheet, produced by NICHCY, addresses several aspects of TBI and includes a tip section that specifically addresses parents of children with TBI.

<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs18.pdf>

In Texas-

Provides an overview of the TBI services that are offered in Texas through the Texas Department of State Health Services.

<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/braininjury/>

Visual Impairment**Overview-**

Presents an overview of visual impairment and the associated educational implications

<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs13.pdf>

For Parents-

Lists parent resources and books that have been approved by the National Federation for the Blind and the National Organization of Parents of Blind Children.

<http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Resources1.asp?SnID=1294274750>

In Texas-

This state resource provides information about state-offered services and tips for living with blindness or visual impairment

<http://www.dars.state.tx.us/dbs/index.shtml>

Special Issues

Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities -

<http://www.dotcr.ost.dot.gov/asp/emergencyprep.asp>