



## **Disability Awareness Resource Packet**

Developed by  
Career and Technical Special Populations Training and Resource Center

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## Contents

BASIC DEFINITIONS .....	3
Disabilities.....	3
Special Needs.....	5
LAWS.....	6
SPECIAL EDUCATION GLOSSARY .....	7
RESOURCE AGENCIES IN TEXAS.....	28
USEFUL WEBSITES.....	30

## **BASIC DEFINITIONS**

### ***Disabilities***

- **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."
- **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.

## ***Special Needs***

- **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.

## SPECIAL EDUCATION GLOSSARY

“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 that 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, and 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	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	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 youngsters.
ADD or ADHD (also AD/HD)	Attention Deficit Disorder. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
ADL	Activities of Daily Living
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)	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 applies to more employers/organizations as it is not restricted to those who receive federal funding.
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.
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, voice dictation software for someone who can't write or keyboard, etc.
Assistive Technology	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	A formalized plan that targets specific behaviors for alteration and that follows from a functional behavioral assessment. Usually appended to a student's individualized educational plan, 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 supposed 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
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, but they 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.
Child Protective Services	An agency of the local government that is responsible for

	investigating allegations of child abuse or child neglect.
Chronological Age	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.
CPS	Child Protective Services
COTA	Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant
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.
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 of providing services child's strengths and building on those.

DARS	Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services
Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services	DARS administers programs that help Texans with disabilities find jobs through vocational rehabilitation, ensure that Texans with disabilities live independently in their communities, and assist families in helping their children under age 3 with disabilities and delays in development 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	State and county agencies that provide needed services to the communities, e.g., child protection, adult services, financial assistance, etc.
Developmental Disability (or Delay)	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 statute on 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: a person who uses a wheelchair for mobility is not “handicapped” in an employment setting that does not require her to walk or do 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	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	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.
EH	Emotionally Handicapped. Also known as Emotionally Disturbed.
ESC	Education Service Center
Education Service Center	Affiliated with the Texas Education Agency, any teacher or educator in a school district can call upon a designated Education Service Center (ESC) 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.
EHA	Education for All Handicapped Children Act
Emotional/Behavioral Disorder	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	1. A specific category/classification under IDEA. 2. In general, dysregulation or inability to maintain emotional state and behavior within normal or accepted range of variation.
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 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, being able 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	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	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 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	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, <i>Hendrick Hudson v. Rowley</i> , 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	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 terms. 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 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 the IDEA was passed.
HI	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 1:1 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. 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	An individual who is duly appointed by a school district to act as decision-maker/judge when there is a dispute concerning 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 to have had 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 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	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	504 Plan.
Individualized Education Program	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 has 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	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 (n) IFSP.
Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act	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 and is usually just referred to as just 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	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 district. 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	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	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 requirement of LRE is an important component under IDEA.
Local education agency	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 who consider 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 had been 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
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	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. Multiply Handicapped
Minimal Brain Damage (or Dysfunction)	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 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 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.

MR	Mental Retardation (or Mentally Retarded)
MR/DD	Mental Retardation/Developmental Disability
Multidisciplinary Evaluation (Assessment)	An approach to evaluations or assessment that involves different professional disciplines (e.g., teacher, psychologist, occupational therapist, etc.) so that different perspectives are obtained and that 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 Multiply Handicapped, or Multi-handicapped, or Multiple Disabilities)	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
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)

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 then to perform appropriate movements or motor actions in response to those stimuli.
Physical Therapy	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 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 3 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 there 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	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Serious (or Severe) Emotional Disturbance (or Disorder).</li> <li>2. State Education Department.</li> </ol>
Sensorimotor	Involving a combination of sensory inputs and motor outputs.

Sensory Integration	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)	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	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	A classification under IDEA: (i) 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. (ii) 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 (or Language) impairment	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 that 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.html>**

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 & Related Services - <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/interagency/shars.html>**

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](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 - <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 – <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/>**

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) 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 which affect their lives. The Arc supports families, advances public policies, provides training programs, and builds a statewide network of advocates.

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

Texas Parent to Parent (P2P) 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, someone to call or email for help figuring out the next step in a parent's journey of raising a child with a disability or special need.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

<p>ADHD – Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder</p>	<p><b>Overview-</b> This publication provides general information about ADHD. <a href="http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/adhd/complete-publication.shtml">http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/adhd/complete-publication.shtml</a></p> <p><b>For Parents-</b> Provides information about the symptoms and causes of ADHD and details tips for parents of children with ADHD. <a href="http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/children/parents/behavior/118.html">http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/children/parents/behavior/118.html</a></p>
<p>Autism</p>	<p><b>Overview-</b> Provides a wealth of information about all aspects of autism and autism spectrum disorders. <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/autism/index.htm</a></p> <p><b>For Parents-</b> Produced by the Autism Society of America, this site provides information on numerous issues that families face with autism. <a href="http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=life_fam">http://www.autism-society.org/site/PageServer?pagename=life_fam</a></p> <p><b>In Texas-</b> This site lists a state resources, workshops, and regional contacts for individuals in Texas. <a href="http://autism.esc2.net/links.asp">http://autism.esc2.net/links.asp</a></p>
<p>Deaf and Hard of Hearing</p>	<p><b>Overview-</b> This resource provides diverse information related to deafness and hearing related topics. <a href="http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing/">http://www.nidcd.nih.gov/health/hearing/</a></p> <p>Provides links to numerous sites that address various aspects of hearing disorders and deafness. <a href="http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/hearingdisordersanddeafness.html">http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/hearingdisordersanddeafness.html</a></p> <p><b>For Parents-</b> This article produced by the American Society of Deaf Children address what a parent should do in the event that they believe their child may be deaf or hard of hearing. <a href="http://www.deafchildren.org/resources/7_I%20Suspect%20my%20Baby%20has%20a%20Hearing%20Loss.pdf">http://www.deafchildren.org/resources/7_I%20Suspect%20my%20Baby%20has%20a%20Hearing%20Loss.pdf</a></p>

	<p><b>In Texas-</b> This website produced by the Texas Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services, Office of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services details the services the office provides. <a href="http://www.dars.state.tx.us/dhhs/index.shtml">http://www.dars.state.tx.us/dhhs/index.shtml</a></p>
Emotional Disturbance	<p><b>Overview-</b> This PDF provides an overview of emotional, behavioral, or mental disorders that are defined as an emotional disturbance. <a href="http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs5.pdf">http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs5.pdf</a></p>
English Language Learners	<p><b>Overview-</b> 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. <a href="http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html">http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html</a></p> <p><b>For Parents-</b> Declaration of Rights for Parents of English Language Learners Under No Child Left Behind <a href="http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1b/a2/84.pdf">http://www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/1b/a2/84.pdf</a></p> <p><b>In Texas-</b> 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. <a href="http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/policy/states/texas/">http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/policy/states/texas/</a></p>
Gifted and Talented	<p><b>Overview-</b> 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. <a href="http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=574&amp;ir">http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=574&amp;ir</a></p> <p><b>For Parents-</b> ABCs of Gifted includes an immense amount of parent-friendly information regarding parenting a gifted and talented child. <a href="http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=956">http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=956</a></p> <p><b>In Texas-</b> Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented site addresses GT resources for educators, parents, and students. <a href="http://www.txgifted.org/">http://www.txgifted.org/</a></p>

<p>Learning Disabilities</p>	<p><b>Overview –</b>  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 - <a href="http://www.ldonline.org/index.php">http://www.ldonline.org/index.php</a></p> <p><b>For Parents –</b>  A wealth of information on understanding learning disabilities, negotiating the special education process and helping the child and themselves: - <a href="http://www.ldaamerica.org/aboutld/parents/index.asp">http://www.ldaamerica.org/aboutld/parents/index.asp</a></p> <p><b>In Texas -</b>  1. Provides comprehensive diagnostic educational evaluations for ages 4-18, college students, and adults; parent and educator resources; teacher training; and adult services: <a href="http://www.thelearningcenterofnt.org/">http://www.thelearningcenterofnt.org/</a>  Organizations, Schools, and LD Professionals in Texas listed alphabetically by title: <a href="http://www.ldresources.org/index.php?state=tx&amp;full=1">http://www.ldresources.org/index.php?state=tx&amp;full=1</a></p>
<p>Mental Retardation</p>	<p><b>Overview-</b>  A fact sheet that provides basic information and statistics about mental retardation  <a href="http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs8.pdf">http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs8.pdf</a></p> <p><b>For Parents-</b>  A parent friendly resource that addresses ways that parents can obtain more information about mental retardation and how to best support their child.  <a href="http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/children/parents/special/birth/549.printerview.html">http://familydoctor.org/online/famdocen/home/children/parents/special/birth/549.printerview.html</a></p> <p><b>In Texas-</b>  This page of links transports the user to a vast array of websites that addresses mental retardation and appropriate resources.  <a href="http://www.gcmhmr.com/helpful_links.aspx">http://www.gcmhmr.com/helpful_links.aspx</a></p>

<p>Orthopedically/ Otherwise Health Impaired</p>	<p><b>Overview-</b>  The article addresses the definition of orthopedic impairments, special considerations in assessing students with physical disabilities, and educational considerations that can assist these individuals.  <a href="http://www.parentpals.com/gossamer/pages/Detailed/689.html">http://www.parentpals.com/gossamer/pages/Detailed/689.html</a></p> <p>An article that addresses the various conditions that can be classified as OHI  <a href="http://ncinfo.iog.unc.edu/pubs/electronicversions/slb/slbum02/article2.pdf">http://ncinfo.iog.unc.edu/pubs/electronicversions/slb/slbum02/article2.pdf</a></p> <p><b>For Parents-</b>  A parent-focused site that provides information about other health impairments.  <a href="http://www.napcse.org/exceptionalchildren/otherhealthimpairments/">http://www.napcse.org/exceptionalchildren/otherhealthimpairments/</a></p>
<p>Severe/Multiple Disabilities</p>	<p><b>Overview-</b>  This fact sheet provides basic information on severe/multiple disabilities  <a href="http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs10.pdf">http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs10.pdf</a></p>
<p>Speech and Language Disorders</p>	<p><b>Overview-</b>  A basic fact sheet that addresses the characteristics and future implications for individuals with speech and language disorders.  <a href="http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs11.pdf">http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs11.pdf</a></p> <p><b>For Parents-</b>  This resource addresses the development of hearing and talking in children and how parents can best help their children.  <a href="http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/23.htm">http://www.asha.org/public/speech/development/23.htm</a></p>

<p>Traumatic Brain Injury</p>	<p><b>Overview-</b> Addresses the basic aspects of traumatic brain injury <a href="http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/tbi/tbi.htm">http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/tbi/tbi.htm</a></p> <p><b>For Parents-</b> This fact sheet produced by NICHCY addresses several aspects of TBI and includes a tip section that specifically addresses parents of children with TBI. <a href="http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs18.pdf">http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs18.pdf</a></p> <p><b>In Texas-</b> Provides an overview of the TBI services that are offered in Texas through the Texas Department of State Health Services. <a href="http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/braininjury/">http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/braininjury/</a></p>
<p>Visually Impaired</p>	<p><b>Overview-</b> Presents an overview of visual impairment and the associated educational implications <a href="http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs13.pdf">http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/factshe/fs13.pdf</a></p> <p><b>For Parents-</b> 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. <a href="http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Resources1.asp?SnID=1294274750">http://www.nfb.org/nfb/Resources1.asp?SnID=1294274750</a></p> <p><b>In Texas-</b> This state resource provides information about state-offered services and tips for living with blindness or visual impairment <a href="http://www.dars.state.tx.us/dbs/index.shtml">http://www.dars.state.tx.us/dbs/index.shtml</a></p>
<p>Special Issues</p>	<p><b>Ranchers, farmers with disabilities –</b> National Agrability Project - <a href="http://www.agrabilityproject.org/purpose.cfm">http://www.agrabilityproject.org/purpose.cfm</a> In Texas - <a href="http://txagrability.tamu.edu/">http://txagrability.tamu.edu/</a></p> <p><b>Emergency Preparedness –</b> National - <a href="http://www.ready.gov/america/index.html">http://www.ready.gov/america/index.html</a></p> <p>For individuals with disabilities - <a href="http://www.dol.gov/odep/programs/emergency.htm">http://www.dol.gov/odep/programs/emergency.htm</a></p> <p>In Texas - <a href="http://texashelp.tamu.edu/">http://texashelp.tamu.edu/</a></p>