

A FAMILY GUIDE TO COMMON TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION

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ABILITY GROUPING: The classroom placement according to a student's academic achievement or competence in a specific area, as determined by performance or standardized test scores. Also called *tracking*.

ABSTRACT THINKING: Ability to understand ideas or thoughts not specifically related to an object, person or occurrence and to apply those concepts in a variety of situations; *cognitive ability* required for *generalization*. As opposed to *concrete thinking*.

ACCELERATED LEARNING: An educational process that allows students to progress through the curriculum at an increased pace.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT: A student's level of performance in basic school subjects measured either formally (published tests that have been researched) or informally (teacher-made tests).

ACCOMMODATION: Generally, an adaptation or modification that enables a student with a disability to participate in educational programming.

ACCOMMODATION PLAN: A written plan for a student receiving services under Section 504, similar to an individualized education program [IEP], that is, individualized to meet the needs of a particular student and setting forth the components of the free appropriate public education [FAPE] to be provided with sufficient detail and specificity for planning purposes.

ACHIEVEMENT TEST: A test that measures what a student has learned in school.

ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING [ADL]: Basic self-care skills needed to function independently in society, the most basic of which are feeding, toileting and dressing. Also called independent living skills.

ADAPTIVE BEHAVIOR: A student's ability to perform the social roles appropriate for his or her age and gender in a manner which meets the expectations of their home, culture, school and neighborhood, and other groups in which he or she participates.

ADAPTIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION: A modified program of instruction to meet the physical education needs of special students who need adaptations.

ADAPTIVE SKILL AREAS: Daily living skills needed to function adequately in the community, consisting of: (a) communication, (b) self-care skills, (c) Home living, (d) social skills, (e) leisure, (f) health and safety, (g) self-direction, (h) functional academics, (i) community use, and (j) work.

ADVOCATE: An individual, either a parent or professional with special knowledge or training concerning the problems of children with disabilities, who represents parents and children in due process hearings and other non-judicial proceedings seeking enforcement of the education rights of students with a disability.

AFFECTIVE: Having to do with emotions, feelings or attitudes.

AGE APPROPRIATE: Achievement consistent with a child's developmental level and chronological age.

AGE NORMS: Standards based on the average performance of individuals in different age groups.

AGNOSIA: An inability to recognize familiar objects and their meaning probably identified as speech/language disability, if qualified for special education services.

ALEXIA: An inability to associate meaning with printed or written words, probably identified as speech/language or learning disability if qualified for special education services.

AMPLIFICATION DEVICE: Any device that increases the volume of sound.

ANCILLARY AND OTHER RELATED SERVICES: Services specially designed to meet the unique needs of a student with disabilities. This may include assistive technology; audiology; psychological services; physical therapy; occupational therapy; medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes only; school health services; recreation, including therapeutic recreation; counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling; early identification and assessment of disabilities in children; social work services in schools; transportation; speech pathology; and parent counseling and training. [The list of related services identified in the IDEA regulations is not intended to be exhaustive and could include other developmental, corrective, or support services if they are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from education.]

ANECDOTAL RECORD: A written account of a child's behavior; an objective (actual observation of something real, not an opinion) narrative description.

ANNUAL GOAL: A general statement of the intention to overcome a deficit in a specific area. It is based on a need identified through an evaluation process.

APHASIA: A receptive (taking in information) language disorder or, more commonly, expressive (speaking/writing) language disorder in children who do not demonstrate the ability to acquire meaningful spoken language usually resulting from damage or disease to the brain.

APPROPRIATE EDUCATION: Requires schools to provide individually tailored education for each student based on an evaluation and augmented by related or supplementary services.

ARTICULATION: The production of distinct language sounds by the vocal chords.

ASSESSMENT: specific features used to gather information and can include formal and informal tests; student records; work products; and observations of students in the classroom, other school environments, and the community.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICE: Any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY SERVICE: Any service that directly assists an individual with a disability to select, acquire, or use an assistive technology device.

AT RISK: Usually refers to infants or children with a high potential for experiencing future medical or learning problems.

ATTENTION-DEFICIT/HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD): A psychiatric classification used to describe individuals who exhibit poor attention, distractibility, impulsivity, and hyperactivity.

ATTENTION SPAN: The extent to which a person can purposely focus his attention on things or activities.

AUDITORY DISCRIMINATION: The ability to identify the differences between sounds.

AUTISM (AI): A developmental disability which typically begins before 30 months of age and is characterized by: disturbance in the ability to relate appropriately to people, events, and objects; absence, disorder, or delay of language, speech, or meaningful communication; unusual or inconsistent response to sensory stimuli; and insistence on sameness as seen in repetitive movements or abnormal preoccupation.

BASELINE DATA: Data that reflect the level and frequency of behavior prior to beginning an intervention.

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION PLAN: Integrating strategies for teaching and maintaining adaptive behavior and reducing or eliminating problem behaviors.

BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION: The shaping of behavior through a planned method of principles of learning in a controlled learning environment to minimize or eliminate negative behavior and emphasize and reinforce positive behavior.

CAREER EDUCATION: Instruction that focuses on the application of skills and content area information necessary to cope with the problems of daily life, independent living, and vocational areas of interest.

CATCHMENT AREA: Geographic area served by a service provider or institution.

CATEGORICAL CLASSROOM: A classroom program usually designed to meet the common needs of students who have the same educational impairment.

CEREBRAL PALSY: Nerve and muscle dysfunction resulting from a defect, injury or disease of the tissues of the central nervous system which alters a person's movement or motor functions.

CHARTER SCHOOL: Public school created by a formal agreement/charter between a person or group of people and a local school district or state that is exempt from most state education regulations and local school district rules in exchange for agreeing to meet certain accountability requirements.

CHRONOLOGICAL AGE (CA): Age determined in years and months by birth date at a specific time such as time of the evaluation or grade placement.

COGNITION: The understanding of information in the brain: involves mental activities such as paying attention, perceiving, learning, making decisions, problem solving, and memory.

COMPLAINT: A complaint is a written allegation made by any individual that the school or school district has violated, misinterpreted, or misapplied State or federal statutes or regulations related to special education, (IDEA, MMSEA, and their implementing regulations); State or Intermediate School District (ISD) plan; an IEP; or a hearing officer or court decision.

COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION: A series of tests and observations; formal and informal, conducted for the purpose of determining eligibility for special education and related services, and for determining the current level of educational performance.

CONCRETE THINKING: Understanding of language which is limited specifically to an object, person or occurrence, connected with an inability to generalize beyond specific object or circumstance being thought about or perceived: considered lower level of thinking when compared to abstract thinking.

CONDUCT DISORDER: A repetitive and persistent pattern of behavior in which the basic rights of others or major age-appropriate societal norms are violated through observable behavior.

CONGENITAL: Existing at birth.

CONSENT: A written agreement to carry out an activity after being fully informed in one's native language of all information related to the activity.

CONSULTANT TEACHER: A teacher who provides guidance and support about educating students with disabilities to other teachers rather than providing direct educational services to students.

CONTINUUM OF ALTERNATIVE PLACEMENTS: The range of placements in which students with a disability may receive some or all of their individualized education program (IEP); these range from least restrictive to more restrictive: regular classroom, regular classroom with resource room, regular classroom with special class (self-contained), full-time special class, day school, residential treatment facility, and homebound instruction.

COORDINATED SET OF ACTIVITIES: In connection with transition services under the IDEA defined as including "instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

CRITERION-REFERENCED TEST: Determine whether a student has mastered a particular skill. They compare a student to a standard of mastery. Criterion referenced tests assess how well a student performs on a test of a particular skill. They help determine a student's educational needs and special education programming and placement.

CUMULATIVE RECORD: The complete record of a student's educational experience over time that is kept by the school attended.

CURRICULUM: Series of courses offered and/or required in a school. The curriculum for students with a disability detailing what student should learn, when they should learn it and how they should be taught is part of the IEP.

DAY TREATMENT: In connection with mental health services for students, a program lasting at least 4 hours a day that includes crisis intervention, special education, counseling and parent training.

DEAF: A hearing loss so severe that the auditory channel is not the primary means of developing speech and language skills.

DECLASSIFICATION: The process in which a child with a disability is no longer considered in need of special-education services. This requires a meeting of the IEPC team and can be requested by the parent, school, or child if over the age of 18.

DEFICIT: An area where the level of performance that is less than expected for a child.

DEPARTMENTALIZE: When two or more teachers at the secondary level teach special education students grouped by content area such as math or science rather than the same teacher providing instruction in multiple subject areas.

DESENSITIZATION: A technique used in reinforcement theory in which there is a weakening of a response, usually an emotional response, used to change a behavior.

DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY: A delay in the area of cognition, socialization, independent functioning, communication or motor skills resulting in a child having slower and more difficulty acquiring skills than his or her typical age peers.

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY [DD]: A severe and chronic mental or physical impairment which developed before age 22 and limits several major life activities.

DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY: The developmental (stages of growth) progress of a child in such skills as sitting, walking, or talking.

DIAGNOSIS: Refers to the specific disorder(s) identified as a result of some evaluation.

DISCREPANCY FORMULA: A formula used to establish the existence of a severe difference between achievement and intellectual ability. [state-selected formula is permitted under federal law]

DISTRACTIBILITY: Refers to difficulty in maintaining attention.

DOMAINS: The functional performance areas in which a child's performance is assessed: physical, cognitive, social and emotional.

DOWN SYNDROME: A condition diagnosed at birth, which includes mental retardation and is the result of improper cell division during fetal development.

DUE PROCESS: A legal procedure guaranteeing a meaningful opportunity to challenge a government action. In special education, this assures parents and children a hearing before placement or reassignment in special education.

DYSCALCULIA: A learning disability in which the child has an inability to calculate, apply, solve, or identify mathematical functions.

DYSFLUENCY: Difficulty in the production of fluent speech as in the example of stuttering.

DYSGRAPHIA: A learning disability in which the child has an inability or loss of ability to write.

DYSLEXIA: A learning disability in which the child has an inability or loss of ability to read and write.

DYSORTHOGRAPHIA: A learning disability in which the child has an inability for spell, probably identified as a learning disability if qualified for special education services.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: Instruction or intervention that precedes traditional schooling to aid the educational success of children who have been identified as having a disability or being at-risk.

EDUCATIONAL METHODOLOGY: Choices in instructional methods or curriculum content.

EDUCATIONAL RECORDS: Any information recorded in any way, including, but not limited to, handwriting, print, e-mail, computer disks or storage, tape, film, microfilm, and microfiche.

ELIGIBILITY: The determination of whether or not a child qualifies to receive special education services based on meeting the disability criteria established by the State Board of Education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

EMOTIONAL DISORDERS: In connection with educational programming needs, generally understood as a school-related emotional problem, such as withdrawal, depression, low self-esteem, excessive anxiety, and somatic complaints impacting interpersonal and social skills.

ENRICHMENT: Providing a child with extra and more complex learning experiences that those normally presented in the curriculum.

EPILEPSY: A chronic condition of the central nervous system which is characterized by periodic seizures, convulsions of the muscles, and with more severe episodes, loss of consciousness.

ETIOLOGY: The origin or cause of a disease or condition.

EVALUATION: Refers to the interpretation of information secured through assessment

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN: Children whose school performance shows significant difference between ability and achievement of typical children their age and as a result require special instruction, assistance and/or equipment.

EXPRESSIVE LANGUAGE: The ability to turn thoughts and feelings into words, writing or by gestures.

EXTENDED SCHOOL DAY: May be required under the IDEA as part of a comprehensive program of instruction and services offered to students with qualifying disabilities who require additional hours beyond the regular school day of a structured setting and consistent application of behavior-related programming.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR: Special education programming that extends beyond the 180 days of the regular school year.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Programs sponsored by a school district that are not part of the required curriculum but are instead offered to further the interests and abilities of students.

EYE-HAND COORDINATION: The ability of an individual to combine functions of the eyes and the hands in carrying out manipulative activities involving the hands.

FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT [FERPA]: Federal law protecting the privacy of students and parents by requiring that personally identifiable information about a student contained in school records must be kept confidential unless parents give consent to the release.

FINE MOTOR: Refers to coordination of small muscles in a purposeful manner, such as writing, paper-pencil tasks, etc.

FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE): A key requirement of IDEA '97 which requires an educational program for all children with no cost to parents in the most normal setting possible.

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT: The process for gathering information that can be used to build effective behavioral support plans. An assessment is complete when three main outcomes can be accomplished: (1) Description of the undesirable behavior(s), (2) Prediction of the times and situations when the undesirable behavior(s) will and will not occur across the full range of typical daily routines, (3) Definition of the function(s) that the undesirable behavior produces for the student with a disability.

FUNCTIONAL CURRICULUM: Focuses on “*student centered*” rather than “*content centered*” activities. Skills are taught relating to individual students’ needs; builds on real life experiences. (e.g., building basic math skills focus on balancing a checkbook or following a recipe); emphasizes problem solving allowing generalization and carry over of skills; provides small groups or individual activities. Skill training is individualized and specific. Small groups are used when skills common to several individuals are addressed, particularly in social, recreational and leisure areas; permits students to acquire skills through active participation in the task at hand. Activities focus on practical, everyday, “hands on” experiences.

GENERALIZATION: Ability to apply a skill or behavior learned in one setting to another setting or ability to apply a learned skill or behavior in similar situations.

GRADE EQUIVALENT: A type of test score which represents what school grade the child has achieved in the skill being tested.

GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT: Ability to use and manipulate the large muscle groups involved in activities such as running and throwing.

GROUP HOMES: A residential living arrangement for adults who have disabilities, usually having full-time staff in the home.

HABILITATION: An educational approach used with exceptional children, directed toward the development of the necessary skills required for successful adulthood.

HAND-EYE COORDINATION: The ability of an individual to combine and coordinate the function of one's eyes and hands to use one's hands for manipulative activities.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION: A special-education service in which teaching is provided by a specially trained instructor to students unable to attend school. A parent or guardian usually must always be present at the time of instruction. In some cases, the instruction may take place on a neutral site and not in the home or school. One of the most restrictive educational placements.

HYPERACTIVITY: Behavior that is characterized by excessive motor activity or restlessness.

IDENTIFICATION: Process of locating and identifying children who need special education services.

IMPULSIVITY: Tendency to take actions without considering consequences or without a planned purpose for the action.

INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: Concept of providing educational services for all students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools in classes with age-appropriate non-disabled peers with support from special education teachers and support personnel. Also referred to as supported or integrated education.

INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION [IEE]: An examination or assessment by a qualified examiner not employed by the public agency responsible for the education of the student.

INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT [IDEA '97]: Federal legislation, amended in 1997, that requires states to provide all children with disabilities a free appropriate public education.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLAN [IEP]: A written statement of specially designed instruction [revised annually or more often as needed] prepared at the IEP Team meeting that describes the student's eligibility; the student's present level of performance; annual goals and short term objectives; specific educational and related services and amount of time in general education; the least restrictive environment and the reasons why accepted or rejected; transition services beginning no later than age 14; and the dates and frequency of service - as specific as possible.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLANNING TEAM [IEP TEAM]: The group of people designated by IDEA '97 or invited to meet to decide a student's eligibility for special education and then develop an individualized educational program plan.

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PLANNING TEAM MEETING: Meeting in which the parents, student and the school jointly develop the student's Individualized Educational Program (IEP).

INFORMAL ASSESSMENTS: Anecdotal records, personality inventories, skill inventories, interviews, observations, teacher-made tests and other non-standardized methods used to learn about a student's needs.

INTELLIGENCE QUOTIENT [IQ]: The score on a test that measures mental development. The average score for the general population is 100.

INTERDISCIPLINARY TEAM: A team of professionals from a variety of disciplines who meet to assess the needs of a child.

INTERIM IEP: Temporary placement of an eligible student in a program before the individualized educational plan is finalized.

INTERVENTION: Preventive, remedial, compensatory, or survival services given to an individual in need.

ITINERANT TEACHER: An outside teacher hired by a school district to provide specific educational services to a child. The teacher is employed by an outside agency and may be responsible for several children in several districts. An itinerant teacher meets the needs and roles outlined by the hiring district. Services are provided as required by the child's IEP.

KINESTHESIS: Sensation of movement arising from one's muscles, joints and inner ears.

LEAD AGENCY: The agency within a state or territory in charge of overseeing and coordinating childhood programs and services. (e.g., Early intervention, wrap-around).

LEARNING DISABILITY: Refers to students with average or above average intelligence ability who experience a severe discrepancy between their ability and their achievement.

LEAST-RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT: The educational setting which allows a child to receive special education services while among the greatest number of peers who do not have disabilities. The general education classroom is the preferred educational setting.

LOCAL EDUCATIONAL AGENCY: The public board of education legally constituted within a State who has administrative control and direction of a public elementary or secondary school.

LONG TERM MEMORY: Recall system within the brain that keeps information for longer than several minutes.

LONG TERM SUSPENSION: Any suspension in exceeding 10 school days.

LOW INCIDENCE DISABILITY: A disability that affects relatively few of the total number of children with disabilities who receives special services.

MAINSTREAMING: The educational placement of a person in the setting that allows the most interaction with peers who do not have disabilities. Typically requires the special education student to perform all elements of the class required of general education students.

MAJOR LIFE ACTIVITIES: Activities like self-care performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working."

MANIFESTATION IEP: An IEP Team meeting called to decide whether a student's misconduct was caused by the student's disability or the result of an inappropriate placement.

MAPS - MCGILL ACTION PLANNING SYSTEM: The MAPS Process provides a common vision and road map for all team members, which enables them to be supportive and effective in furthering the integration of learners with disabilities into regular school and community life.

MEDIATION: An informal process in which an impartial facilitator tries to help parents and school districts resolve differences over student's identification, programming or placement.

MEDICALLY FRAGILE: Having significant medical needs that require specific attention at times throughout the day in order for the student to attend school.

MENTAL AGE: An intelligence test score that compares the person's score with others the same age taking the test.

MENTAL RETARDATION [MR]: A disability in which the individual's intellectual level measures within the below average range [IQ below 70], with marked impairments in adaptive behavior.

MOBILITY INSTRUCTION: Integration of specific daily living skills into the educational program of a student with a disability to help the student navigate safely in the community.

MOBILITY SPECIALIST: A professional with formal training who provides mobility training, including orientation, to blind individuals.

MOBILITY TRAINING: Techniques to help blind individuals move safely and independently within the community, including orientation and using a cane.

MODALITY: A specific physical therapy treatment, such as hot packs or whirlpool baths.

MODELING: Imitation by a child of desired behaviors performed by peers or teachers.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY: Professionals from more than two disciplines who contribute to a common objective, such as a screening committee consisting of a special educator, a psychologist, and a social worker.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY EVALUATION: The testing of a student by a group of professionals: psychologists, teachers, social workers, speech/language therapists, etc.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY EVALUATION TEAM: Two or more professionals from separate disciplines who share responsibility for conducting a comprehensive evaluation of students suspected of having a disability or a reevaluating a person with a disability.

MULTISENSORY APPROACH: In connection with reading instruction, use of visual, auditory and tactile or kinesthetic pathways to present instructional content.

NATIVE LANGUAGE: The primary language used by an individual.

NEUROLOGICAL: Relating to the nervous system.

NEUROPSYCHOLOGICAL: Discipline concerned with functional assessment and mapping, or correlating, of human behavior to specific areas of the brain; encompasses assessment of cognitive processing and affective dimensions of behavior.

NONCATEGORICAL RESOURCE ROOM: A resource room in a neighborhood school that provides services to children with all types of classified disabilities. The children with these disabilities attend classes in general education classrooms at least 50% of the day.

NONDISCRIMINATORY EVALUATION: An evaluation using materials and procedures free of racial or cultural biases, which accommodates a student's disabilities by allow more time, using a computer, or reader, etc.

NORMALIZATION: The concept that all persons with disabilities have the opportunity to live according to the patterns of every day life which are as close as possible to the mainstream of society.

NORM-REFERENCED TESTS: Tests that compare a child's performance to the performance of others when using the same measure. For example, a child's reading skills are compared to the scores by all other children his age, based on proven research.

OBJECTIVE: A specific skill, development, ability, or change within the goal area which the student is expected to achieve.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST [OT]: A professional who evaluates and determines purposeful activities to facilitate improvement of a student's physical, fine motor, sensory motor and self care functioning within the school environment. This may include adaptation of equipment.

OCULAR CONTROL TRAINING: Exercises to strengthen eye muscles to improve eye coordination and vision.

ORIENTATION: The method by which a blind individual uses his or her remaining senses to determine where in the environment he or she is situated.

PARAPROFESSIONALS: Trained assistants (maybe a parent) who work with a classroom teacher in the education process.

PARENT: Mother, father, or legally designated guardian of a student with a disability. Parent also means the actual student when the student reaches the age of 18 years, if an appropriate court has not appointed a legal guardian.

PARENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PAC): A group of parents of students with disabilities from each local education agency within the intermediate school district appointed by the Intermediate School District Board of Education. The PAC participates in the development of the intermediate school district plan and advises the Intermediate School District Board of Education on matters relating to special education programs and services.

PEER TUTORING: Individualized instruction provided as an addition to classroom instruction by a student close to the same age but functioning at a higher level

PERCENTILE: A type of measurement that compares a person's performance to the performance of others of the same age or in the same grade by ranking the score. A percentile score means the individual performed that test as well as or better than equal or lower percentiles.

PERCEPTION: Ability to process and comprehend information one receives via the senses.

PERCEPTUAL-MOTOR DISORDER: A sensory perception deficiency receiving, processing or responding to sensory information about one's environment, in turn causing problems with comprehension, memory and the perceptual motor-skills needed to read, write and master arithmetic.

PERCEPTUAL SKILLS: The ability to select, organize, and understand information coming in through the sense. (hearing, seeing, touching, smelling, tasting)

PHYSICAL THERAPIST [PT]: A professional who assesses and treats a student to improve his level of functioning, mainly in the area of mobility and walking skills, within the school environment.

PLACEMENT: The setting in which a child with disabilities is educated. Placement includes the school, the classroom, related services, community based services, and the amount of time a student will spend with peers who do not have disabilities.

POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT: Any stimulus or event that occurs after a desired behavior has been exhibited and increases the possibility of that behavior occurring in the future.

PRAGMATICS: Language system concerned with functional language use, including the ability to engage in a conversation through appropriate use of nonverbal behaviors such as maintaining eye contact and taking turns speaking and listening to others.

PRAXIS PLANNING: Ability to plan and execute tasks requiring motor skills.

PROMPTING: Instructional technique in which a cue --- visual, auditory or physical --- is presented in order to facilitate successful completion of a task or performance of a behavior.

PROPRIOCEPTIVE SENSE: A student's subconscious awareness of body positions, either when in motion or still.

PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION: The portion of a child's overall special education evaluation that tests general aptitudes and abilities, eye-hand coordination, social skills, emotional development and thinking skills.

PSYCHOLOGIST: A professional trained to administer psychological tests, interpret results, recommend eligibility and develop programs/services for students.

PSYCHOMOTOR: A term used to describe operations that combine the use of both mental and physical processes, such as playing ball or handwriting.

PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT: How a student relates to and interacts with other people in his or her environment.

PSYCHOSOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: The psychological development of a person in relation to his or her social development.

PUBLIC EXPENSE: The public agency either pays for the full cost of the evaluation, program or services, including transportation and room and board, or ensures that such is provided at no cost to the parent.

PUPIL PERSONNEL TEAM: A group of professionals from the same school who meet regularly to discuss children's problems and offer suggestions or a direction for resolution.

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE: The ability to receive and understand information from others.

RECREATION THERAPIST: A professional trained to develop programs to help students with disabilities plan and manage leisure time activities.

REEVALUATION: Periodic evaluation of a student already identified as IDEA eligible.

REFERRAL: A formal notification to the local school made by a family, a teacher or other professional, that a child is experiencing educational difficulties which may require a full special education evaluation.

REGRESSION-RECOUPMENT: Loss of learned skills during the summer resulting in the need to relearn those skills at the start of the new school year.

REHABILITATION: Program or services provided to reduce deficits and attain maximum possible level of mental or physical functioning.

RELATED SERVICES: Services provided to disabled children to assist in their ability to learn and function in the least restrictive environment. Such services may include in-school counseling, speech and language services, and so on.

RELIABILITY OF TESTS: Refers to how consistently a test yields similar results across time, raters, and items. If a particular test is given at several different times to different students and is administered and scored by different people, and if the test questions do not change, the test is reliable if the raters basically agree on the scores of the test takers.

REMEDIATION: An educational program designed to teach children to overcome some deficit or disability through education and training.

RESOURCE ROOM: A classroom program designed for students who require 50% or less of their instructional day in special education with two or less classes in the areas of language arts, mathematics, science and social studies. (Elementary - 50% or less of instructional school day; Secondary - three periods or less of instructional school day.)

SCREENING: The process of examining groups of children in hopes of identifying potential high-risk children.

SECTION 504: Refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which protects the civil rights of disabled children and adults. It also applies to the provision of services for children whose disability is not severe enough to warrant eligibility for special education, but could benefit from supportive services and classroom modifications.

SELF-CARE SKILLS: Activities in the domain of adaptive behavior, such as toileting, eating, grooming, bathing, shopping or housekeeping.

SELF-CONTAINED CLASS: A separate classroom located within a general education school, used by children with disabilities, usually in the same categorical grouping.

SELF-MANAGEMENT: Strategies which help a student control his or her own behavior through systematic application of behavioral techniques, such as self-monitoring, self-reinforcement and self-evaluation.

SELF-MONITORING: The use of an audio tone or random beep to cue students to check how well they are attending to a task and then recording whether they were exhibiting on-task or off-task behavior on a check-off sheet

SELF-STIMULATORY BEHAVIOR: Repeated nonfunctional and non-responsive movements such as rocking back and forth; arm or hand flapping; eye rubbing, etc.

SEMANTICS: The rules of language governing the meaning of words in sentences.

SENSORY IMPAIRMENT: Sensitivity in the auditory, visual, tactile, taste, vestibular, olfactory, or proprioceptive senses.

SENSORY INTEGRATION: How an individual organizes, interprets and uses sensory information, from the tactile, vestibular and proprioceptive senses to move through space and coordinate movement.

SERIAL SUSPENSIONS: A series of suspensions cumulatively totaling more than 10 school days per school year.

SHAPING: Technique used to reinforce target behaviors

SHELTERED EMPLOYMENT: Employment in a workplace, such as a sheltered workshop, in which a person with a disability works in a self-contained unit from non-disabled workers.

SHELTERED WORKSHOPS: A transitional or long-term work environment for individuals with disabilities who either cannot prepare for work in a regular setting or are learning to work in a regular setting. Within this setting the individual can learn to perform meaningful, productive tasks for pay.

SHORT TERM MEMORY: Memory that typically persists for only seconds to minutes.

SHORT TERM SUSPENSION: Any suspension of 10 school days or less in a school year.

SIGN LANGUAGE: A visual-gestural system of language for deaf or hearing-impaired students.

SOCIAL WORKER: Professionals who act as the link between home, school, and community by providing direct interventions with students, families, and the educational community; consultation with the school personnel and community; and advocacy regarding the special needs of those in the educational setting.

SPASTIC: In connection with muscle tone, overly resistant to passive stretching.

SPECIAL EDUCATION: Specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique educational needs of students with disabilities to help them develop to their maximum potential.

SPEECH PATHOLOGIST: Professional trained to evaluate and provide therapy for speech and language disorders.

STANDARD DEVIATION: Statistical term used to measure how far a student's score is from the score of most students, as measured in distances that represent a significant difference.

STANDARDIZED TESTS: Tests which compare one student to a large sample of students of the same age or group, which have been tested and through research methods established a "normal" score for purposes of comparison.

STAY PUT PROVISION: A legal concept from special education law. A student is allowed to stay in a class or program while an impartial hearing officer hears evidence and decides whether the student's program or placement should be changed.

SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS AND SERVICES: Modifications to the general education program made to ensure that a student with a disability can participate fully in the program.

SURROGATE PARENT: A person other than the child's natural parent who is named to act as the child's "parent" in special education matters. Surrogate parents most often serve students who live in facilities or institutions.

SURVIVAL SKILLS: Essential skills demanded in community independent living, such as shopping, reading a menu and balancing a checkbook.

SUSPENSIONS: A temporary cessation of educational services, typically from 1 to 15 school days.

SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION OF BEHAVIOR: A assessment method where a trained observer watches behavior in a natural setting, records or classifies each behavior objectively as it occurs or shortly thereafter, ensures that the obtained data are replicable, and converts the data into quantitative information.

TACTILE DEFENSIVENESS: Extreme sensitivity to touch.

TACTILE SENSE: Sense of touch over body surfaces, including pressure temperature and pain.

TARGET BEHAVIOR: A specific undesirable behavior(s) in a student's behavior to be modified, reduced or eliminated; also refers to desirable skills, which are goals of behavior support plans for a child with a disability.

TASK ANALYSIS: A teaching strategy in which skills are broken down into smaller steps; and then used in a teaching method tailored to each child's pace of learning.

TEACHER CONSULTANT (TC): A certified special education teacher who provides support services to students with disabilities and provides consultation to the regular classroom teachers and parents. The teacher consultant does not grade, give credit or teach a general or special education course.

TOKEN ECONOMY: A system of encouraging desirable behaviors through the delivery of tokens. These tokens can be in the form of stars, points, candy, chips, and so on.

TOTAL COMMUNICATION: The approach to the education of deaf students that combines oral speech, sign language, and finger spelling.

TRANSITION SERVICES: A coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult services, independent living, or community participation.

TRANSPORTATION: Travel to, from and between schools; travel in and around school buildings; and specialized equipment (such as special or adapted buses lifts, and ramps), if required to provide special transportation to a child with a disability.

TRAVEL TRAINING: Instruction provided to help students with disabilities develop an awareness of the environment in which they live; and learn the skills necessary to move effectively and safely from place to place within that environment (e.g., in school, in the home, at work, and in the community).

UNDERACHIEVER: A term referring to the discrepancy between a child's ability and his/her academic achievement in school. Underachievement may be a signal of a more serious problem.

UNILATERAL PLACEMENT: The enrollment of a child with a disability in a private school or facility without the involvement of public school officials.

VALIDITY: Refers to how well a test measures what it claims to measure. A test is valid when it accurately measures one or more of a student's skills or needs, such as the capacity (or lack of capacity) to see, hear, talk, reason, remember, or conform to certain standards of behavior.

VESTIBULAR SENSE: System of the inner ear that detects movement and changes in the position of one's head. Dysfunction may cause either hyper- or hyposensitivity to movement.

VISION THERAPY: A process that helps a child with low vision develop residual vision, use low vision aids effectively and enhance auditory skills.

VISUAL ACUITY: The degree to which the eye can distinguish fine detail at varying distances, also termed the

clarity of vision.

VISUAL MEMORY: Memory that holds visual information.

VISUAL-MOTOR INTEGRATION: Ability to relate visual stimuli to motor responses in an accurate and appropriate manner.

VISUAL-MOTOR INTEGRATION THERAPY: Treatment to improve general coordination, balance, and hand-eye coordination, eye movement, form recognition and visual memory.

VISUAL-PERCEPTION AND DISCRIMINATION: The ability to recognize visual stimuli and to differentiate among them, and understand what one sees.

VISUAL-SPATIAL DEFICIT: A reading disorder marked by difficulty linking letters together to form whole words.

VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT: An assessment of a student's personal adjustment skills, aptitudes, interests, achievements, and special information regarding the student's disability. Examples of tests include A.P.T.I.C.O.M., Vocational Research Interest Inventory, Becker Reading Free Interest Inventory.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION: Preparing a student to work by developing good work habits and values, planning for occupational opportunities, and making career decisions.

WORD ATTACK SKILLS: Ability to use word identification strategies to analyze and pronounce unfamiliar words and define meaning without using clues from context.

WRAP-AROUND SERVICES: The process of providing a network of services to a child and family in the natural home, school and community environments. Parent-driven individualized service plans, creative use of resources and natural environments are the common attributes which characterize service systems based on wraparound.

ZERO INFERENCE: The suspension of the typical belief in general education that a child has the basic communication and personal skills, social skills and adaptive behavior skills to learn in a non-natural setting and to use generalization to apply what he or she has learned to other situations in other settings.

ZERO REJECT PRINCIPLE: All students are entitled to a free appropriate public education regardless of severity of disability.