

## Frequently Used Educational Terms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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