

Special Education Acronyms and Glossary

Common Acronyms Used in California Special Education

ACRONYM	MEANING
504	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AT	Assistive Technology
CAC	Community Advisory Committee on Special Education
CCS	California Children's Services
CDE	California Department of Education
DOR	Department of Rehabilitation
FAPE	Free and Appropriate Public Education
FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation
IEP	Individualized Educational Program
IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
LEA	Local Education Agency
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment

OT/PT	Occupational Therapy/Physical Therapy
RSP	Resource Specialist Program
SDC	Special Day Class
SELPA	Special Education Local Plan Area
SPED	Special Education

Glossary of Terms

TERM	MEANING
Accommodation	A change in curriculum or instruction that does not substantially modify the requirements of the class or alter the content standards or benchmarks.
Adapted Physical Education (APE)	A diversified program of developmental activities, games, sports, and rhythms suited to the interests, capabilities and needs of students with disabilities who may not successfully engage in a regular physical education program.
Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)	Alternative opportunities for parties to resolve disputes collaboratively and avoid litigation, typically through negotiation, mediation, or arbitration.
Assessment	Any systematic method of obtaining information from tests and other sources; used to draw inferences about characteristics of people, objects, or programs. An initial evaluation (or periodic re-evaluation) to determine whether a child is a child with a disability and to determine the educational needs of this child.

Assistive Technology (AT) Device	Any piece of equipment used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.
Assistive Technology (AT) Service	Any service that directly assists an eligible individual in selecting, acquiring, or using an assistive technology device.
Curriculum	The subject matter that is to be learned, usually described in terms of scope and sequence.
Due Process	In general, a course of legal proceedings according to rules and principles established for enforcement and protection of private rights. Essential components of due process are “notice” and “a meaningful opportunity to be heard.”
Extended School Day	A provision for a special education student to receive instruction for a period longer than the standard school day.
Extended School Year (ESY)	A provision for a special education student to receive instruction during ordinary school vacation periods.
Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)	A federal law that regulates the management of student records and disclosure of information from those records, with its own administrative enforcement mechanism.
Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)	Special education and related services are provided to students with disabilities at public expense and under public supervision and direction at no cost to the student’s parents.
Functional Curriculum (Life Skills Curriculum)	A curriculum focused on practical life skills and usually taught in community-based settings with concrete materials that are a regular part of everyday life.

Goals and Objectives	A written component of an IEP: skills the student is expected to reasonably achieve in one year maximum (reviewed and re-evaluated by the IEP team at least annually).
Inclusion [or] Inclusive Education	A belief that every student is entitled to an instructional program that meets his or her individual needs and learning characteristics; a commitment to build and maintain an assured sense of belonging for all students, regardless of strengths or challenges.
Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)	An independent evaluation of a student from a qualified person. Parents have the right to ask for and obtain an IEE if they disagree with the results of an assessment conducted by the school district. Any IEE must be considered at the IEP.
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	Federal law that entitles students with disabilities to special education services.
Individualized Education Program (IEP)	The annually written record of an eligible individual's special education and related services, describing the unique educational needs of the student and the manner in which those educational needs will be met.
IEP Meeting	A gathering required at least annually under IDEA in which an IEP is developed for a student receiving special education.
IEP Team (Minimum Required Members)	Parent or legal Surrogate; Student, when necessary; one general education and one special education teacher both responsible for implementing the IEP; school district representative qualified to provide/supervise provision of specialized instruction, knowledgeable about the general curriculum and the resources of the district. (CA law requires this be someone other than

	the child's teacher); Person(s) who conducted assessment(s) or knowledgeable enough to explain/interpret the results; People with specific expertise or knowledge of the student. (Optional: Attorneys or advocates)
Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)	A written plan for providing early intervention services to an eligible child with a disability (from birth to 3rd birthday) and to the child's family.
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	A federal mandate stipulating that, to the maximum extent possible, students with disabilities be educated with their non-disabled peers.
Local Education Area (LEA)	A school district.
Mainstreaming	This lay term doesn't appear in law. It refers to IDEA's preference for the education of every child in the least restrictive environment (LRE); most widely refers to placement of students with disabilities in general education, rather than segregated, classrooms.
Modification	A change in curriculum or instruction that substantially alters the requirements of the class or its content standards or benchmarks.
Placement	The unique combination of facilities, personnel, location or equipment necessary to provide instructional services to meet the goals as specified in the student's IEP. placement is a set of services, not a location.
Prior Written Notice (PWN)	A notice supplied to the other party that includes a description of the action proposed or refused by the school district or by the parent.
Procedural Safeguards and Referral Services (PSRS)	An office of the CA Dept. of Education (CDE) that provides technical assistance and resources about procedural safeguards and educational rights

	of students with disabilities, from ages 3 up to 22nd birthday. Compliance Complaints are filed here.
Related Services [aka] Designated Instruction and Services (DIS) in CA	Services required to assist an individual with disabilities to benefit from special education, including but not limited to: transportation, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech and language therapy, mental health services, and medical care.
Special Education (SPED)	Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of an eligible individual, including the specially designed instruction conducted in schools, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings. Special education provides a continuum of services in order to provide for the education needs of each eligible individual regardless of the nature or severity of the educational needs.
Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)	A consortium of school districts, within a geographical service area, responsible for ensuring that every child eligible for special education receives appropriate services. Each SELPA's Local Plan, based on Federal and California law and regulations, describes how special education services are provided.
Transition Plan	A plan to coordinate a set of activities that promote movement from school to post- school education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. Transition goals are determined by the IEP team beginning at least by age 16 and are based on student and family vision, preferences, and interests.

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