



# KENT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Glossary of Terms Used in Special Education

**Accommodations:** students may receive accommodations that provide students with disabilities equitable access to instruction and assessments that are dictionary aligned to the Maryland College & Career Ready Standard. Accommodations can be provided in the areas of: Presentation; Response; Setting; and Scheduling.

**Achievement testing:** test that measures competency in a particular area of knowledge or skill; measures mastery or acquisition of skills.

**Activities of Daily Living (ADL):** daily tasks necessary to care for oneself such as dressing or eating.

**ADA** - Americans with Disabilities Act. A Federal law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in the areas of employment, public transportation, services provided by state and local government, services and accommodations offered by private businesses, and telecommunication access for people with communication impairments.

**Adaptive development** - development of the child in comparison to other children the same age. This might include the child's ability to dress himself, feed himself, toilet training, how he/she plays with other children, how he/she plays alone, understanding dangers in crossing the street, how he/she behaves if mother leaves the room, etc.

**Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Meeting:** See Individualized Education Program (IEP) Meeting.

**Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Team or Committee:** See Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team or Committee.

**Advocate:** a person who speaks on behalf of himself/herself or others to protect his/her rights and ensure access to services to which the individual is entitled.

**Alternative assessment:** usually means an alternative to a paper and pencil test; refers to non-conventional methods of assessing achievement (e.g., work samples and portfolios).

**Amendment:** a change, revision, or addition made to a law

**Annual Goal:** a measurable outcome written in the IEP (along with related short term objectives) for each area of identified need that the student can reasonably achieve in one year by meeting each of the related short term objectives. Progress toward meeting the objectives related to each annual goal must be documented and shared with parents at least quarterly.

**Annual Review:** meeting of the IEP Team held at least annually to review a child's progress and to develop and use an IEP, including goals, objectives and services, to determine appropriate placement for the next year.

**Appeal:** a written request to change a decision or the act of making a request to change a decision.

**Appropriate:** able to adequately address/meet identified needs.

**Assessment:** a collecting and bringing together of information about a child's needs, which may include social, psychological, and educational evaluations used to determine services; a process using observation, testing, and test analysis to determine an individual's strengths and weaknesses in order to plan his or her educational services

**Assistive Technology (AT):** Equipment used to maintain or improve the capabilities of a child with a disability.

**At risk:** a term used with children who have, or could have, problems with their development that may affect later learning

**Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/ADHD):** Child with ADD or ADHD may be eligible for special education under other health impairment, specific learning disability, and/or emotional disturbance categories if ADD/ADHD condition adversely affects educational performance.

**Audiology:** related service; includes identification, determination of hearing loss, and referral for habilitation of hearing.

**Autism:** developmental disability that affects communication and social interaction, adversely affects educational performance, is generally evident before age 3. Children with autism often engage in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resist environmental change or change in daily routines, and have unusual responses to sensory experiences.

**Basic skills** - Skills in subjects like reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics.

**BIP:** Behavior Intervention Plan. A BIP includes practical and specific strategies and positive supports designed to increase or reduce certain behaviors.

**Case Manager:** a person (frequently the Special Educator for a student who qualifies for an IEP or the Special/General Educator, Guidance Counselor or other school staff for a student who qualifies for services under Section 504), who acts as a coordinator for all of the services provided for a student.

**Child Find:** requirement that states ensure that all children with disabilities are identified, located and evaluated, and determine which children are receiving special education and related services.

**C.F.R.:** Code of Federal Regulations

**Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR):** The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) is a permanent compilation of all Maryland agency regulations. Started in 1977, COMAR is divided into 31 titles, with each title usually corresponding to a department or agency within State government.

**Cognitive:** a term that describes the process people use for remembering, reasoning, understanding, and using judgment; in special education terms, a cognitive disability refers to difficulty in learning

**Consent:** A parent has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought, in the parent's native language or other mode of communication; understands and agrees in writing to the carrying out of the activity for which the parent's consent is sought, and the consent describes that activity and lists the records, if any, that will be released and to whom; and understanding that the granting of consent is voluntary on the part of the parent and may be revoked at any time.

**Counseling:** advice or help given by someone qualified to give such advice or help (often psychological counseling)

**Deaf-blindness:** IDEA disability category; includes hearing and visual impairments that cause severe communication, developmental and educational problems that adversely affects educational performance.

**Deafness:** IDEA disability category; impairment in processing information through hearing that adversely affects educational performance

**Developmental:** having to do with the steps or stages in growth and development before the age of 18 years

**Developmental Delay:** a delay in the usual steps of growth and development for children from birth through 18 years old.

**Developmental history:** the developmental progress of a child (ages birth to 18 years) in such skills as sitting, walking, talking, or learning

Developmental tests - standardized tests that measure a child's development as it compares to the development of all other children at that age.

**Disability categories:** IDEA disability categories include autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disability, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment (e.g., asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia and Tourette syndrome), specific learning disability, (e.g., Perceptual Disabilities, Brain Injury, Minimal Brain Dysfunction, Dyslexia, Developmental Aphasia), speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment (including blindness), and developmental delay.

**Disability:** the result of a physical or mental condition that prevents an individual from developing, achieving or functioning within a normal range.

**Due Process Hearing:** a formal procedure to resolve a dispute between parents and the school system about identification, evaluation or educational placement/program of a child.

**Early Intervention Services or Programs:** programs or services designed to identify and treat a developmental problem as early as possible.

**Early intervention (EI):** Special education and related services provided to children under age of 5.

**Education Records:** personally identifiable information about a student with a disability maintained by a public agency.

**Educational Disability:** After the existence of a disability has been established, the IEP Team must use and document using a variety of sources such as achievement tests, teacher and parent input, physical condition of the child, adaptive behavior, etc. to determine if a child has a disabling condition affecting learning and is in need of special education and/or related services.

**Eligibility:** The IEP Team uses a variety of sources (see Educational Disability) to determine whether a child has an educational disability and qualifies for special education services according to the guidelines specified in special education law.

**Evaluation:** includes use of existing information along with tests and procedures used initially to determine whether a child has a disability and if the child qualifies, the type and extent of special education services needed by the child.

**Extended School Year (ESY) Services:** an individualized extension of specific services beyond the regular school year provided as part of a free appropriate public education.

**FERPA:** Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; statute about confidentiality and access to education records.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):** the right to a free public education which meets the specific educational needs of a child with a disability as guaranteed by IDEA.

**Functional Behavior Assessment:** or FBA is a process for gathering information that can be used to determine why a person is exhibiting unacceptable behavior and what is needed to change the behavior.

**Functional Skills:** skills needed for independent living, such as domestic skills, consumer skills, working with or managing money, using public transportation, and knowing how to be safe in the community.

**General curriculum:** curriculum adopted by LEA or SEA for all children from preschool through high school.

**Guardian ad litem:** person appointed by the court to represent the rights of minors.

**Health Related Services:** 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: speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, counseling services, interpreters for the hearing impaired, and medical services for diagnostic and evaluation purposes

**Hearing impairment:** Disability category under IDEA; permanent or fluctuating impairment in hearing that adversely affects educational performance.

**Home/Hospital Teaching:** provided to Kent County Public School students who are unable to attend school due to a certified physical or emotional condition. It is provided to the student to continue academic work and remain current with classroom instruction while absent from school.

**Identification:** the process of finding and identifying children needing special education services.

**Inclusion:** practice of educating children with special needs in regular education classrooms in neighborhood schools. See also least restrictive environment.

**Independent Evaluation:** an evaluation, such as psychological or educational testing usually arranged and paid for by parents. Team members must consider - although they may not

necessarily agree with - the results of a private evaluation as long as the evaluator meets certain school criteria, such as specific licensing requirements. Under certain circumstances, the school system may agree to pay for an independent evaluation.

**Individualized Educational Program (IEP):** a written education plan for a school-aged child with disabilities developed by a team of professionals (teachers, therapists, etc.) and the child's parents; it is reviewed and updated yearly and describes how the child is presently doing, what the child's learning needs are, and what services the child will need; (For children ages birth through 2 years, the IFSP is used.)

**Individualized Education Program Meeting:** any of the meetings held throughout the special education process such as screening, determining eligibility for special education, developing an IEP, conducting an annual review, etc.

**Individualized Educational Program (IEP) Team or Committee:** this multidisciplinary team is made up of regular and special education teachers, other professionals, and the parents of the child. The team is responsible for identifying and evaluating children with disabilities who are in need of special education; developing, reviewing their progress on, or revising an IEP; determining the student's placement; and determining that the child is no longer a child with a disability.

**Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP):** a written statement for an infant or toddler (ages birth through 2 years old) developed by a team of people who have worked with the child and the family; the IFSP must describe the child's development levels; family information; major outcomes expected to be achieved for the child and family; the services the child will be receiving; when and where the child will receive these services; and the steps to be taken to support the transition of the child to another program; the IFSP will also list the name of the service coordinator assigned to the child and his/her family.

**Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE):** a plan which outlines the services needed to reach an employment goal, how the services to be provided will be evaluated, and the approximate time expected when employment will occur.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** a federal law which was reauthorized in 1997 that guarantees that all children with disabilities are provided with a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE), and that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are protected.

**Infants & Toddlers Program:** This is the early intervention amendments to IDEA. It is the statewide program that requires services for children from birth to three years of age, including an individualized family service plan (IFSP) and case management services. Each county administers this program differently.

**Intelligence tests:** tests that measure aptitude or intellectual capacities (Examples: Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-IV) and Stanford-Binet (SB:IV)).

**Intelligence Quotient (IQ):** score achieved on an intelligence test that identifies learning potential.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** an educational setting or program that provides a student with disabilities with the chance to work and learn to the best of his or her ability; it also provides the student as much contact as possible with children without disabilities, while meeting all of the child's learning needs and physical requirements

**Lead Agency:** the agency (office) within a state or territory in charge of overseeing and coordinating service systems for children

**LICC:** Local Interagency Coordinating Council. A group of people representing all of the city or county level agencies that provides services to children. The LCC makes recommendations for residential school placements.

**Local School System (LSS):** Local School System (sometimes referred to as LEA - Local School System). Any of the 24 public, local school systems in Maryland responsible for educating your child.

**Manifestation Determination:** decision whether inappropriate and/or dangerous behavior was caused by, or directly and substantially related to the student's disability. A manifestation determination may be required after a student has been removed from school as a disciplinary action.

**MSDE - Maryland State Department of Education:** the state agency that is responsible for monitoring local education agencies and for making sure that these agencies follow state and federal laws.

**Mediation:** this is the process of having a trained person try to help parents and the school system reach an agreement.

**Modifications:** student requires and receives modified academic achievement standards aligned with the Maryland College & Career Ready Standards. Content may be modified to the testing assessment limits. Students who have modifications written on their IEP are earning a diploma.

**Multiple disabilities:** disability category under IDEA; concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.) that cause such severe educational problems that problems cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments; does not include deaf-blindness.

**Native language:** language normally used by the child's parents.

**Nonpublic Placement:** Parents may choose to apply for their child with disabilities to attend a nonpublic school but still access some special education services from the local public school system through the IEP process. Or, if an appropriate public placement as determined by the IEP Team cannot be provided, the school system must place and pay for a child to attend an appropriate program in a nonpublic school.

**Occupational Therapy (OT):** a therapy or treatment provided by an occupational therapist that helps individual developmental or physical skills that will aid in daily living; it focuses on sensory integration, on coordination of movement, and on fine motor and self-help skills, such as dressing, eating with a fork and spoon, etc.

**Orientation and mobility services:** related service; includes services to visually impaired students that enable students to move safely at home, school, and community

**Orthopedic impairment:** disability category under IDEA; orthopedic impairment that adversely affects child's educational performance

**OSERS:** Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services

**OSEP:** Office of Special Education Programs

**Other health impairment:** disability category under IDEA; refers to limited strength, vitality or alertness due to chronic or acute health problems that adversely affects educational performance.

**Partners for Success:** Resource Centers for Parents, Families, and Schools: formerly called Parent Information Training Centers (PITC's), a partnership between the Maryland State Department of Education and the local school systems establishing resource centers that provide parents and professionals with information, consultation, referral, training and advocacy support regarding special education services.

**Performance standards:** definitions of what a child must do to demonstrate proficiency at specific levels in content standards.

**Personal Identification Information:** the name of the student, the student's parent or other family member; the address of the student; and a personal identifier, such as the student's social security number or student number.

**Physical Therapy (PT):** services provided by a physical therapist (PT) to address needs in areas of gross motor development such as strength, flexibility, motion and endurance.

**Placement:** the classroom, program, service, and/or therapy that is selected for a student with special needs



**Positive Behavioral Supports:** interventions intended to reduce an inappropriate behavior and teach a student alternative ways to communicate needs.

**Private Agency:** a non-public agency which may be receiving public funds to provide services for some children

**Portfolio:** a collection of work that shows progress and learning; can be designed to assess progress, learning, effort, and/or achievement.

**Prior written notice:** required written notice to parents when school proposes to initiate or change, or refuses to initiate or change, the identification, evaluation, or special educational placement and services of the child.

**Procedural safeguards notice:** requirement that schools provide full easily understood explanation of procedural safeguards that describe parent's right to an independent educational evaluation, to examine records, to request mediation and due process.

**Psychological services:** related service; includes administering psychological and educational tests, interpreting test results, interpreting child behavior related to learning.

**Psychologists:** provide testing and consultation services for students who are referred for evaluation. They meet with the IEP Team, explain testing results, and make recommendations for the student's placement and program.

**Reasonable accommodation:** adoption of an accommodation that can be accomplished without undue administrative or financial burden.

**Reevaluation:** when the IEP team looks at available information to determine what additional tests, observations, etc. are necessary to document continued eligibility for special education and/or related services, and to determine what constitutes an appropriate educational program for the student.

**Referral:** the process of requesting a screening to determine if a child should be evaluated to find out if there is a need for special education services.

**Rehabilitation Act of 1973:** civil rights statute designed to protect individuals with disabilities from discrimination; purposes are to maximize employment, economic self-sufficiency, independence, inclusion and integration into society.

**Rehabilitation counseling services:** related service; includes career development, preparation for employment, vocational rehabilitation services funded under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**Related Services:** transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as may be required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special

education. Related services include: speech-language pathology; audiology; interpreting services; psychological services; physical and occupational therapy; recreation, including therapeutic recreation; early identification and assessment of disabilities in students; counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling; orientation and mobility services; medical service for diagnostic or evaluation purposes; school health services, including school nursing services; social work services in schools; and parent counseling and training. Related services does not include: a surgically implanted medical device; the optimization of the devices functioning; maintenance of the device; or replacement of the device.

**Residential Placement:** a highly restrictive special education placement requiring 24 hours of special education intervention every day.

**Resolution Session:** a mandatory meeting that the school district must convene within 15 days of receiving the parents' due process complaint. The resolution session includes parents, members of the IEP team relevant to the complaint, and a representative of the school district who has decision-making authority.

**SECAC:** Special Education Citizens' Advisory Committee advises the school system on the needs of students with disabilities. We collaborate with other community disability advocacy groups to improve special education and the lives of our students in Kent County, MD.

**SICC:** State Interagency Coordinating Council. The SICC is made up of people from all of the state agencies that provide services to children.

**Screening:** screening is the process of reviewing a child's situation to see if he or she may be disabled and in need of special education.

**Section 504:** a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities. Section 504 ensures that the child with a disability has equal access to an education. The child may receive accommodations and modifications. Unlike the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Section 504 does not require the school to provide an individualized educational program (IEP) that is designed to meet the child's unique needs and provides the child with educational benefit. Under Section 504, fewer procedural safeguards are available to children with disabilities and their parents than under IDEA. 504 Plans can be discussed with the school guidance counselor.

**Service Coordinator:** someone who acts as a coordinator of a child's services, working in partnership with the family and providers of special programs

**Short Term Objectives:** specific, measurable steps written in the IEP and implemented to assist in achieving annual goals. Student progress in meeting the objectives should be reviewed, and progress documented and shared with parents at least as frequently as parents of nondisabled students.

**Special Education Programs/Services:** programs, services, or specially designed instruction (offered at no cost to families) for children with special needs who are found eligible for such services; these include special learning methods or materials in the regular classroom, and special classes and programs if the learning or physical problems indicate this type of program.

**Special Needs:** (as in "special needs" child) a term to describe a child who has disabilities or who is at risk of developing disabilities and who, therefore, requires special services or treatment in order to progress.

**Specially designed instruction:** the adaptation of content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of a student with a disability to ensure access to the general curriculum, so that the student can meet the educational standards that apply to each student within the jurisdiction of the public agency.

**Specific learning disability (SLD):** 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 the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, consistent with department criteria. SLD includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. SLD does not include students who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor impairments, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

**Speech-language impairment:** a communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, voice impairment, or language impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

**Speech-language pathology services:** a service which includes identification of students with speech or language impairments; diagnosis and appraisal of specific speech or language impairments; referral for medical or other professional attention necessary for the habilitation for speech or language impairments; provision of speech and language services for the habilitation or prevention of communicative impairments; and counseling and guidance of parents, students, and teachers regarding speech and language impairments.

**Standard score:** score on norm-referenced tests that are based on the bell curve and its equal distribution of scores from the average of the distribution. Standard scores are especially useful because they allow for comparison between students and comparisons of one student over time.

**Standardization:** a consistent set of procedures for designing, administering, and scoring an assessment. The purpose of standardization is to ensure that all individuals are assessed under the same conditions and are not influenced by different conditions.

**Standardized tests:** tests that are uniformly developed, administered, and scored.

Standards - Statements that describe what students are expected to know and do in each grade and subject area; include content standards, performance standards, and benchmarks.

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**State Education Agency (SEA):** responsible for monitoring local education agencies and for making sure that they follow state and federal laws. In Maryland the SEA is the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE).

**Supplementary aids and services:** aids and services and other supports that are provided in regular education classes, other education-related settings, and extracurricular and nonacademic settings to enable a student with a disability to be educated with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

**Third Party Billing:** a program dedicated to strengthening and expanding Special Education and Health Related Services for students in the school system through the reimbursement of funds collected from Medicaid.

**Transition services:** IEP requirement; designed to facilitate the student's movement from school to the workplace or to higher education.

**Transportation:** services which include travel to and from school 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 for a student with a disability.

**Traumatic brain injury:** disability category under IDEA; includes acquired injury caused by external physical force and open or closed head injuries that result in impairments; does not include congenital or degenerative brain injuries or brain injuries caused by birth trauma.

**Visual impairment including blindness:** disability category under IDEA; impaired vision that adversely affects educational performance.