

Special Education Glossary and Acronyms Guide

Here are some selected abbreviations and terms you might encounter if you start getting involved in education or special education issues. Some relate to agencies and committees or terms that have legal meaning in the U.S.; others refer to learning disabilities or other such terms. You can use the "find" function in your software to find a particular word or abbreviation or use the bookmarks in the left frame of your Adobe window to jump to particular letters. Remember that there's another glossary for neuroscience, clinical, and medical terms.

Term or Abbreviation	Definition
"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.
Abstract intelligence (or Abstract reasoning)	The intellectual ability to understand relationships and to recognize non-tangibles such as concepts, ideas, images, and symbols. For example: recognizing a parakeet as a parakeet is somewhat concrete, whereas "bird" is a more abstract concept (winged, feathered, etc.). Abstract processes represent higher-order cognitive/intellectual processes.
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.
Active Range of Motion	The extent to which the individual can voluntarily and actively move a limb or body part through an arc or angle. For example, if your arm is hanging down at your side and you can raise it straight up over your head, your active range of motion is 180 degrees.

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.
ADC	Aid to Dependent Children Program. A Department of Social Services program providing financial assistance for needy children whose parents have abandoned them or who are unable to support them.
ADD or ADHD (also AD/HD)	Attention Deficit Disorder. Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. See the clinical glossary for more information.
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.
APE	Adaptive Physical Education
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.
ARP	Advisory Review Panel. Another name for a local education agency committee that determines eligibility for special education services.

Articulation	The ability to make specific sounds correctly, such as the "r" in "roll" or the "w" in "we." A certain amount of articulation difficulty is normal developmentally, but if the child does not "outgrow" certain problems, evaluation by a speech and language pathologist is indicated. Articulation difficulties may include omissions (sounds that are left out of words), substitutions (e.g., a "w" sound instead of a "r" sound), additions, and distortions.
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 distractors; 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
CAPD	Central Auditory Processing Disorder. Central auditory processing ("CAP") refers to the perception of sound, which is not the same as the individual's ability to sense or receive sound. CAP includes attention to sound, short- and long-term memory for sound, selective listening, and localization of sound (i.e., the ability to detect whether the sound is coming from behind, to the left, above, etc.).

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.
Child Study Team	A team consisting of the parents of a child with a disability and the education professionals serving the child. In some areas of the country, the CST is a building-level team while the CSE is the district-level team.
Chronological Age	Actual age, as measured in years, months, and days, as opposed to "mental age."
Committee on Special Education	In its most common usage: A committee of the local education agency which has responsibility for determining a student's eligibility for special educational services. If the student is found eligible, then the committee is also involved in developing the needed individualized program for the student. The CSE 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. In some states, the CSE is known as the ARD or PPS.

Concrete	An adjective that describes a way of describing or thinking about an object or idea in terms of its actual observable features or literal words. As an example : a concrete description of a particular bird might be "small, blue, soft, having feathers, with beak." A person who thinks concretely tends to do best with objects and tangibles. As an example: if you asked a concrete thinker what the expression "A stitch in time saves nine" means, they might give you an answer that has to do with sewing. Concrete is usually contrasted with its opposite style: abstract.
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.
CSE	Committee on Special Education
CST	Child Study Team
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, rather than emphasizing the child's strengths and building on those.
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.

Direct Services	Providing services to the child in either one-to-one (1:1) or small-group setting, in contrast to indirect services (see Consultant Teacher).
Disability	This term has different definitions, some of which relate to statute on state or federal level. In a nonlegal 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.
DVR	Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (sometimes known as OVR, or in New York State as VESID). An agency of the state that assists individuals with disabilities develop skills so that they can be employable. For students with disabilities, this agency may become involved in any transition planning.
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. See Emotional Disturbance
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 distractors, 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 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, Hendrick Hudson v. Rowley, 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

Gait	Style of walking, ambulation.
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, but it is not expressed in observable 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," but the two terms may have 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. For more details, see the IDEA at §300.502.
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. For other details and requirements of what goes into an IEP, see IDEA at §300.347 or the Appendix A Interpretation.
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 Act	PL 101-476 (formerly known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act). IDEA was amended in 1997 as Public Law 105-17 as is usually just referred to as "IDEA" or "IDEA '97." 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	Multipdisciplinary 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," whereby the child has some mild coordination deficits but neurological testing such as EEG or scans do not show any clear evidence of brain damage. .Historically: the term used to describe children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
Modality	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 be do better by aurally presented material.
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. NOTE: if a student has a neurobiological condition such as ADHD, then listing them as "multiply handicapped" because they also have a tic disorder, or other neurobiological condition frequently associated with ADHD is not necessary. Similarly, if the child has ADHD and LD, they do not need to be classified as Multiply Handicapped, and one classification under IDEA may suffice.
Noncategorical	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	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.

PPS	Pupil Personnel Services
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.
Pupil Personnel Services	Yet another name for the local education agency committee that has responsibility for special education 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 for if it's part of an 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	1. Serious (or Severe) Emotional Disturbance (or Disorder). 2. State Education Department.
Sensorimotor	Involving a combination of sensory inputs and motoric 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.
Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale	A standardized psychological test to assess intelligence. The Stanford-Binet actually predates the Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children, the more commonly employed test.
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.
WIAT	Wechsler Individual Achievement Test
WISC-III	Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, 3rd Edition
WRAT	Wide Range Achievement Test
