

School Advocacy Terms to Know

Accommodation¹

A change in teaching techniques, materials or environment. Accommodations can help students work around or overcome challenges and level the playing field. For example, if your child has trouble with writing, she might be allowed to answer test questions orally. Even with that accommodation, though, she's expected to learn the same content as other kids.

Adaptive Development²

A child's current level of self-care skills, such as dressing, eating, and using the toilet.

Alternate Assessment³

Any form of measuring what students know and are able to do other than traditional tests. Examples are: oral reports, projects, performances, experiments, portfolios, and class participation.

Assistive Technology (AT) Device²

Any item, piece of equipment, or product that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of a child with a disability in any life activity.

Assistive Technology (AT) Service²

Any service that directly assists a parent, professional, or child with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an AT device.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)³

A plan to address behavior that may be getting in the way of a student with disabilities success at school using [PBS](#).

Change of Placement³

A concept in special education law that describes when student with disabilities is moved from one setting to another, or when there are significant changes in a student's individualized education program (IEP).

Due Process¹

Due process is the legal method you can use to formally disagree with the school. You have to file a written complaint to begin the process. The complaint could have to do with

your child's eligibility for special education services or the types of services she receives.

Eligibility²

The criteria used to determine if a child qualifies for early intervention or special education and related services.

Evaluation²

The process used to determine eligibility

Extended School Year (ESY)²

Special education and related services when school is not typically in session.

FAPE: Free and Appropriate Public Education¹

Children with disabilities have the right to free and appropriate public education (FAPE). FAPE is one of the most important terms to know for your child. It ensures that she receives an education that is "appropriate"—it meets her individual needs.

FBA - Functional Behavioral Assessment¹

A process used to try to solve a child's behavioral challenges. It can uncover why a student is having behavioral issues by identifying social, emotional and environmental causes. The school then writes a behavior intervention plan (BIP), which outlines how to address the issues.

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act¹

IDEA is the federal law that guarantees the right to FAPE and the right to be educated in the least restrictive environment. IDEA serves students with disabilities in a number of other ways, too.

Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE)¹

This is different from an evaluation given by the school. Professionals who are not school district employees conduct IEEs. Parents sometimes request an IEE if they disagree with the results of the school's evaluation of their child. Sometimes the school requests an IEE when they don't feel they have the right experts to evaluate a specific issue a student might have. You have the right to request that the school pay for an IEE. Whether or

not the school ends up paying for an IEE, it has to consider the results.

IEP: Individualized Education Program¹

A legally binding document that spells out your child's educational goals, academic challenges and strengths. It describes how she's currently doing academically. It also lists when and where your child will receive special education services and accommodations.

IEP Team³

A group of people made up of education professionals, the student's parent, and others who have information about a student and his or her needs. Every student with disabilities must have an IEP Team that is responsible for creating and reviewing the student's IEP and determining where the services will be delivered.

Local Educational Agency (LEA)²

The local school district

LRE: Least Restrictive Environment¹

Means that students with disabilities have to be educated in the same setting as students without disabilities as much as possible. "Setting" refers to a general education classroom. For example, if your child has dyslexia or ADHD and needs specific supports and services to succeed in the general education classroom, the school has to offer those supports and services.

Mediation²

A free, voluntary process available to parents or guardians and the school to settle differences of opinion about special education services. Both parties participate in drafting and approving the agreement.

OSPI: Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction³

The state office that oversees school districts.

Present Level of Performance (PLOP)¹

If your child has an IEP, PLOP serves as the starting point, or baseline, for the coming year's IEP. It explains your child's academic skills (like reading level) and daily life skills (such as the ability to hold a conversation).

This plays an important role in setting annual goals for the IEP.

Positive Behavior Support (PBS)³

An approach to changing student behavior that interferes with learning that is focused on evidence based practices and positive outcomes for students. The goal of PBS is to increase a student's integration and access to their peers and the educational environment, and to prevent isolation, restraint or disciplinary actions for a student.

Prior Written Notice¹

A formal letter the school sends to parents. It's also a legal right under IDEA. Any time the school district denies, refuses or accepts an evaluation or change to special education services, it must give prior written notice. It explains what the school plans to do or refuses to do.

Related Services²

Any specially designed services that enable a child to benefit from special education instruction. Examples include assistive technology, transportation, and occupational, physical, or speech therapy.

Section 504 Plan³

A plan for providing services and program modifications necessary to meet the needs of students with disabilities who qualify for Section 504 accommodations. Section 504 is a federal anti-discrimination law that protects the rights of students with disabilities and provides for services and program modifications necessary to meet the needs of such students. It pre-dates IDEA and does not offer as many protections as IDEA. Some students may qualify for 504 plans even if they don't meet the requirements for special education services under IDEA.

Special Education³

Instruction that is specially designed to meet the individual needs of a child with a disability. Special education is paid for by the school district

¹ <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-rights/your-childs-rights-important-terms-to-know?view=slideview>

² <http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-a40.pdf>

³ http://oeo.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/manual_students_with_disabilities.pdf