

Glossary of Terms

Adaptive Physical Education (APE) - a service that assists children with motor activities such as balance and climbing.

Advocate/Advocacy - someone who takes actions to help someone else; also to take action on someone's behalf. Advocates may be family members, friends, regional center staff, independent evaluators or experts, legal representatives, or even the individuals themselves representing their own interests.

Assessment - testing and observation to identify the child's strengths, needs, and to monitor progress.

Audiological Services - services for evaluating and assisting children with hearing loss; provided by a licensed audiologist.

Autism or autism spectrum disorder (ASD) - a developmental disability characterized by unusual communication, social interaction, and restricted or repetitive behaviors, starting before age three.

Categorical Class - a type of specialized class that serves children who share a common disability.

Cerebral Palsy - a non-progressive disorder characterized by impaired movement and posture occurring in the first two years of life, and resulting from damage to neurons in the brain.

Cerebral palsy may affect only certain areas of the body; it may cause rigidity, spasticity, involuntary movement, low muscle tone, balance problems, or a combination of these.

Cognitive Skills - thinking skills, sometimes referred to as problem-solving skills.

Community Advisory Council (CAC) - a group of parents of children with special needs, students, members of the community, and special education professionals who advise the school district and school board about special education programs.

Communicatively Handicapped* (CH) - a term used to describe children whose major disability is in the area of speech and language.

Deaf Blind - a disability characterized by impairment in both vision and hearing.

Designated Instructional Services (DIS) - instruction and services that are necessary for the child to benefit educationally, for example adaptive physical education (APE) or speech services.

Developmental Disability - according to the Lanterman Act, a disability which originates before an individual attains age 18, continues or can be expected to continue indefinitely, and constitutes a substantial disability for the individual. Under the law, developmental disabilities include mental retardation, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, and other conditions closely related to mental retardation or requiring similar treatment.

Developmental Delay - a term used to describe the development of children when they are not able to perform the skills that other children of the same age are able to perform.

Due Process/Fair Hearing - method or process for resolving disputes between the agency responsible for securing services (may be the Local Education Agency or the regional center) and families. Due process includes informal meetings, mediation, and fair hearing procedures.

Epilepsy - a seizure disorder characterized by recurrent sudden episodes of loss of consciousness or movement problems. Types of seizures include partial, grand mal, petit mal, and infantile spasms.

Evaluation - a way of collecting information about a child's strengths and needs; also called assessment.

Extended School Year (ESY) - a related service that provides an additional session during summer to assist children in meeting the IEP goals.

Fair Hearing - a formal meeting held by an outside individual to resolve a disagreement about regional center services or a child's educational program.

Family Resource Center (FRC) - a center that is usually staffed by parents who have children with special needs. They provide information, training activities, and support to parents of children from birth to three years of age. Family Focus Resource & Empowerment Center is the FRC that serves our area.

Fine Motor Skills - skills involving hand use or the use of small muscle groups (i.e. scribbling, bead work)

Full Inclusion - generally means placement in the regular classroom, essentially 100% of the time, with the use of supplemental aides and services as necessary.

Goals - a list of skills and/or behaviors that you, the teacher and your child will be aiming for over the next year. They are based upon your child's needs.

Gross Motor Skills - skills involving the use of large muscle groups for example walking or running.

Head Start - is a federally funded preschool program that serves children from low income families to meet the child's educational, social, health, nutritional, and emotional needs. (10% of the class is reserved for children with special needs).

Hearing Impaired (HI) - a term used to describe children whose main disability is in the area of hearing.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) - a written document that is developed between the family and the service coordinator from the regional center when your child is between birth and three years of age.

Individualized Educational Program (IEP) - a written document that states the child's current level of educational performance, specifies annual goals and objectives, and identifies the appropriate services needed to meet those goals.

Informed Consent - a parent's written permission to assess and/or receive a special education program.

Inclusion - the use and participation by individuals with disabilities and their families of the same community resources which are utilized by non-disabled peers.

Integration - children with and without disabilities participating in community activities together.

Itinerant Teacher - a special education teacher, with support from speech and language specialist services, who works in a variety of classrooms and at different sites. Most itinerant teachers work at a variety of sites.

Language delay - a lag or slowness in the development of a child's ability to use or to understand language.

Learning Disability/Learning Handicap* (LD/LH) - a disability characterized by problems using language, remembering, concentrating, following instructions, reading, calculating or learning through listening or looking.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - children with special needs being educated to the maximum extent appropriate) with children who are not disabled.

Local Education Agency (LEA) - usually the local school district.

Mainstream - children with special needs spend as much time in a general education classroom as the parent(s) and professionals agree is appropriate

Mediation - a meeting of parents and school district personnel aimed to reaching an agreement regarding the child's educational program. This is also a part of the fair hearing process with the regional center.

Mental Retardation - significantly below average intellectual functioning, occurring prior to 18 years of age, and associated with impairments in adaptive behaviors such as communication, self-care, health and safety, and independent living skills. Must not be determined by IQ scores alone.

Multi-Agency Team - a group of individuals representing various agencies who meet and discuss a child's assessments and appropriate services The parent/legal guardian is a member of this team.

Multidisciplinary - a number of professionals from different disciplines (e.g., education, occupational therapy, nursing).

Multidisciplinary Team - under state law, refers to the involvement of two or more disciplines or professions, and the parent or guardian, in the provision of integrated and coordinated services, including evaluation, assessment, and IFSP development.

Multi-Handicapped* (MH) - when a child has two or more disabilities.

Objectives - describe the steps to be accomplished to reach your child's goal(s). Serve as a guide for planning and carrying out learning activities.

Occupational Therapy (OT) - a related service provided by a licensed occupational therapist who assists children with fine motor activities and everyday tasks like eating, dressing and hand use.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) - a related service provided by an orientation and mobility specialist who teaches children with visual impairments how to know their position in space and how to move safely from place to place.

Orthopedically Handicapped* (OH)/ Orthopedic Impairment (OI) - a disability characterized by difficulty getting around without adaptive equipment, (e.g., wheelchair, braces, etc.).

Physical Therapy (PT) - a related service provided by a licensed physical therapist who assists children with gross motor activities such as rolling, sitting and walking.

Parent Counseling/Parent Training- support or educational services for parents to assist their understanding of the special learning needs of their child.

Placement - the actual service that occurs after the IEP is written to meet the child's special needs.

Preschool - classes or specialized services that serve children ages three-to- five-years-old.

Program Specialist - a professional working for a school district special education department who is knowledgeable about educational programs to meet a child's special needs and is responsible for making sure that children receive needed available services.

Psychological Services - services which provide a school psychologist for the purpose of educational assessment of the child and also provide support for children and parents.

Receptive Language - recognition and/or understanding of what is heard.

Referral - a recommendation for assessment to determine if a specialized service is needed and at what level.

Related Services/Designated Instruction and Services - a term referring to those support services children may need in order to benefit from their educational program.

Resource Room - a special educational classroom for children who are in a regular classroom for more than half the day.

Reverse Mainstreaming - when children without disabilities go to the special education classroom to play and learn with children with disabilities.

Self-Contained Classroom - a special educational classroom where children receive instruction in all developmental and academic areas. Also called a Special Day Class.

Self-help Skills - a term relating to those skills associated with feeding, dressing and toileting.

Service Coordinator - as defined by law, the person responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring the child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), including securing services and supports, collecting and disseminating

information, providing advocacy, and revising the plan if necessary. With training and support, a family member of the individual may serve as service coordinator.

Severely Emotionally Disturbed (SED) - a disability characterized by behavior problems that prevent a child from learning or getting along with other people; the behavior must occur for a long period of time and be severe.

Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA) - each school district is either a SELPA or is a part of a SELPA. A SELPA is a combination of school districts and the county office of education, joined together to provide resources to meet the needs of students with special needs.

Special Day Class (SDC) - a classroom that is appropriate for children who would benefit from specialized services for over half of the school day.

Special Education - instruction that is adapted to teach children with special needs.

Speech/Language Therapy - related services provided by a remedial language and speech therapist or speech pathologist who helps children learn to communicate.

Transition Plan - a part of the IFSP which is done when a child is 2.6 years old. It is developed by you, your regional center service coordinator, public school personnel, and other members of your multi-agency team. It includes specific steps to help you and your child through the process.

Visual Handicap* (VH)/Visual Impairment (VI) - a disability characterized by a vision loss that affects a child's ability to learn.