

Commonly Used Terms

Accommodations: Teaching supports and services that the student may require to successfully demonstrate learning. Accommodations should not change expectations to the curriculum grade levels. Examples include, extra time for assignments or tests, the use of taped textbooks, study carrel, etc.

Alternative Assessment: Use of assessment strategies, such as performance assessment and portfolios, to replace or supplement assessment by machine-scored multiple-choice tests.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA): An intensive, structured teaching program. Behaviors to be taught are broken down into their simplest elements. These elements are taught using repeated trials where the child is presented with a stimulus. Correct responses and behaviors are rewarded with positive reinforcement. When incorrect responses occur, they are ignored and appropriate responses are prompted and rewarded.

Assistive Technology: Any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially, off the shelf, modified or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): A plan and/or strategies, program or curricular modifications, and supplementary aids and supports developed by a planning and placement team (PPT) to teach a child appropriate behaviors and eliminate behaviors that impede his/her learning or that of others. It should be positive in nature, not punitive.

BSE: Bureau of Special Education

CSDE: Connecticut State Department of Education

Evaluation: Tests and other assessment procedures, including a review of information, that are used to decide whether your child is eligible for special education services and what services your child may need.

Extended School Year (ESY): Special education and related services that are provided to a student: in accordance with the student's individualized education program (IEP); beyond the normal school year; and/or school day and at no cost to parents. The determination of the need for ESY services to a student is determined by the PPT on an individual basis.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): A federal law, enacted in 1984, that gives all parents of students under 18 or students over the age of 18 or attending post-secondary schools, the right to see, correct and control access to student records.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): Special education and related services that are provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; meet state and federal requirements, include preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education; and are provided according to an IEP.

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA): A FBA is an assessment that looks at why a child behaves the way he or she does, given the nature of the child and what is happening in the environment. It is a process for collecting data to determine the possible causes of problem behaviors and to identify strategies to address the behaviors.

Identification: The decision that a child is eligible for special education.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A written education program for a child with a disability that is developed by a team of professionals (administrators, teachers, therapists, etc.) and the child's parents; it is reviewed and updated at least yearly and describes the child's present performance, what the child's learning needs are, what services the child will need, when and for how long, and identifies who will provide the services.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): A child with a disability must, to the maximum extent appropriate, be educated with children who are nondisabled in the general education class in the school that he/she would attend if the child did not have a disability that required special education and related services. A child with a disability should not be removed from the general education setting unless the nature and severity of the child's disability is such that education in the general class with the use of supplemental aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

Manifestation Determination: When a child with a disability behaves in a way that violates the school's code of conduct and, as a result, the school seeks to change the child's education placement, a determination needs to be made as to whether the child's behavior is caused by the child's disability.

Modifications/Adaptations: Changes made to curriculum expectations in order to meet the needs of the student. Modifications are made when the grade level or age appropriate expectations are beyond the student's level of ability. Modifications may be minimal or very complex depending on the student performance. Modifications must be clearly acknowledged in the IEP.

Office of Civil Rights (OCR): A branch of the U.S. Department of Education that enforces several Federal civil rights laws (such as, Section 504) that prohibit discrimination in programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. These laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, national origin, gender, disability and on the basis of age.

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP): A division of the U.S. Department of Education dedicated to improving results for children with disabilities ages birth through 21, by providing leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts. OSEP administers the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA).

PJ Settlement Agreement: *P.J., et al. v State of Connecticut Board of Education, et al.* was filed in 1991 in federal district court on behalf of five school-age children with mental retardation and their families against, among others, the Connecticut State Board of Education and the State Commissioner of Education. The lawsuit was later certified by the court as a class action. The class is made up of all school-age children in Connecticut identified with the label of mental retardation/intellectual disability who are not educated in the general classroom. On May 22, 2002, a settlement agreement was approved by the federal court and five goals and outcomes were established.

Positive Behavior Supports (PBS): An approach to addressing challenging behaviors that includes functional assessment of the behavior, organizing the environment, teaching skills, rewarding positive behaviors, anticipating situations and monitoring the effect of interventions and redesigning interventions as necessary.

Planning and Placement Team (PPT): A group of professionals who represent each of the teaching, administrative and pupil personnel staffs and who, with the parents, are equal participants in the decision making process to determine the specific educational needs of the child and develop, review and revise a child's IEP. A planning and placement team reviews referrals to special education, determines if the child needs to be evaluated, decides what evaluations will be given to the child, and determines whether the child is eligible for special education services.

Prior Written Notice: An explanation why the school district proposes or refuses to take an action. The school must inform parents of any actions proposed or refused by the PPT, a description of other options that the PPT considered, an explanation why those options were rejected including assessment information used to make the decision. All this must be done in writing. In Connecticut, prior written notice is attached to the IEP. The proposed action cannot be implemented until five school days from the date the parents receive the notice.

Regional Education Service Center (RES-C): A Connecticut public educational authority formed by four or more boards of education for the purpose of cooperative action to furnish programs and services.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973: A federal civil rights statute that protects the rights of persons with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, which includes public schools.

Stay Put: The requirement that your child must stay in his or her current program or placement during the course of a due process hearing, unless you and the school district agree to a change.

Supplementary Aids and Services: Aids, services, program modifications, and/or supports for school personnel that are provided in general education classes or other education-related settings to enable students with disabilities to be educated with students who are nondisabled.

