

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEFINITIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Abbreviation/ Terminology	Definition/Meaning	Examples
504	A blueprint for supporting a student with a disability by removing barriers. It gives the student equal access to learning in the general education classroom. Students with 504 plans tend not to need specialized instruction (special education).	
Accommodations	This is a change to or in a student's learning environment. Accommodations help students learn and show what they've learned by removing barriers.	students who take longer to answer questions because of learning differences might be allowed extra time to take a test. Even with accommodations, students are expected to learn the same content as their peers.
Annual Goals	The IEP document lists the academic and functional (everyday) skills the IEP team thinks a student can achieve by the end of a school year. These goals are geared toward helping students take part in the general education curriculum. Goals need to be attainable and measurable.	
Assistive Technology (AT)	Any device, equipment, or software that helps students learn, communicate, and function better in school.	ranges from simple tools (like highlighters) to high-tech software (like apps that read text aloud)
Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)	A plan designed to proactively teach and reinforce positive behavior. Typically, the plan uses strategies to prevent and address behavior that gets in the way of learning. It may also have supports and aids for the student. A BIP is often included as part of an IEP. To get a BIP, a student must have a	
CPSE	Committee on Preschool Special Education	
CSE	Committee on Special Education	
Disability	A condition recognized by the law. To qualify for an IEP, students must have a disability that falls under one of the 13 categories listed in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Many students who learn and think differently are eligible in one of three categories: (1) specific learning disability; (2) other health impairment; and (3) speech or language impairment.	
Due Process	A formal process for resolving disputes about special education and IEPs. Due process isn't the only way to resolve a dispute.	
Extended School Year (ESY)	Special education services provided outside of the regular school year, such as during the summer or, less commonly, during extended breaks like winter break.	
Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)	Functional behavioral assessment (FBA) is a process schools use to figure out what's causing challenging behavior.	
General Education Curriculum	public education	
IEP	Individualized Education Plan An IEP outlines the program of special education instruction, supports, and services kids need to make progress and thrive in school. Some people refer to the written document that outlines this as the IEP (in which case p can stand for plan).	
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	The nation's special education law is a federal law that guarantees all students with disabilities access to a free, appropriate	
Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	This means they must be taught as much as possible in the same setting as peers who don't have disabilities. In most circumstances, schools must offer services and supports to help students with an IEP thrive in a general education classroom.	
Modification	A modification is a change in what a student is expected to learn and demonstrate. For example, a teacher might ask the class to write an essay that analyzes three major battles during a war. A student with a modification may only be asked to write about the basic facts of those battles.	
Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)	is a proactive, schoolwide approach used to promote positive behavior and improve school safety. PBIS creates a school culture in which all students learn about behavior and use a common language to talk about it.	
Progress Reporting	How a school reports on student progress on annual goals. This is specified in the IEP. Progress reporting needs to be provided as often as a school reports on progress in general education for all students.	
Related Service	Any support services a student needs to benefit from special education. One possible example is transportation. Another is occupational therapy.	
Response to Intervention (RTI)	is a systematic way of identifying struggling students and providing extra help. Teachers assess the skills of everyone in the class to see which students need evidence-based instructional interventions. Progress is monitored frequently to make sure students are getting the right support and intervention.	
Special Education	Specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of a student. It should be designed to give access to the general education curriculum. The instruction is provided at no cost to families.	
Supplemental Aids and Services	These are supports to help students learn in the general education classroom. They can include equipment or assistive technology, like audiobooks or highlighted classroom notes. They may also include training for staff members to help them learn how to work with students based on their specific needs.	
Transition Plan	This part of the IEP lays out what a teen will learn and do in high school in order to thrive as a young adult. The IEP team and the student develop the plan together before it kicks in at age 16. The transition plan includes goals and activities that are academic and functional. But they extend beyond school to practical life skills and job training.	

source: <https://www.understood.org/en/articles/iep-terms-to-know>