

GLOSSARY & ACRONYMS

Adaptive physical education – a physical education program designed to meet the special needs of a child with disabilities when the child cannot fully participate in the school's regular physical education program.

Advocacy – speaking or acting on behalf of yourself or your child to educate others, express concerns and to ensure the rights of your child to appropriate services and benefits.

Advocate – a person who speaks on behalf of himself/herself or others to ensure the right to appropriate services and benefits.

Annual goals – broad statements of direction and long-range goals of what the child might reasonably accomplish (educationally, physically and socially) within one year. Annual goals are included in an individualized education plan (IEP).

Arbitration – a process in which an outside party (the arbitrator) resolves a disagreement between parents and school personnel concerning a child's individual education plan.

Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act – a law that requires states to use 10 percent of federal vocational education monies to fund programs, services and activities for people with disabilities.

Chronic illness – an illness that lasts for a long time (months to years) or for life.

Department of Special Education – department that manages special education, including administering special education programs and assisting parents in arranging special education services. These exist within both state and local governments.

Due process – a formal procedure through which parents may resolve disagreements with school personnel regarding their child's individualized education plan.

Early identification – recognizing special needs that will affect a child's education as early as possible.

Early intervention – action that school and health personnel take to fulfill a child's developmental and special education needs.

Educational rights – the legal requirements that guarantee the provision of services and accommodations to meet the child's special needs in school.

Eligibility – determination whether a child is qualified to receive special education services and/or modifications according to specific education laws.

Evaluation/assessment of needs – formal process of testing and gathering information to determine if a child needs special education services or accommodations and, if so, the specific services the child needs.

Family Educational Rights And Privacy Act (FERPA) – a law that ensures a parent and/or student's access to the student's school records, but which protects those records from public access. Also known as the Buckley Amendment.

Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) – a child’s right to a free public education which meets his/her specific needs, as guaranteed by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) – a federal law that mandates special education services for children and youth with disabilities.

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) – a written document describing the special educational services a child will receive in school, the delivery of those services and the short- and long-term goals to be accomplished by the child through implementation of the plan. Mandated by IDEA.

IEP committee – a team that includes school and health care professionals, parents and student (if appropriate) that collectively develops an IEP to meet the student’s special educational needs. Certain committee members are required by IDEA, while other members are optional.

IEP review – the process by which a student’s individualized education plan is re-evaluated annually, or revised as needed, to ensure it meets the student’s changing educational needs.

Independent evaluation – a formal evaluation of a child requested by the parent(s) and performed by an independent evaluator in order to determine the child’s specific needs in school. Parents may request an independent evaluation if they disagree with previous evaluations of their child or if the school does not have a qualified person to perform the evaluation. The evaluation must be performed by a licensed psychologist, and may be performed at the school’s expense unless contested by the school.

Instructional plan – the portion of an IEP that states what a child will accomplish during the school year and how he/she will accomplish it.

Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP) – a written document prepared for a person eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. The document specifies the services to be provided, the recipient’s employment goals, and the recipient’s and vocational rehabilitation agency’s responsibilities in meeting those goals.

Juvenile ankylosing spondylitis – a type of childhood arthritis that affects the spine and large joints in the lower extremities (hips, knees).

Juvenile arthritis – a general (not medical) term for any type of arthritis occurring in a child who is age 18 or younger. The medical conditions include juvenile ankylosing spondylitis, juvenile dermatomyositis, juvenile idiopathic arthritis, systemic lupus erythematosus or any other rheumatic disease.

Juvenile dermatomyositis – a rheumatic disease that causes a skin rash, weak muscles and sometimes joint problems in children.

Juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA) – Formerly known as juvenile rheumatoid arthritis, this medical condition refers to arthritis that affects children. There are six types of JIA (systemic, oligoarthritis, polyarthritis, enthesitis-related arthritis, juvenile psoriatic arthritis and undifferentiated arthritis). They may affect joints, muscles, ligaments, eyes, skin and internal organs.

Local Education Agency (LEA) – term meaning a local school district.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) – an educational environment that meets a child's unique needs, while being as similar as possible to that of peers without disabilities. IDEA requires that students receiving special education must be educated in the least restrictive environment.

Mediation – a process in which an outside party (mediator) will assist parents and school (or other) personnel to resolve a disagreement concerning a child's individualized education plan.

Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team (MET) – the group of professionals that conducts a formal evaluation to determine a child's special educational needs. This team may be composed of school and health care personnel, including psychiatrists and/or psychologists.

Occupational Therapy or Occupational Therapist (OT) – a healthcare profession or a professional that helps people with disabilities perform activities of daily living customized to their unique needs and limitations. Occupational therapists can also provide assistive devices.

Protection and Advocacy Agencies (P&AA) – state agencies that provide information and support about state educational, health and social services and other programs. They provide legal and advocacy assistance to people with disabilities, including those with arthritis and related diseases.

Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) – a team of parents, community members, education and health personnel and others who provide information about special education to their local school system and/or special education department. This committee is not required by federal law, but may be required by some state laws. This committee might also be called a Community Advisory Committee or a similar name.

Parent Training and Information (PTI) Centers – a network of federally funded centers that provide advocacy and training for parents regarding educational rights.

Physical Education (PE) – a structured program within the school curriculum aimed at developing a child's physical coordination and skills, and teaching healthy-living habits.

Placement and services – the process by which school personnel and parents decide who, when, where, how and why special education services will be provided for a child.

P.L. 94-142 – Public Law 94-142, passed in 1975, guarantees a free appropriate public education for children with disabilities.

P.L. 94-482 – Public Law 94-482, also called the Vocational Education Act of 1976. An amendment to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 that mandates equal vocational education opportunities for persons with disabilities.

P.L. 99-457 – Public Law 99-457, an amendment to the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 that extends all rights and protections of P.L. 94-142 to disabled children ages 3 to 5, who are beginning the school year.

Physical Therapy or Physical Therapist (PT) – a healthcare profession or a professional who assist people who have disabilities or who are recovering from an injury by providing a variety of non-medicinal treatments to restore, maintain or improve motion, strength and endurance.

Range of motion (ROM) – the movements of a joint in various directions. Children with arthritis often have limited ROM and require therapeutic exercises to improve joint function.

Referral – the process by which parents request their child be evaluated for special educational services, or by which schools initiate an evaluation with parental permission.

Related services – services such as transportation, speech, occupational and physical therapy (among others) that may be provided to a child with a disability.

Rheumatic – general term used to describe diseases that involve inflammation of connective tissues, such as skin, muscle, bones and joints.

State Education Agency (SEA) – the agencies in state governments that oversee and implement policies and procedures concerning education, such as those related to 504 and IEP requirements and other provisions of IDEA. Also responsible for developing plans and policies to coordinate efforts between state and/or local agencies for educating children with disabilities.

Section 504 – the section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits discrimination on the basis of a disability and ensures that certain accommodations be made in schools for children with disabilities.

Short-term objectives – the specific, measurable steps taken to accomplish an annual goal. Short-term objectives are written in a child's individualized education plan.

Special education – a written, individualized educational program for students with physical, mental or emotional disabilities.

Systemic lupus erythematosus – a rheumatic disease that can affect the skin, kidneys, heart and lungs and that can cause joint problems. Although this disease usually strikes women in their childbearing years, it can also affect children and teenagers of both sexes.

Transition – the process of moving through different life stages, such as from one grade level to the next, from pre- to post secondary education or graduating from an educational environment to a working environment.

Vocational education – a school-based service that teaches high school students specific job-related skills during school hours.

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) – a community-based service through which disabled adults are trained in specific job-related skills and are assisted with job placement.