

Alphabet Soup: A Guide to Special Education Acronyms

ADA - Americans with Disabilities Act. A Federal Civil Rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in the areas of employment, public transportation, services provided by state and local government, services and accommodations offered by private businesses, and telecommunication access for people with communication impairments.

ACCOMMODATIONS – “Practices and procedures that provide student with disabilities equitable access during instruction and assessment in the areas of presentation of content, student response, setting for instruction, and schedule (MSDE 2019)”

ALTERNATE EDUCATIONAL FRAMEWORK – Standards for students with the most significant cognitive disability that are related to grade level content while restricted in scope or intensity.

ASSESSMENT - Tests given to a child by qualified professionals to determine the child's current academic levels in such areas as math, reading, and spelling.

BIP - Behavioral Intervention Plan (sometimes referred to as a Behavior Management Plan or a Behavior Support Plan). A BIP includes practical and specific strategies and positive supports designed to increase or reduce any behavior that impacts a student's learning or the learning of others.

CHILD FIND - Child Find requires all school districts to identify, locate and evaluate all children from birth to age 21 who are suspected to have disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities. It includes all children who live in the state including those who attend private school, public school, are home schooled, migrant and homeless children, and children who are wards of the state.

CHILD OUTCOME SUMMARY (COS) - A process used in Maryland to measure child outcomes. This process is done in order to meet federal accountability reporting requirements for all children receiving services through an IFSP or preschool IEP. Three outcomes are listed for children to become active, successful participants: positive social emotional skills, learning and use of knowledge and skills, and using appropriate behaviors to meet their needs.

COMAR - Code of Maryland Regulations issued by governing State agencies.

DEI/SES- Division of Early Intervention/Special Education Services. Provides leadership, accountability, technical assistance, and resource management to local school systems, public agencies, and stakeholders. Uses a comprehensive system of coordinated services to children and students with disabilities, birth through 21, and their families.

DUE PROCESS – A written complaint filed by the parent or public agency when consensus cannot be reached concerning a student’s identification, evaluation, placement and/or provision of FAPE

EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICES (EIS) - Various services provided by public and private agencies to support eligible children and their families to enhance a child’s potential for growth and development from age’s birth to three. For the extended option, it covers ages three through five until Kindergarten age.

ESY - Extended School Year services. Services provided to a student beyond the normal school year and at no cost to the family. ESY eligibility is an IEP Team decision

EVERY STUDENT SUCCEEDS ACT (ESSA) – Federal law signed in 2015 that governs the US Federal Education policy (K-12).

EQUITY IN EDUCATION – Student supports and services that are intentional, student/family-centered and applied differentially to ensure equal opportunity and outcomes. Equitable access for students with disabilities includes making content accessible, have activities that encourage student engagement and ensuring students can communicate their knowledge and skills (MSDE 2019).

FAPE - Free Appropriate Public Education. “A cornerstone of IDEA, our nation’s special education law, is that each eligible child with a disability is entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet the child’s unique needs and that prepares the child for further education, employment, and independent living” (<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/fapebrief-ref-list-fape/>)”

GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM - “...the curriculum that is based on a State’s academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled (OSERS, Nov 2015).”

IDEA - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. This is the name of the federal law that guarantees all children with disabilities the right to a free appropriate public education.

IEP – The “Individualized Education Program provides the diagnostic-prescriptive tool to implement specifically designed instruction (MSDE 2019).” The document describes what special education and related services your child is to receive.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) TEAM - This team must include; 1) the parent, 2) a regular education teacher, 3)a special education teacher, 4) a representative from the public agency (usually the vice principal or other administrator), 5) individual(s) who can interpret evaluation results,

6) individuals who the parent and/or school can invite who have special knowledge or special expertise related to the student, and, 7) the student who is 14 years old or older.

IFSP - Individualized Family Service Plan. A written plan to provide early intervention and other services to eligible children ages birth through three and their families. Includes services needed to develop the child and family's capacity to meet child's needs. Plan is developed by the family and professionals working together and is based upon assessments as required by law. In Maryland the IFSP can be extended until Kindergarten.

INFANTS & TODDLERS PROGRAM - This is the early intervention amendments to IDEA. It is the statewide program that requires services for children from birth to three years of age, including an individualized family service plan (IFSP) and case management services. Each county administers this program differently. Also called Part C.

LICC - Local Interagency Coordinating Council. A group of people representing all of the city or county level agencies that provides services to children. The LICC makes recommendations for residential school placements.

LEA - Local Education Agency. Each school district or independent charter may function as their own local education agency. Schools are a local education agency.

LMB - Local Management Board. Established to implement the Systems Reform Initiative, and functions to develop jurisdictional plans for the provision of services and to allocate resources.

LRE - Least Restrictive Environment. All children with disabilities have a right to be educated in the least restrictive environment, with supports and services, in which their IEPs can be implemented. This means that a child can be in a class with his/her non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible in which she/he can still learn.

LSS - Local School System (sometimes referred to as LEA - Local School System). Any of the 24 public, local school systems in Maryland responsible for educating your child.

MANIFESTATION DETERMINATION REVIEW- Decision whether challenging behavior is caused by, or had a direct and substantial relationship to the student's disability; or is the direct result of the schools failure to implement the student's IEP. A manifestation determination review may be required after a student has been removed from school as a disciplinary action.

MEDIATION - A confidential, voluntary process that allows parents and schools to resolve disputes without a formal due process hearing. This is the process of having a trained neutral person try to help parents and the school system reach an agreement. Both the school and the parent have to agree to mediation.

MSDE - Maryland State Department of Education. The state agency that is responsible for monitoring local education agencies and for making sure that these agencies follow state and federal laws.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY IFSP TEAM - A parent and two or more individuals from separate professions who help to coordinate services of an IFSP. One individual must be a service coordinator from an agency.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT – The home or other community places that are natural or typical for an infant, toddler, or preschooler to be. Applicable to IFSP participants.

PART B – Part B of IDEA includes children and youth ages three through 21 who receive special education and related services under federal law. Children, if eligible, transition from Part C to Part B.

PART C – Part C of IDEA is called the Maryland Infants and Toddlers Program and covers age's birth through three. It is a comprehensive statewide program of early intervention services coordinated by Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Each county coordinates services provided by education, health care, and social services agencies and private providers.

PERIODIC REVIEW - A review of the IFSP done every six months, or more frequently if needed, or at the family's request.

OT – Occupational Therapist. Can address a variety of needs including, but not limited to: sensory integration/processing, fine motor skills, feeding, attention, and self-help skills.

PT – Physical Therapy. Can address a variety of needs including, but not limited to: gross motor skills, safe navigation of the physical school environment, access to the learning environment, and maximizing independence.

PTI – Parent Training and Information Center. For the state of Maryland, it is The Parents' Place of Maryland.

PLAAFP – The section of the IEP that documents a student's **Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance**

PWN – Prior Written Notice. The school district must give you a written notice in a language you understand whenever the school district: 1) proposes to begin, change the identification, evaluation or educational placement of your child or the access of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE); 2) refuses to begin or change the identification, evaluation or educational placement of your child or access to FAPE. It must also include a description of the assessments used in deciding to propose or refuse the action.

SECAC – Special Education Citizens’ Advisory Council. Each county has a council that works with the special education system to address student needs. Made up of parents and LEAs, and other special education administrators who come together to discuss special education needs in their county.

SESAC –Special Education State Advisory Council. Was established under IDEA and are required by federal law. Responsible for improving the delivery of special education services for all students with disabilities in working with MSDE and DEI/SES.

SICC - State Interagency Coordinating Council. The SCC is made up of people from all of the state agencies that provide services to children.

SCREENING - Screening is the process of reviewing a child to see if he or she may have a disability and need extra supports to assist them in accessing their education. Extra supports may come in the form of special education services.

SEA - State Education Agency. The Maryland State Department of Education is the state education agency.

SECTION 504 - A civil rights law that prohibits any agency that gets federal money from discriminating against a person on the basis of disability. Makes sure that a child with a disability has equal access to education and receives accommodations and modifications.

SERVICE COORDINATOR/CASE MANAGER - An individual of the early intervention team who coordinates and facilitates the early intervention services and supports the family through the IFSPS process. This person demonstrates an understanding of special education laws.

SERVICE PROVIDER - An individual who works for a public or private agency to provide early intervention services for an eligible child and the family.

SPECIALLY DESIGNED INSTRUCTION (SDI) – “Adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability; and to ensure access to the general education curriculum (34 CFR 300.39 (b)(3)).”

SLP- Speech Language Pathologist. Can address a variety of needs including, but not limited to: articulation, language, fluency, feeding, and communication development to facilitate learning.