

§ — This symbol means “Section” as in § 300.7 Child with a disability” in the IDEA regulations

SAS — Supplementary Aids and Services

SB — Spinal Bifida

SE — Special Education

SEA — State Education Agency

SEAC — Special Education Advisory Committee

Section 504 — Section 504 of the Rehabilitations Act

SED — Serious Emotional Disturbance

SI — Sensory Integration

SLD — Specific Learning Disability

SLI — Speech/Language Impairment

SLP — Speech/Language Pathologist

TBI — Traumatic Brain Injury

TDD — Tele-communication Devices for the Deaf

TIEP — Transition Individualized Education Program

TS — Tourette Syndrome

TTY — Tele-typewriter (phone system for the deaf)

TWWIIA — Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act

VI — Visual Impairment

Voc. Ed. — Vocational Education

VPK — Volunteer Prekindergarten Education Program

VR — Vocational Rehabilitation

WIC — Woman Infant and Children Special Supplemental Nutrition Program

****Editorial Note****

In October 2010, Rosa’s Law was signed into law by President Obama. Rosa’s Law changed the term to be used in future to “intellectual disability.” The definition of the term itself did not change, only the use of “intellectual disability” instead of mental retardation

“Striving for complete integration and equality of people with disabilities in a society without barriers.”



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A Primer on Special Education Acronyms & Abbreviations

Understanding Alphabet Soup



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Greetings, and welcome to the world of Exceptional Student Education (ESE). As you participate in the ESE process, you will encounter unfamiliar languages and acronyms. The language is often referred to as Alphabet Soup. It may seem like a foreign language, but it is really just a language of initials.

These initials and acronyms are used in meetings, and it is assumed that everyone is familiar with the meaning. As a parent or self-advocate, if you are in a meeting and this occurs feel free to ask,

What does that term mean?

This brochure was designed to assist you in understanding the most common language used inside the alphabet soup. You can find definitions of these special education terms at www.fndusa.org

It might be helpful for you to read and study the contents of this brochure and the resources on our website before you attend a meeting for your child or yourself.

- AAC** — Alternative Augmentative Communication
- ABA** — Applied Behavioral Analysis
- ABC** — Antecedent, Behavior, Consequence
- ADA** — American with Disabilities Act
- ADD** — Attention Deficit Disorder
- ADHD** — Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- ADLs** — Activities of Daily Living
- ADR** — Alternative Dispute Resolution
- AIM** — Accessible Instructional Material
- APE** — Adaptive Physical Education
- APR** — Annual Performance Progress
- ASD** — Autism Spectrum Disorder
- ASL** — American Sign Language
- AT** — Assistive Technology
- AYP** — Adequate Yearly Progress
- BEES** — Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services
- BD** — Behavioral Intervention Plan
- CAPD** — Central Auditory Processing Disorder
- CBI** — Community Based Instruction
- CC** — Closed Captioning
- CERT** — Considerations for Educationally Relevant Services
- CF** — Cystic Fibrosis
- CP** — Cerebral Palsy
- DB** — Deaf-Blind
- DD** — Developmental Delay
- DS** — Down Syndrome
- EBD** — Emotional Behavioral Disorder
- ESE** — Exceptional Student Education
- ESOL** — English for Speakers of Other Languages
- ESY** — Extended School Year
- FAPE** — Free Appropriate Public Education
- FBA** — Functional Behavioral Assessment
- FC** — Facilitated Communication
- FERPA** — Family Educational Rights Privacy Act
- GE** — General Education
- GT** — Gifted and Talented
- HI** — Hearing Impaired
- HoH** — Hard of Hearing
- IA** — Instructional Assistant
- ID** — Intellectual Disabilities*
- IDEA** — Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- IEE** — Independent Educational Evaluation
- IEP** — Individualized Education Program
- IFSP** — Individualized Family Support Plan
- IHE** — Institute of Higher Education
- LD** — Learning Disability
- LEA** — Local Education Agency
- LEP** — Limited English Proficiency
- LRE** — Least Restrictive Environment
- MD** — Muscular Dystrophy
- MD or MH** — Multiple Disabilities or Multiply Handicapped
- MDR** — Manifestation Determination
- MTSS** — Multi-Tiered System of Support
- NIMAS** — National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard
- OCD** — Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder
- ODD** — Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- OHI** — Other Health Impairment
- OI** — Orthopedic Impairment
- OT** — Occupational Therapy
- PBIS** — Positive Behavior Intervention Supports
- PD** — Physical Disability
- PDD** — Pervasive Developmental Disorder
- PLEP or PLP** — Present Level of Educational Performance or Present Level of Performance
- PP** — Para-Professional
- PS** — Preschool
- PT** — Physical Therapy
- RDA** — Results-Driven Accountability
- RS** — Related Services
- RTI** — Response to Intervention