



Raise Your Hand

Special Education Acronyms Guide

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A

AAC	<i>Alternative and Augmentative Communication</i>	At its most basic level, AAC is anything that helps a person communicate when traditional spoken or written forms of communication don't meet that person's needs. AAC systems can range from "light tech" systems such as expanded use of natural gestures, sign language or pictures to speech generating devices like dedicated devices and iPads. (Jill E. Senner, Technology and Language Center)
ABA	<i>Applied Behavior Analysis</i>	Typically, a therapy used to target behaviors like communication and social skills through positive reinforcement. A therapist will first identify a goal behavior such as a task or communication attempt and reward the child with meaningful and individual reward such as praise, preferred toy or activity. ABA is a research based intervention for individuals with Autism and other intellectual disabilities. ¹
ADA	<i>Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)</i>	A federal law that prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life including: jobs, schools, transportation, and both public and private places open to the general public.
ADHD	<i>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</i>	A common neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by trouble paying attention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. Classroom accommodation, therapy, and medication can be helpful to children with ADHD. This disorder falls under the Other Health Impairment disability eligibility category.
AT	<i>Assistive Technology</i>	"An assistive technology device means 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 the functional capabilities of a child with a disability. (34 CFR 300.5) ... (34 CFR 300.6)" These supports range from low tech devices such as pencil grips and lined paper to higher tech devices like computerized technology and mobility aids.
AUT	<i>Autism</i>	An area of eligibility for special education describing a developmental disorder impairing verbal and nonverbal communication occurring usually before the age of 3. Individuals with Autism may also show repetitive and restrictive behaviors. For a student to qualify for special education services, it must be shown that the student's diagnosis of Autism adversely impacts their education, requiring specialized instruction.

¹ It should be noted that the Autistic Self Advocacy Network, a non-profit dedicated to empowering autistic people across the world to take control of their own lives and the future of their common community, advocates for schools to look beyond ABA therapy as a treatment of autism within school systems. They believe that ABA, with its repetition and long hours for very young children, can be abusive and is designed to make a person with autism appear "normal," and that school districts and society in general should accept neurodiversity.

B

BCBA	<i>Board Certified Behavior Analyst</i>	A specialist in behavior. They conduct Functional Behavior Assessments and Analyses to determine a student’s purpose in performing certain behaviors, and with that information, they develop a Behavior Intervention Plan (“BIP”).
BIP	<i>Behavior Intervention Plan</i>	A plan created following a Functional Behavior Analysis that is designed to decrease unwanted student behaviors and/or increase wanted student behaviors and is based on a student’s individual profile. A BIP is required after a Manifestation Determination Review only if the student’s behavior is determined to be a result of their disability.

C

CCSS	<i>Common Core State Standards</i>	Statewide learning standards for students in each grade. IEP goals must reflect the common core standard(s) it is targeting. Special education teachers must collect data on the student’s progress towards these common core standards.
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D

D-B	<i>Deaf/Blindness</i>	A student that has both visual and hearing impairments which results in communication, developmental, and educational challenges that would not be appropriately addressed in separate special education programs solely for students with either visual impairments or hearing impairments and requires specific special education to address both impairments.
DD	<i>Developmental Disability/Delay</i>	An area of IEP eligibility evidenced by a delay in physical, cognitive, communication, social, emotional, or adaptive development in a child usually from ages 3-9 that requires special education services in order to benefit from educational instruction. An example of DD includes Autism and Down Syndrome. It is often used when a student has delays requiring specialized instruction but the underlying basis for those delays remain unknown.
DHS	<i>Department of Human Services</i>	Statewide agency with services such as welfare, child care support, abuse and neglect reporting, food stamps, and medical assistance. DHS is involved in service connection during transition planning and support after exiting the school system including vocational training.
DLM-AA	<i>Dynamic Learning Maps Alternative Assessment</i>	An alternative standardized test available to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. These are typically students with an IQ below 55 and significant adaptive impairments. This is limited to 1% students with

		disabilities and reflects the progress of students with severe and profound disabilities in the school, district, and statewide accountability metrics. See: https://www.isbe.net/Documents/DLM_Participation_Guidelines.pdf
DR/ ODLSS Network Rep CPS	<i>District Representative/ CPS Special Ed Department Network Representative</i>	<i>(ODLSS - terminology used within Chicago Public Schools #299) acting as a District Representative</i> District person responsible for participating in IEP meetings when discussing placements. Required to attend in IEPs where transportation or an alternative school are being considered. DR/ ODLSS Network Representatives are responsible for monitoring special education.
DR	<i>District Representative (term used outside of CPS)</i>	The person who has the authority to make decisions on behalf of the school District. It can be anyone designated by the District -- a teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal, Case Manager, etc.
Dyslexia	<i>Dyslexia</i>	Dyslexia is a specific learning disability characterized by difficulty with fluent word recognition, spelling, and decoding during reading. Dyslexia is a common specific learning disability. ISBE Dyslexia Handbook

E

ED	<i>Emotional Disability</i>	This Eligibility category includes common conditions such as depression, anxiety, and other mood disorders. A child may be diagnosed with an emotional disability when they have a diagnosis of schizophrenia, show difficulty learning material not related to an intellectual impairment, show trouble building and maintaining relationships, show inappropriate behavior or feelings, show symptoms of depression, and/or develop fears related to personal or school problems over an extended period of time.
EL	<i>English Learner</i>	A student whose native language is not English determined by a home language survey. When a student who is an EL qualifies for special education under one or more of the IDEA disability categories, they have received adequate language support and instruction and failed to develop age appropriate native language skills and/or demonstrated low academic/behavior achievement, Special Education services must be provided in the student's native language with the assistance of a bilingual teacher.
ESY	<i>Extended School Year</i>	Summer school for students who are at risk for losing academic and functional progress. All students with disabilities must be considered for ESY annually. A student is eligible for ESY if they demonstrate one or more of the following: regression/recoupment, skills in the critical stage of development, and special circumstances.

ESL	<i>English as a Second Language</i>	A service provided to English Learners (EL) to help the student learn English. Provided to the student in addition to instruction of core subjects in the student's native language.
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F

FAPE	<i>Free and Appropriate Public Education</i>	A federal mandate saying students with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate education. FAPE places the financial responsibility of services on the school, not the family.
FBA	<i>Functional Behavior Analysis</i>	A consideration of why a behavior is occurring by looking at what happens before and after the behavior. A FBA should happen when the student has a challenging behavior and is required during the Manifestation Determination Review process when the behavior is determined to be a result of the student's disability. Parental consent is required for an FBA.
FERPA	<i>Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act</i>	A federal law protecting the privacy rights of students and their families. FERPA gives parents and students over 18 the right to review student records and request any inaccurate information be corrected. Parents must consent to release of student information. The IDEA's student record requirements incorporate the FERPA.
FIE	<i>Full and Individual Evaluation (aka Case Study Evaluation)</i>	An evaluation to see if the student needs special education services. Evaluations must be conducted in at least one area (health, vision, hearing, social/emotional status, general intelligence/cognitive functioning, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities) and must reflect the student's suspected disability. An FIE is conducted as an initial evaluation, within 60 school days of parental consent and during reevaluations every three years.

H

HHIP	<i>Home/ Hospital Instruction Program</i>	The school is responsible for providing services at home or the hospital for students who provide a doctor's certification ² that they have a medical or psychiatric condition that will cause them to miss 10 days of instruction consecutively or on an intermittent basis. Considered during the LRE portion of a student's IEP process. CPS must include a nurse and an ODLSS Home/ Hospital Manager in the decision. School Code states that homebound instruction should be a minimum of 5 hours a week. It also needs to be of a
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² CPS may ask for psychiatrist documentation in cases where a student with an emotional disorder is requesting HHIP. This is **NOT** required and a doctor's note is sufficient.

		<p>sufficient amount to keep the student caught up in their general education courses and to meet their IEP goals.</p> <p>CPS HHIP Form CPS HHIP Procedure</p>
HI	<i>Hearing Impairment</i>	A permanent or fluctuating hearing impairment that negatively affects the student's education but is not also included in the definition of Deafness.
HIPPA	<i>Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996</i>	HIPPA protects the privacy of an individual's health information and the right of the individual to access their health information and decide how to share their information. This is relevant to students who might have health concerns that need to be addressed at school by healthcare personnel, such as a classroom teacher and school nurse.

I

IAES	<i>Interim Alternative Education Setting</i>	<p>Students may be placed in an alternative education setting on a case by case basis as determined in an Manifestation Determination Review. A student may be removed from their school for up to 45 days regardless of if the behavior was determined to be a result of the student's disability if the student brings a weapon or drugs to school or if they cause serious bodily harm to another person on school grounds by an order from an ISBE hearing officer after a due process hearing. When the student is placed in an alternative setting, such as a therapeutic day school or residential treatment facility, the student must have access to services enabling general education progress and IEP goals.</p> <p>IDEA</p>
ID	<i>Intellectual Disability</i>	Area of eligibility for a student with significantly below average intellectual functioning AND deficits in adaptive functioning appearing during a student's development and negatively impacting their education.
IDEA	<i>Individuals with Disabilities Act (2004)</i>	Guarantees special education services and a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for all students with disabilities in their least restrictive environments (LRE).
IEE	<i>Independent Educational Evaluation</i>	<p>If parents disagree with the evaluation conducted by the school, they have the right to request an independent evaluation paid for by the school. Requests must be written to the CPS CEO and the district must provide a notice to convene an IEP meeting within 10 days of receipt of the IEE request. The district decides whether or not to provide the independent evaluation or go through due process to defend their evaluation. Parents may also seek out private evaluation at their expense, keeping in mind that the district must consider the private evaluation, but they do not have to accept it as having precedence over their own evaluation.</p>

IEP	<i>Individualized Education Plan</i>	A legal document that outlines the student’s unique learning needs, goals, supports, services and placement necessary for the student to access an education similar to those of the student’s general education peers. An IEP team consists of parents, general education teacher, special education teacher, an individual who can interpret evaluation results, a local school district representative, a speech language pathologist, if applicable, and an interpreter, if applicable. Other members can be included if necessary (this can include related service providers such as OT, SLP, PT, if applicable). The IEP must include the most recent evaluation of the student, current academic and functional achievement, annual goals, supports and services for the child and persons working with the child, and a statement of related services and placement. The IEP is updated annually and requires a reevaluation every three years, unless it is waived.
IHP	<i>Individualized Health Plan</i>	A section of the IEP for students with medical needs that is updated regularly and shared with all staff interacting with the student on a regular basis. The IHP should include information about the student’s symptoms, accommodations, medications, an emergency plan, prevention steps, emergency contacts, and cases where 911 should be called.
ISBE	<i>The Illinois State Board of Education</i>	The governing board with jurisdiction over school districts, including CPS, that sets educational policies and guidelines for public and private schools, preschool through grade 12, in the State of Illinois.
ISRA	<i>Illinois Student Records Act</i>	Illinois law that allows parents and guardians to request any record with the student’s name on it. This includes requesting relevant documentation before they are presented at an IEP because of the parent’s rights as an equal participant in the IEP. See: https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=1006&ChapterID=17
<u>ITP</u>	<i>Individualized Transition Plan</i>	Included in the IEP when the student turns 14.5 to help plan for life after high school focusing on vocational, independent living, and postsecondary education skills. The ITP includes statements and assessments on the student’s current academic and functional skills, goals for the student after exiting the school, the student’s planned coursework that enables them to meet their goals, and a coordinated set of activities such as any related services and instructional areas of need.

L

LEA	<i>Local Education Agency</i>	A term used within the IDEA to indicate a local school district. Within the State of Illinois, Chicago Public Schools is District 299 and is the LEA for Chicago.
LEA Rep	<i>LEA Representative</i>	A representative of the local school district who has the authority to make decisions on behalf of the District.

LRE	<i>Least Restrictive Environment</i>	This is the child’s classroom placement in the school as determined by the IEP team, AFTER the child’s goals, accommodations/modifications and related services have been written. The IEP team must start by considering placement in the general education classroom with any supports needed to succeed there. If that placement is determined to be inappropriate for the child, the IEP team must then consider the next placement that would be least restrictive. If a child is excluded from the general education classroom or activity at any time through their placement, the IEP team must provide an explanation. The goal of determining an LRE is to place a student, as much as possible and appropriate, with their general education peers with necessary supports and services to succeed. Note that each student’s LRE is dependent on their particular needs.
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M

MD	<i>Multiple Disabilities</i>	A combination of various impairments that negatively impact the student’s education and cannot be accommodated with just one special education program solely for a specific impairment. This does not include Deaf-Blindness.
MDR	<i>Manifestation Determination Review</i>	This IEP meeting must be called when a student shows a pattern of problematic behavior and is suspended for a total of 10 days, or when a student has been expelled (including emergency assignments to an Interim Alternative Education Setting (IAES)). The purpose of an MDR meeting is to decide if the behavior is related to the student’s disability or a result of failure to follow the IEP. If the IEP team decides either of these options are correct, then the student cannot be suspended and an FBA and BIP must be conducted. If the team decides that the behavior is <i>not</i> due to the student’s disability, the student may be subject to discipline by the school district similar to his/her general education peers.
MTSS	<i>Multi Tiered Systems of Support</i>	A more comprehensive general education intervention that addresses academics, as well as social/emotional challenges, including behaviors. The system includes 3 levels and incorporates data and progress monitoring. The levels are: (1) Universal Instruction using core curriculum and support for all students, (2) Additional Targeted supports provided for some students, and (3) Deep and Intensive supports focused on the individual student. MTSS is used to give all students the support needed to succeed and to identify students who are struggling and intervene quickly. CPS may require a student who is identified as struggling academically to go through MTSS and Response to Intervention (RTI) before considering special education eligibility. However, MTSS should NOT be used as a replacement for special education or as a reason to delay evaluation.

O

ODLSS	<i>Office of Diverse Learners Supports and Services</i>	CPS Special Education Department
OHI	<i>Other Health Impairment</i>	Limited strength, vitality, or alertness that negatively impacts the student’s education and is due to a chronic or acute health problem. Eligibility for special education for AD/HD typically falls here.
OLCE	<i>Office of Language and Cultural Education</i>	CPS department that oversees English Learner, Dual Language, and World Language programs.
OT	<i>Occupational Therapy</i>	A related service provided by a licensed Occupational Therapist that works with students to improve access to academic and functional skills, focusing on fine motor and sensory impairments. For a student to qualify for OT services, they must have a deficit in a motor and/or sensory development and need intervention to benefit from special education.

P

PAS	<i>Pre-Admission Screening</i>	An assessment for students in high school and transition age with developmental disabilities seeking home based support services. The PAS is conducted by an Independent Service Coordination (ISC) agency and results in placement on the Prioritization of Urgency of Need for Services (PUNS) waiting list based on the assessment.
PB(IS)	<i>Positive Behavioral Support or Positive Behavior Intervention and Support</i>	A possible accommodation for behavior in an IEP. A PBS would include student-specific rewards and reinforcers and a plan for implementing these rewards to encourage positive behavior. Some schools in CPS also use the term PBS to describe PBIS, a school-wide incentive program for all students.
PHY	<i>Physical Disabilities/ Orthopedic Impairment</i>	A severe physical impairment that negatively affects a student’s education. This can include congenital abnormalities, impairments caused by disease and other causes.
PLAAFP	<i>Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance</i>	A section of the IEP that describes how the student’s disability affects the student’s involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. This section includes the present level of performance in academic and functional skill areas and is based on relevant evaluations and assessments.

PT	<i>Physical Therapy</i>	A related service provided by a Licensed Physical Therapist that evaluates functional gross motor development of students. For a student to qualify for PT services, they must have an orthopedic or physical impairment that affects their posture, mobility, gross motor activities, and/or self care required for the student to benefit from special education.
PTSD	<i>Post Traumatic Stress Disorder</i>	A psychological condition resulting from a traumatic experience or event. Four main symptoms of PTSD include: intrusive thoughts, avoidance of reminders, negative thoughts and feelings, and arousal and reactive symptoms. A child with a PTSD diagnosis that impedes learning may fall under the special education eligibility category of emotional disability.

R

RS	<i>Related Services</i>	Services in the IEP to help the student to make progress. CPS related services include: Assistive Technology, Audiology, School Nurses, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Psychology, Social Work, School Speech Language Pathology, paraprofessional support and transportation services.
RSPs	<i>Related Service Providers</i>	Specialists that provide additional therapy and work with the IEP team to help the student make progress. Examples of Related Service Providers include: Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Pathologists, Social Workers, Physical Therapists, Vision/ Hearing Specialists, paraprofessionals and bus aides.
RTI	<i>Response To Intervention</i>	The data collection and progress monitoring of students after an intervention to determine the success of the intervention and if there are additional academic needs. Criteria for RTI should be set individually based on the skill being assessed, the gap in the student's ability, the time needed to close the gap, and the student's age and developmental level. RTI requires data collection and conference with the parent. RTI is NOT to be used as a replacement for special education and if a student is not referred for a special education evaluation after the student receives the highest level of RTI (Tier 3) without achieving targeted gains, the school may be found in violation of their IDEA Child Find duties. ³ ISBE RTI SPED Eligibility guidance

³ It should be noted that if a parent requests a Full Initial Evaluation for suspected disability and the district agrees, the district can still simultaneously provide MTSS and RTI interventions during the 60-day evaluation window and use data gathered in that process to help inform the type of supports and services needed when developing the IEP.

S

SCC	<i>Student Code of Conduct:</i>	A district wide handbook outlining the student and schools’ responsibilities, rights and rules. A student may be punished if they violate the Student Code of Conduct.
SEA	<i>State Education Agency</i>	A term used within the IDEA to indicate the state-level governmental agency that oversees education within the state. The Illinois State Board of Education is the SEA for Illinois.
SEA Rep	<i>State Education Agency Representative</i>	An individual representing the state education agency with knowledge of State-level policies and procedures for oversight of special education services within the state.
SECA	<i>Special Education Classroom Assistant</i>	A person on staff at a school who provides individual adult support to students who require such support within the school day, based on the student’s IEP. A SECA assists the special education teacher with classroom activities, collecting data, and should have access to ongoing training in supporting students with disabilities. Must be licensed by ISBE. Academic instruction must be provided under the supervision of a certified teacher.
Section 504	<i>Referring to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act</i>	Protects individuals with disabilities against discrimination in any program that receives federal funding. This includes the school district but also applies to other programs outside of education. In the context of schools, Section 504 applies much more generally to disability than IDEA. If a student is eligible, they may receive a 504 plan from the school which details what the school will do to make sure that the student’s disability is not a barrier to their education. A 504 plan is different from an IEP in that some disabilities covered by 504 are not eligible for an IEP like temporary disabilities and some health impairments. While protected from discrimination due to disability, students with a 504 receive less protection than an IEP. For example, students with a 504 are not entitled to evaluations, an IEP, or due process in the case of a disagreement with the district.
SEL	<i>Social Emotional Learning</i>	An area of assessment and possible need that is addressed through IEP goals, placement, and related services such as social work. SEL is also a statewide requirement that is addressed schoolwide with implementations such as Multi Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS).
SETT	<i>Student Environment Task Tools</i>	An assessment used to determine appropriate Assistive Technology services and devices that considers the students’: (1) cognitive strengths and weaknesses; (2) physical and instructional work environment; (3) curriculum objectives; and (4) the tools that would be appropriate and suited to a student,

		given their needs and ability to perform the tasks in these specific environments.
SLD	<i>Specific Learning Disability</i>	An eligibility category for special education which includes a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using spoken or written language, resulting in the inability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. Conditions can include: perceptual disabilities, brain injuries, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
S/LI	<i>Speech or Language Impairment</i>	A special education eligibility category describing any communication disorder including stuttering, impaired articulation, a language or voice impairment that negatively impacts a student's education. This can be articulation, receptive, expressive and/or pragmatic language.
SLP	<i>Speech Language Pathology</i>	A related service for students with a communication deficit.
<u>SOP</u>	<i>Summary of Performance</i>	A document summarizing the student's academic and functional skills, accomplishments, and recommendations for accommodations in future settings such as employment. These are included in the transition plan for students who are graduating with a regular diploma, or aging out of special education.
SSCA	<i>Student Specific Corrective Action</i>	A remedy proposed by Illinois State Board of Education to provide education services or reimbursement for certain costs related to CPS' systemic delays and denials of certain services in the 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 school years.
SSM	<i>Student Services Management</i>	The digital IEP reporting system. It is the job of the administrator to upload all information and documentation related to a students' IEP into the SSM.

T

TBI	<i>Traumatic Brain Injury</i>	A special education eligibility category that is caused by an injury to the brain by an external physical force resulting in at least a partial functional or psychosocial disability negatively impacting a student's education. Impairments include: cognition, language, memory, attention, reasoning, abstract thinking, judgement, problem solving, sensory, perceptual, motor, psychosocial behavior, physical functioning, information processing, and speech. This disability category does not apply to congenital or deformative injuries or those resulting from birth trauma.
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U

UER	<i>Universal Enrichment Remedy</i>	CPS' term for an automatic eligibility for SSCA for specified students.
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V

VI	<i>Visual Impairment</i>	An eligibility category for special education that includes any type of sight impairment that cannot be corrected with glasses, that negatively affects education.
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