



Making Sense of Alphabet Soup

Definition Cheat Sheet for Youth and Parents on the Special Education Process

PATHFINDER SERVICES OF ND

Term	Acronym	Definition
504 (Section 504)	504	The Rehabilitation Act - Section 504 is a federal law designed to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities in programs and activities that receive federal funding.
504 Plan		A plan developed by a team to ensure that a child who has a disability (identified under the Rehabilitation Act) receives accommodations that will ensure their academic success, and access to the learning environment. These accommodations must ensure that there is no discrimination because of the child's disability.
Accommodations		Accommodations are supports or services provided to assist a student to access the general curriculum.
Adaptations		Changes in educational environments that allow students with disabilities to participate in inclusive environments by compensating for learners' weakness.
Age of Majority		Age at which a student gains the right to make his or her own decisions, including those related to education. In North Dakota, that age is 18.
Americans with Disabilities Act	ADA	Federal civil rights law which protects people with disabilities at work, school and in public places.
Annual Review		IDEA requires that students with disabilities have their individualized educational program (IEP) reviewed at minimum yearly.
Assessment		Evaluation used to identify a student's strengths, weaknesses, and progress. These tests are designed to provide an overview of a child's academic performance, basic cognitive functioning and/or his or her current strengths or weaknesses, they can also test hearing and vision. Assessments can consist of informal and formal observations and tests. IDEA provides 60 days to complete an evaluation from the time a parent gives permission.
Assessment Plan		A written description of the assessments that will be used to evaluate a student's strengths, weaknesses and progress, to determine his/her eligibility for special education services and the types of services that would help that student succeed.
Assistive Technology	AT	An item or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability.

Term	Acronym	Definition
Augmentative and Alternative Communication	AAC	A means of communicating ideas and feelings that does not involve speaking. Examples include sign language, pictures, mobile devices, and speech-generating devices.
Behavior Management		Responding to, preventing and de-escalating disruptive behavior.
Behavioral Health Plan	BIP	A plan designed to increase (reinforce) positive behaviors and decrease problem behaviors. This plan is developed by reviewing the results of a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA).
Behavioral Therapist		A professional who treats people with mental health disorders, helping them change their behaviors or their reactions to certain situations. Behavioral therapists treat patients with a range of conditions and in a variety of age groups, often beginning in childhood.
Benchmark		A major milestone that allows parents, students and educators to monitor process.
Child Find Program		A program mandated by IDEA that continuously searches for and evaluates children who may have a disability. These programs can vary widely from district.
Due Process		A written complaint that can be filed by families if they are in disagreement with the identification, evaluation, educational placement or other aspects related to Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE).
Early Childhood Special Education		Activities and/or experiences that are intended to produce developmental progress in children prior to entry into elementary school.
Early Intervention	EI	System for providing early intervention services for infants and toddlers, birth through age 2, with a developmental delay or disability. This program includes support to parents to help their children learn and grow.
Emotional Disturbance	ED	A mental health issue including, but not limited to, anxiety disorders, bipolar disorder, conduct disorders, eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and psychotic disorders.
Extended School Year	ESY	Extended School Year may be a service provided in students' IEP. The purpose of ESY is to prevent serious regression of previously learned skills on the IEP.
Facilitated IEP		A facilitated IEP team meeting is one that includes an impartial facilitator. The facilitator is not a member of the IEP team, but rather is there to keep the IEP team focused on developing the child's program while addressing conflicts as they arise.

Term	Acronym	Definition
Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act	FERPA	Federal law that provides parents the right to have access to their children's education records, the right to seek to have records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records.
Free Appropriate Public Education	FAPE	Special education and related services that are free and appropriate for a student's unique needs, guaranteed under IDEA.
Functional Behavior Assessment	FBA	A process to help understand a child's problem behavior(s).
Goals		Goals are the key reference points in the IEP process. They describe the performance to be achieved by students within a year time frame. The goals for students are individualized and based on their needs.
Head Start		A Federally funded program that provides comprehensive early childhood education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and families.
Independent Education Evaluation	IEE	An evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner who is not employed by the school district responsible for the education of children. Families may request an IEE if they have concerns regarding evaluation completed by the school district.
Individualized Education Program	IEP	The written program is designed to help develop specific educational goals for students with disabilities. It identifies the disability, describes the students' strengths and areas of needs; it lists goals that student should reach in a year's time; includes shorter instructional objectives that represent a series of skills to master or goals to accomplish; and, identifies programs and services, including regular education, that the child will receive. The IEP is reviewed each year. From 16 on, the IEP will also address transition needs and services.
Individualized Family Service Plan	IFSP	A written document that outlines the early intervention services that your child and family will receive.
Individualized Health Plan	IHP	A document that outlines necessary services to address a student's health needs at school. An emergency health plan may be included if determined necessary by the team.
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act	IDEA	Federal special education law.

Term	Acronym	Definition
Informed Consent		Signed consent of a parent that describes what the parent is consenting to, informed consent must be obtained before a district assesses, makes a major revision to a child's program, continues, or stops service for a child's disability.
Interventions		Sets of teaching procedures used by educators to assist students who are struggling with a skill or lesson in the classroom.
Least Restrictive Environment	LRE	The environment in which a child receives appropriate supports and services while learning with nondisabled peers.
Mediation		A process in which a mediator helps to resolve a dispute between a parent and school district over a child's special education program. Mediator is a neutral person who assists team to arrive at mutually satisfactory agreement.
Modification		Changes made to the context and performance standards for students with disabilities. It changes the playing field for a student.
North Dakota Department of Public Instruction	NDDPI	The education agency in the state of North Dakota.
North Dakota Multi-Tiered System of Supports	NDMTSS	A framework to provide all students with the best opportunities to succeed academically and behaviorally in school. The focus is on providing high-quality instruction and interventions matched to the student needs, monitoring progress frequently to make decisions about changes in instruction or goals.
Occupational Therapist	OT	A supportive service provided to help students with disabilities in special education. OT addresses the physical, cognitive, psychosocial and sensory components of performance. In schools, OTs focus on academics, play and leisure, social participation, self-care skills.
Office of Special Education	OSEP	The Office of Special Education Programs is a unit within the U.S. Department of Education provides leadership, oversight and financial support to State Education Department Special Education Units and State Parent Training & Information Centers.
Outcomes		Short-term goals that are a critical component of an Individualized Family Service Plan. They must be relevant, specific and measurable.
Positive Behavioral Supports		An approach to eliminate challenging behaviors and replace them with pro-social skills.

Term	Acronym	Definition
Present Level of Performance	PLOP	The present level of performance describes the student's academic achievement, functional performance, and how their disability affects their involvement and progress in the classroom. It also looks at the students' strengths and needs.
Procedural Safeguards		A set of requirements that go across the laws and regulations of IDEA to protect the rights of children with disabilities and their families, particularly in regard to the access to FAPE.
Related Services		Related services mean; transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. These include: speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. Related services also include school health services and school nurse services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training.
Specially Designed Instruction	SDI	Specially designed instruction means adapting to the needs of an eligible child through content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of a child that results from the child's disability and to ensure the child has access to the general curriculum. So that he or she can meet the educational standards.
Speech Language Pathologist or Speech Therapist	SLP	A professional who assesses, diagnoses, treats, and helps to prevent communication and swallowing disorders in patients.
"Stay Put" Law		A law which states that a parent can request that a child remain in his or her current educational placement while an IEP or offer of FAPE is in dispute.
Supplementary Aids and Services		Supplementary aids and services are intended to improve children's access to learning and their participation across the spectrum of academic, extracurricular, and nonacademic activities and settings. The IEP team must determine what supplementary aids and services a child will need and specify them in the IEP.
Transition/Transition Plan		Transition is a general term used to describe a change in a student's school or program. A transition plan is specific to an IEP. In North Dakota, students at age 16, if not earlier must have a transition plan and goals in place which outlines how he/she will transition to life beyond high school.