

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SPECIAL EDUCATION

1. What is special education?

Special education means "specially designed instruction" to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability. The special education process is explained in more detail in A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards). Before a child is referred for special education services, there are many general education resources that should be considered first. If you have questions about these general education resources, please discuss them with the staff at your child's school.

Tip for Parents: General education resources may include classroom modifications, accommodations, interventions, Student Success Team, categorical programs, etc.

2. What are the steps in the special education process?

There are 4 basic steps in the special education process:

1. Referral for Assessment—Parents or teachers can refer students to be assessed for special education services. If your child is referred, you will receive an Assessment Plan to review and sign if you consent to assessment. The Assessment Plan describes the purpose of the assessments, the types of assessments, and who the assessors will be.

2. Assessment—Assessment involves gathering information about your child. It could include tests, observations, interviews, work samples, and/or school records. The results of these assessments will be used to help determine if your child needs special education services. If you disagree with the school's assessment of your child, you may provide an independent educational evaluation (outside expert's report) to the IEP team.

3. Development and Implementation of the IEP

4. IEP Review

Your child may have difficulties that interfere with his/her ability to go to school or to learn. These difficulties may be in one of these general areas:

Speech and Language Development	Some children may have a very difficult time learning to speak clearly and/or understanding what is said to them.
Vision Problems	Some children may have great difficulty seeing objects and/or printed words even though they may already be wearing glasses.
Hearing Problems	Some children may have difficulty hearing and/or distinguishing sounds and voices, even with hearing aids.
Physical Development	Some children may have trouble learning to walk, move or work with small objects.
Academic Development	Some children may have great difficulty learning to read, write or do arithmetic. Young children may have trouble with pre-school skills such as learning shapes and colors.
Thinking/Memory Skills	Some children may have more difficulty than others in remembering what they see or hear. As a result, it may be a challenge for them to solve problems in daily living or schoolwork.
Attention/Perception Skills	Some children may have difficulty processing or understanding information. As a result, it may be hard for them to pay attention or follow directions.
Social/Emotional Development	Some children may have trouble managing their feelings and/or behavior. They may find it very difficult to get along with others. It may be hard for them to make friends or to cope with changes in their lives.
Living Skills	Some children may be challenged by day-to-day activities such as dressing, feeding themselves or taking care of their basic health and grooming needs.
Other Health Conditions	Some children have serious or chronic medical conditions that may interfere with school attendance or learning.

4. What should I do if I believe my child needs special education?

Call your local public school for assistance. If your child needs assessment for special education services, you will be asked to give permission for the assessment in writing.

5. What should an assessment cover?

The student is to be assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability including, where appropriate, health and development, vision (including low vision), hearing, motor abilities, language function, general ability, academic performance, self-help, orientation and mobility skills, career and vocational abilities and interest, and social and emotional status. A developmental history should be obtained, when appropriate.

6. How can I contribute to the assessment process?

As a parent, you know your child best. You can contribute by observing your child at home, noting the areas of educational concern to you, writing them down, and pointing out those areas to school personnel. After you receive the assessment plan, you should review it carefully to determine whether you want additional information about the proposed assessments and/or want to request additional areas that need assessment.

7. Does the school need my consent to assess my child?

Yes the school must request in writing your consent to assess and evaluate your child. This request must state what particular test will be used to evaluate your child and any other informal or formal assessment tools may be used. If you consent to the testing, the school will provide in writing when the testing will be done and by whom.

8. Who conducts the assessment?

Trained personnel must administer each test in the assessment in conformance with the test producer's instructions. The law requires that persons knowledgeable about the disability being assessed and competent to perform the assessment conduct it. Further, these persons must be competent in both the oral and written skills of the student's primary language or mode of communication, and must have knowledge and understanding of the student's cultural and ethnic background. California regulations require the use of an interpreter when necessary. Assessments may be conducted by teachers, school psychologists, related services providers, and a credentialed school nurse.

9. How long will the assessment for special education take?

When school is in session, the District must respond in writing to your request for an assessment within fifteen (15) days. If the District determines that assessments are necessary, you will be asked to sign an Assessment Plan. If the District determines that assessments are unnecessary, you have the right to appeal. Once the District has received your signed Assessment Plan, the assessment must be completed and the results shared with you at an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting within sixty (60) days.

10. What will happen with the results of my child's assessment?

Information gathered from the tests conducted on your child will determine if your child is eligible for special education services and if so what areas of learning will be affected by the identified disability. This information is then used to develop the IEP (Individual Education Program).

11. What can I expect at an IEP team meeting?

You will be invited to an are an important member of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting which will be held to share the results of your child's assessment and determine if your child has special needs which make him or her eligible for special education services. If your child is eligible, the IEP team will develop an IEP that will describe the services and programs that your child may need. If the District determines that your child is not eligible, you have the right to appeal that decision.

12. How can I find out more about my child's rights and my rights as a parent?

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) children with disabilities have a right to public education designed to meet their unique needs. To find out more about your child's rights, ask for a copy of the school district's publication, A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services, at your local public school or office. This booklet provides detailed information about your protections under the law.

13. What is the purpose of an IEP team meeting?

The purpose of an IEP meeting is to develop a written document describing your child's educational needs. If the IEP team determines at the IEP meeting that your child needs special education services, the IEP document will describe those services.

14. How often is an IEP team meeting held?

Generally, IEP meetings are held at the following times:

Initial IEP—The first IEP meeting is held to determine if your child needs special education services and what those services should be.

Annual review of the IEP—An annual IEP meeting is held to review the progress of your child each year.

Three-year review of the IEP—A more thorough review of your child's progress occurs every three years.

Tip for Parents: Once your child has an active IEP, you may request an IEP meeting at any time. The meeting is to be held within 30 days of your written request.

15. What are the important timelines for IEP team meetings?

15 days—Within 15 days after your written request for a special education assessment is received by the District, the District must develop an Assessment Plan. You will receive the Assessment Plan from your child's school.

60 days—After you sign the special education Assessment Plan allowing assessment of your child, an IEP meeting must be held within 60 calendar days from the date the District receives your signed consent (school breaks lasting more than 5 days are not included in the 60 days).

30 days—If your child already has an IEP and is not making satisfactory progress, or for any other reason, you or a school staff member may request an IEP meeting before the regularly scheduled review date. The meeting must be held within 30 calendar days (excluding school breaks over five days) of the receipt of the request.

30 days—Students new to the District, who receive special education services, must have an IEP meeting held within 30 days.

16. How are parents notified about the IEP team meeting?

School staff will hold the IEP team meeting at a date and time agreeable to you and to the other participants in the IEP team meeting. You will receive a Notification to Parent/Guardian to Participate in Individualized Education Program Meeting form to be signed by you and returned to the school. The notification form contains information about the following:

- *When and where the IEP meeting will be held.*
- *The purpose of the IEP meeting.*
- *Whether you will or will not be able to attend.*
- *If you would like an interpreter.*
- *If you would like an independent educational evaluation (outside expert's report) of your child to be considered.*
- *If you would like to reschedule the IEP meeting.*

17. What if I can't make the time/date the school scheduled for my child's IEP?

The school is obligated to notify you well enough in advance of the meeting so that you can attend (and at a convenient location). If you cannot make the meeting, you can ask the school to reschedule it, and they must reschedule it so that you can attend.

You will be asked to answer the items on the notification form, sign, and return the form to your child's school.

Tip for Parents: If you are unable to attend the IEP meeting, you may call your child's school to change the meeting, or to arrange for your participation in the meeting over the telephone. If you would like

the meeting to proceed without you, a staff member from your child's school will review the team decisions with you before you sign the IEP. It is the CAC's recommendation that families attend all IEP meetings. It is better to reschedule so you may participate than to leave important decisions up to others without you being present to provide important information to the team. You have valuable insights and information about your child's strengths and needs, and ideas for enhancing your child's education.

18. Where are the IEP team meetings held?

The IEP team meeting will be held in an appropriate setting (usually at your child's school), where there is privacy, sufficient space, and seating for all team members.

19. What are District responsibilities do District have in preparing for an IEP team meeting?

The IEP team administrator is responsible for:

- *Arranging for a translator or an interpreter, if you have requested one.*
- *Ensuring that District IEP team members are invited and attend.*
- *Ensuring that school staff attends the meeting and presents the results of assessment reports and information about your child's present level of performance. These will serve as the basis for the IEP discussion and development of goals and objectives.*

20. How can I prepare for an IEP team meeting?

If you want to audiotape record the IEP meeting, you must notify the school in writing at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

- *Review the booklet *A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards)*.*
- *Make a list of your child's strengths and any concerns you have about your child's educational progress.*
- *Review your child's previous IEP (if your child already has an IEP).*
- *Visit your child's current educational placement.*

Tip for Parents: You may bring any outside experts' reports for the IEP team to review.

21. What happens during a typical IEP team meeting?

Every IEP meeting is different, because each meeting is based on the individual needs of each child. However, most meetings proceed as follows:

- *The IEP team participants introduce themselves, and the purpose of the IEP meeting is stated. If an interpreter or translator is used, procedures for taking turns will be explained.*
- *A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards) is given to you and summarized for you.*
- *Your child's assessment reports, teacher reports, and progress reports are discussed. In general, the discussion will concern how your child is doing.*
- *You may want to talk about your concerns and expectations for your child.*
- *The goals and objectives from the previous IEP are reviewed and discussed, unless it is the first IEP meeting for your child. If so, your child's eligibility for special education services will be discussed*
- *New goals and objectives are developed for your child on the basis of his or her needs.*
- *Current or proposed related services and modifications are discussed.*
- *Your child's educational placement is discussed and decided upon.*
- *The IEP is reviewed, summarized and finalized by the IEP team.*
- *Copies of the IEP are distributed.*
- *Follow-up activities are decided upon.*

Tips for Parents: Remember, at any point during the IEP process, you are encouraged to ask questions if you have any concerns or do not understand.

You may wish to have the IEP translated before you review and sign it. Remember that you can sign to show you participated in the meeting, but you don't have to agree to the goals or services at the meeting. You can take the IEP home to review, get input, and return later.

Remember: Any change to the IEP document requires your written consent.

22. Who participates in the IEP team meeting?

Many people come together to develop your child's IEP. This group is called the IEP team and includes many of the individuals who were involved in your child's evaluation. Team members will include:

- *You! And if appropriate:*
- *A special education teacher*
- *Your child, if they are age 16-22, or earlier, if appropriate*
- *An administrator or representative who is qualified commit resources*
- *Other District staff*
- *Others of your choosing including a representative of the public agency (school system) who*

- a) *is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education,*
 - b) *knows about the general curriculum; and*
 - c) *knows about the resources the school system has available;*
- *A general education teacher (if your child is or maybe participating in the general education setting)*
 - *An individual who can interpret the evaluation results and talk about what instruction may be necessary for your child*
 - *Representatives from any other agencies that may be responsible for paying for or providing transition services (if your child is 16 years or, if appropriate, younger)*

Tip for Parents: You may wonder why the general education teacher is attending your child's IEP team meeting. The law states that your child must be educated in the general education setting in the least restrictive environment to the maximum extent appropriate. The general education teacher is important in helping to determine any accommodations, modifications, or other instructional strategies that can be implemented in the general education classroom to help meet your child's needs.

23. Can IEP team members be excused from the team meeting?

A member of the IEP Team may be excused from attending an IEP meeting if both you and the district agree in writing that this Team member's area of curriculum or related service is not being modified or discussed at the meeting.

Also, a Team member may be excused from the meeting due to a scheduling conflict only if you and the district agree in writing and that Team member submits written input into the development of the IEP to you and the Team prior to the meeting.

If you believe that the Team member is needed at the meeting, you may ask to reschedule.

24. What information does the IEP contain?

- *General information about your child—name, address, birth date, etc.*
- *Your child's present level of educational performance, including how your child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.*
- *A statement about your child's eligibility and, if your child has a specific learning disability, how the disability was determined.*
- *The annual goals and objectives the IEP team develops for your child, including how those goals and objectives will be measured.*
- *If your child is eligible, a statement about the kinds of special education and related services (see question and answer 11 for a brief explanation of related services) your child will receive to help him or her achieve those goals and objectives, including specific placement and necessary program modifications and supports.*
- *How often, when and in what setting your child's special education services will take place.*

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- *How your child will participate in the general curriculum and in activities with non-disabled peers outside the classroom.*
- *How your child's progress will be monitored and measured, and how you will be informed about the progress.*
- *How your child will take part in state and District wide tests, or how your child's progress will otherwise be measured.*
- *Whether your child has any behaviors negatively affecting his or her academic success.*
- *How decisions about your child's promotion to the next grade level will be determined.*
- *If your child is 14 years old or older, an Individual Transition Plan (ITP) will be part of the IEP to describe the kind of planning or services your child will need as he or she plans for adult life.*

Tip for Parents: The IEP contains very important information about your child. Be sure you feel comfortable that everything in the IEP has been explained to your satisfaction.

25. What can I do if I disagree with the finding of a school assessment?

You can request an Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE). A parent or guardian is entitled to only one independent educational assessment at public expense each time the school district conducts an assessment with which the parent or guardian disagrees. The district may initiate a due process hearing to show that its assessment is appropriate. If the final decision resulting from the due process hearing is that the assessment is appropriate, the parent or guardian maintains the right for an independent educational assessment, but not at public expense.

26. What other types of services might your child need?

Sometimes students qualify for what are called related services or designated instruction and services (DIS). These are services designed to assist your child in benefiting from his or her instructional program. The IEP team will decide if your child needs any of these services.

Examples and brief descriptions of these services are:

- *Language and speech—provides assistance in understanding or using language.*
- *Adapted physical education—assists a child who may have a disability that prevents him or her from benefiting from general or modified physical education.*
- *Occupational therapy—provides assistance in improving or restoring functions lost or impaired through illness, accident, or deprivation.*
- *Physical therapy—provides treatment for posture stability, movement, positioning, gait training, etc.*
- *Counseling—provides educational, career and/or personal counseling and consultation with students, parents and staff members.*

27. What if your my child has special needs?

If there are special needs to consider, they will be discussed and written on the IEP. Examples of special needs are:

- *Does your child's behavior interfere with his or her ability to learn? If so, a behavior support plan may need to be developed.*
- *Is your child an English language learner? If so, appropriate language goals will be developed.*
- *Is your child visually impaired, deaf, or hard of hearing? If so, different forms of communication may need to be considered.*
- *Does your child qualify for extended school year (special education services in excess of the regular school year)?*
- *Does your child qualify for transportation to and from school?*
- *Does your child need assistive technology services (see the Technical Terms section in the back of this guide)?*

28. What is an Individual Transition Plan (ITP)? Does your my child need an ITP?

If your child is 14 years old or older, an ITP is part of the IEP. It is designed to assist you and your child in planning and transitioning your child to adult living and post school activities. An ITP is based on student needs and parent and student interests. It may involve the participation of other community agencies.

29. Who decides what type of educational setting is best for your my child?

Many things are considered in making the decisions as to the educational setting for your child. The IEP team, including you, will make this decision, always keeping the least restrictive environment (LRE) in mind. This means that your child will be educated to the maximum extent appropriate in the general education setting, including access to extracurricular activities, with students who are not disabled. Your child's placement is based on the information contained in his or her IEP, and will be reviewed annually. A school cannot change your child's placement without your permission. The school must hold an IEP meeting, and any changes require your consent.

A list of some of the program options follows, beginning with the least restrictive environment and continuing to the most restrictive environments:

General Education Class/General Education Site

Special Day Program/General Education Site

Special Day Program/Special Education Center

Nonpublic School

30. Will your child be included with students who do not have disabilities?

The law states that students must be educated in the general curriculum and/or participate in activities with other students who are not disabled to the maximum extent appropriate. This is often referred to as the least restrictive environment, or LRE. The IEP will include a statement regarding any necessary modifications or supports that your child will be given to be involved in the general curriculum. Your child's IEP must also include an explanation of how often your child will not participate in the general curriculum.

31. What happens if you I do not agree with any of the decisions made by the IEP team?

After the IEP has been developed for your child, the administrator or administrative designee will summarize the decisions for the IEP team. If you disagree with any part or all of the IEP, the school staff will again review your rights. If you agree with parts of the IEP, those services can begin with your written consent. No part of the IEP will be implemented without your consent.

32. Can I disagree with portions of an IEP and agree with other parts of it?

Yes. For example, you may agree on the goals and placement, but disagree with the services as outlined. In this situation, you may give your limited consent, identifying directly on the IEP what you agree and disagree with. By writing out your consent, you permit the school to implement the portions you agree with while you wait to resolve the issues you disagree with.

If there are differences of opinion, what are your my rights about the IEP team decisions?

As a parent you have many rights under the law. These rights are described in some detail in A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards).

Briefly, you have the right to:

- *Participate in the IEP meeting and consent to, or not consent to, the IEP.*
- *Understand the contents of the IEP.*
- *Understand the appeals process, which includes the right to request a legal hearing.*
- *Meet to review the IEP at least annually, and more often at your request.*

If you disagree with your child's special education instruction and services, or any part of the IEP, you will be advised of your rights and given information on how to address your disagreement informally, through mediation, and/or a due process hearing. Ask the school administrator if you have questions about these procedures. Hopefully, you and the school staff will agree on interim measures (for the time being) until agreements on all issues are reached. In a few cases, where there is no agreement, your child's previous IEP will remain in effect until agreement is reached or a due process hearing has been held.

33. What happens after the IEP team meeting?

- *Copies of the IEP will be distributed to you and staff members involved with your child's education.*
- *Team members who are to follow-up on IEP decisions will be told about them.*
- *If requested by you, the IEP will be translated into your primary language.*
- *If you have any questions the IEP team or school staff cannot answer, they will give you the names and telephone numbers of District staff who can help you.*

34. Where do I call if I want information about training or support for parents of students with disabilities?

The Community Advisory Committee for Special Education (CAC) serves to maintain ongoing interaction between educators and parents. The CAC holds monthly informational and training meetings that are open to parents and staff in each Educational Service Center. These meetings are a forum for a mutual exchange of information. CAC meets monthly on a designated Monday. Meeting dates can be verified by calling (213) 241-6701.

The CAC provides community members with opportunities to:

- *Understand the policies of the Los Angeles Unified School District*
- *Know their rights*
- *Become aware of their options*
- *Influence legislation*
- *Learn about programs*
- *Advise the District*
- *Meet administrators and staff*
- *Network with other parents*
- *Affect education policy*

35. How can you become involved with the CAC?

Involvement in the special education program of a child is the responsibility of each parent. Being informed about options, programs, and rights in special education assists you in making decisions that assure your child's successful education. CAC meetings offer information about special education instruction, services, and supports for students with disabilities, as well as updates regarding pending legislation affecting education. Time is set aside to provide parents and community members an opportunity to ask questions of special education professionals and to share experiences with other parents.

The Community Advisory (appointed annually by the Board of Education) is composed of parents of students with a wide range of disabilities, general education parents, students and adults with disabilities, teachers, District personnel, and community representatives. A majority of the membership must be parents of children enrolled in LAUSD and a majority of these parents must have

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children in special education. The meeting agenda includes updates from the Division of Special Education, reviews of the Local Plan for Special Education and progress of Modified Consent Decree outcomes.

36. Where do I call if I have a concern about my child's special education program?

The Los Angeles Unified School District established the Complaint Response Unit (CRU) Parent Resource Network (PRN) to join the Division of Special Education to respond to concerns of parents of students with disabilities. PRN services may be accessed by calling (800) 933-8133 or by visiting the Unit at the administrative offices of the Los Angeles Unified School District, located at 333 South Beaudry, 17th Floor, Los Angeles, California 90017.

37. Where can I go for more information?

- The principal and special education staff at your child's school.
- The booklet *A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services (Including Procedural Rights and Safeguards)*.
- Contact the Division of Special Education at (213) 241-6701
- Complaint Response Unit (CRU)/Parent Resource Network (PRN) at 1-800-933-8133.
- Community Advisory Committee (CAC) at 1-888-665-6601 or (213) 241-6701.

38. How can I find out more about my child's rights and my rights as a parent?

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) children with disabilities have a right to a free and appropriate public education designed to meet their unique needs. To find out more about your child's rights, ask for a copy of the school district's publication, *A Parent's Guide to Special Education Services*, at your local public school or office. This booklet provides detailed information about your protections under the law.

39. SPECIAL EDUCATION TECHNICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS FREQUENTLY USED AT IEP MEETINGS

ADAPTED PHYSICAL EDUCATION (APE) A special education (remedial) program for students who require developmental or corrective instruction and who cannot participate in the activities of the general physical education program, a modified general physical education program or a specially designed physical education program in a special class.

ASSESSMENT The gathering of information about the student to determine his or her eligibility for special education and service needs. It may include tests, observations, interviews and review of school records or student work samples.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY Any item, piece of equipment, product, or system, whether acquired commercially 'off the shelf', modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of students with disabilities.

AUTISM (AUT) A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before the age of three.

BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION Implementation of procedures for the elimination of maladaptive behaviors which are significantly interfering with the implementation of the student's IEP. A systematic implementation of procedures, identified in the IEP, that results in lasting positive changes in the individual's behavior. Acceptable interventions include positive behavioral support strategies that do not cause pain or trauma, and that which respect the student's individual needs and dignity.

BILINGUAL The ability to speak two languages with native or near-native skills.

COMMUNITY BASED INSTRUCTION (CBI) Instruction in the skills needed to function in community settings. Instruction takes place both in the community and in the classroom.

DEAF-BLIND Students with both hearing and vision disabilities.

DEAF OR HARD OF HEARING (DHH or HOH) Students who have a measurable hearing loss, conductive or sensorineural, in either one or both ears, which limits the normal acquisition of speech and language through the ear. Students with a hearing impairment may require an aural/oral or total communication approach.

DESIGNATED INSTRUCTION AND SERVICES (DIS) Specific services, also called related services, which are required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education or general education. Includes transportation, speech-language pathology, audiological services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, social work services, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes only. The term includes school health services, social work services in schools and parent counseling and training.

DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY An observed difference between a person's development and behavior and the typical development and behavior expected of people of the same age.

DUAL PLACEMENT/ENROLLMENT Dual placement/enrollment occurs when the IEP team determines that a student with a disability should be educated part-time in a non-public school (NPS) and part-time on a general education campus in general education classes, resource specialists programs, or special day classes.

EARLY EDUCATION A program to serve students between the ages of 4.9 and 7.9 with severe or non-severe disabilities in special education classrooms.

EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE (ED) Students who exhibit one or more characteristics of a severe emotional disturbance as specified by law and whose condition has existed for a long period of time and to a marked degree. The condition must also adversely affect the student's educational

performance. A serious disturbance is to be distinguished from antisocial/socially maladjusted behavior which is not a special education disabling condition.

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) A program of instruction for speakers of other languages to develop listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL) Limited English proficient students acquiring English and speakers of non-mainstream language forms acquiring mainstream English.

ESTABLISHED MEDICAL DISABILITY (EMD) (This eligibility criteria applies only to children between the ages of three to five years.) A disabling medical condition or congenital syndrome that the individualized education program team determines has a high predictability of requiring special education services.

EXTENDED SCHOOL YEAR (ESY) Special education services in excess of the regular academic year.

FREE APPROPRIATE PUBLIC EDUCATION (FAPE) The federal provision for special education and related services for students at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge to a parent, student or guardian.

GOALS Broad or general statements which describe what needs to be learned by the student.

HARD OF HEARING (HOH) Impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, which adversely affects a student's educational performance but which is not included under the definition of deafness.

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) A written plan prepared at an IEP meeting that includes the student's present level of educational performance, eligibility for special education, annual instructional goals and objectives, services to be provided, needed transition services, type of instructional setting and provisions for integration/mainstreaming in general education programs.

INDIVIDUAL TRANSITION PLAN (ITP) The ITP must be developed for students prior to age 14 and updated annually. It includes a statement of the transition service needs of the student, related to the IEP, that focuses on the student's course of study (such as participation in advanced placement courses or vocational programs). Beginning at age 16 (or younger, if appropriate), the ITP provides a statement of needed transition services for the child, including a statement of the interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages, as appropriate.

INFORMAL ASSESSMENT Procedures such as classroom observation, interviews, portfolios of student work, or teacher-made tests which have not usually been used with large groups of students and which do not necessarily have a standard set of instructions for their use and interpretation.

INTERSESSION General education or special education services in addition to the regular academic school year.

LANGUAGE AND SPEECH SERVICES (LAS) A designated instruction and service (related service) for students who have articulation, voice, fluency or language disorders.

LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT (LRE) A requirement in both state and federal laws that to the maximum extent appropriate, a student with a disability should be educated in the general education setting, including access to extracurricular activities, with nondisabled peers. Separate schooling and other removal from the general environment should occur only when the nature or severity of the disability prevents satisfactory education in general classes even with the use of supplementary aids and services.

LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENT STUDENT (LEP) A student identified through a formal initial identification process as not having sufficient fluency in English to participate in a mainstream English classroom.

LOW INCIDENCE DISABILITY (LI) A severe disabling condition with an expected incidence rate of less than one percent of the total statewide enrollment in kindergarten through grade twelve. Conditions include hearing, vision and severe orthopedic impairments or any combination.

MENTAL RETARDATION (MR) Students with significantly below-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior.

MULTIPLE DISABILITIES (MD) Students who have a combination of two or more specific disabilities.

NONPUBLIC SCHOOL (NPS) Nonpublic, non-sectarian school placements may be provided to a student who is eligible for special education at no cost to the parents, when no appropriate public placement is available. The nonpublic schools included within this provision must be certified by the California Department of Education (CDE).

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY (OT) A designated instruction and service (related service), that provides assistance in improving or restoring functions lost or injured through illness, accident, or deprivation.

ORTHOPEDICALLY IMPAIRED (OI) Students with specific orthopedic or physical needs which adversely affect their educational participation or performance. This term includes but is not limited to: impairments caused by congenital anomaly (clubfoot, absence of limb, etc.); impairments caused by disease (poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.); and impairments from other causes (cerebral palsy, amputations and fractures or burns).

OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRED (OHI) Students may be considered other health impaired if they require special education services because of chronic or acute health conditions resulting in limited strength, vitality or alertness; due to chronic or acute health problems such as heart condition, tuberculosis, rheumatic fever, nephritis, asthma, sickle cell anemia, hemophilia, epilepsy, lead poisoning, leukemia or diabetes, which adversely affect their educational performance.

PARENT Includes the person(s) having legal custody such as natural parents, the custodial parent, legal guardian, or district-appointed surrogate parent of a student.

PHYSICALLY DISABLED (PD) Students with specific orthopedic or physical needs which adversely affect their educational participation or performance. This term includes but is not limited to: impairments caused by congenital anomaly (clubfoot, absence of limb, etc.); impairments caused by disease (poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis, etc.); and impairments from other causes (cerebral palsy, amputations and fractures or burns).

PHYSICAL THERAPY (PT) A designated instruction and service (related service), including services to provide treatment for posture stability, movement, positioning, gait training, etc.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT Support that is specified in a behavior intervention plan that is developed by an IEP team to help a student with serious behavior problems change patterns of undesirable behavior/s that interfere with learning. These supports are respectful of a student's dignity, and are successful in promoting a student's capabilities and opportunities. The support includes a reliance on data obtained from a functional analysis assessment.

PRIMARY LANGUAGE The language spoken in the student's home.

REEVALUATION A comprehensive assessment conducted every three years, or sooner if a parent or teacher requests, for each student receiving special education services.

REFERRAL FOR ASSESSMENT Any request for assessment, made by a parent, teacher or other service provider. Referrals for assessment should be in writing to avoid delay. Where an oral referral for assessment is made, school staff must offer assistance to the individual making the referral to put it in writing.

RELATED SERVICES Specific services, also called designated instruction and services, which are required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education or general education. Includes transportation, speech-language pathology, audiological services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, social work services, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation and mobility services, medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes only. The term includes school health services, social work services in schools and parent counseling and training.

RESOURCE SPECIALIST PROGRAM (RSP) A program or service provided by a credentialed Resource Specialist teacher for students with disabilities.

SCHOOL OF ATTENDANCE Refers to the school a student is attending which may or may not be in his or her area of residence.

SCHOOL OF RESIDENCE Refers to the school a student attends or would attend because of the location of his or her residence in the school's attendance area.

SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVE Included on the student's IEP as a means of measuring progress toward a goal. It includes a series of intermediate steps or training activities that will take the student from his or her current level of functioning to the accomplishment of annual goals.

SPECIAL DAY CLASS (SDC) A special education class, taught by a specially credentialed teacher, for students who benefit from enrollment in special education for a majority of the school day.

SPECIAL EDUCATION The term "special education" means specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a student with a disability.

SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY (SLD) A specific learning disability is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. Eligibility for services requires that there is a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement in one or more of the following academic areas: oral or written expression, listening or reading comprehension, basic reading skills, mathematics calculations and reasoning.

SURROGATE PARENT A person who is appointed by the District to act as a child's "parent" in all matters related to special education. A surrogate is appointed when a child is a dependent or

ward of the court, and the court has limited the rights of the parent/guardian to make educational decisions, or when a parent cannot be identified or located.

TRANSITION This term refers to the passage from one program, setting or environment to another. In special education, it may include, passage from elementary to middle school programs, movement from a special day class setting to a general education setting, graduation from a high school program into a work environment or other significant changes for a student.

TRAUMATIC BRAIN INJURY (TBI) Traumatic brain injury is an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical event resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment that adversely affects a student's educational performance. It may include open or closed head injuries resulting in impairment in one or more areas such as cognition, speech, judgment, problem solving, perceptual and motor abilities, sensory, psychosocial behavior, physical functions and information processing.

VISUALLY IMPAIRED (VI) A visual impairment which, even with correction, adversely affects a student's educational performance. The term includes both partial sightedness and blindness.