

ABCs of Special Education



This tip sheet is created to assist educational professionals, students, and parents in understanding acronymsspecific to special education to facilitate a collaborative and student-focused special education process.

504	Section 504 of the Rehabilitations Act of 1973	DOJ	Department of Justice
AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Communication	DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th Edition)
ABA	Applied Behavior Analysis	ED	Emotional Disturbance
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	EHA	Education for All Handicapped Children Act (predecessor to IDEA)
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder	EIS	Early Intervention Services
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	EL	English Learner
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution	ESL	English as a Second Language
AEA	Area Education Agency	ESY	Extended School Year
ALJ	Administrative Law Judge	FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
APE	Adaptive Physical Education	FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
ASL	American Sign Language	HHI	Home/Hospital Instruction
AT	Assistive Technology	IA	Instructional Aide
BCBA	Board Certified Behavior Analyst	IAES	Interim Alternative Educational Setting
BIP	Behavioral Intervention Plan	ID	Intellectual Disability
CART	Communication Access Realtime Translation	IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation
DDSDP	District Developed Service Delivery Plan	IEP	Individualized Education Program
DHH	Deaf and Hard of Hearing	IFSP	Individualized Family Services Plan

©2026 Fagen Friedman & Fulfroost LLP.

All rights reserved. No portion of this work may be copied, sold or used for any commercial advantage or private gain, nor any derivative work prepared therefrom, without the express prior written permission of Fagen Friedman & Fulfroost LLP through its Managing Partner. The Managing Partner of Fagen Friedman & Fulfroost LLP hereby grants permission to any client of Fagen Friedman & Fulfroost LLP to whom Fagen Friedman & Fulfroost LLP provides a copy, to use such a copy intact and solely for the internal purposes of such client.

IHO	Impartial Hearing Officer	OSEP	Office of Special Education Programs
IS	Independent Study	OSERS	Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services
ISS	In-School Suspension	OT	Occupational Therapy
ISA	Individual Services Agreement	PBIS	Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports
ISP	Individualized Service Plan	PDD	Pervasive Developmental Disorder
ITP	Individualized Transition Plan	PLAAFP	Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
IWEN	Individual with Exceptional Needs	PT	Physical Therapy
LCI	Licensed Children's Institution	PWN	Prior Written Notice
LEA	Local Education Agency	RSP	Resource Specialist Program
LEP	Limited English Proficient	RTI	Response to Intervention
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment	SAI	Specialized Academic Instruction
MDR	Manifestation Determination Review	SBE	State Board of Education
MTSS	Multi-Tiered System of Supports	SDC	Special Day Class
NPA	Nonpublic Agency	SEA	State Education Agency
NPS	Nonpublic School	SELPA	Special Education Local Plan Area
O & M	Orientation and Mobility	SLD	Specific Learning Disability
OAH	Office of Administrative Hearings	SLI	Speech or Language Impairment
OCD	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder	SST	Student Study Team
OCR	Office for Civil Rights	SWD	Students with Disabilities
ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder	TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
OHI	Other Health Impairment	USC	United States Code
OI	Orthopedic Impairment	USDOE	United States Department of Education
		VI	Visual Impairment