

Special Education Acronyms

Acronym	Definition	Category	Use case
504	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a federal law that provides accommodations and supports for students with disabilities who do not qualify for special education services	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The student receives accommodations through a 504 plan.
AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Communication (methods and devices that support communication for students who cannot rely on speech alone)	Special Education	The student uses AAC to communicate in class.
ABA	Applied Behavior Analysis (therapy approach used to improve behavior, communication, and learning skills, often for students with autism)	Special Education	The student receives ABA support during the school day.
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution, a voluntary process used to resolve disagreements between families and schools without a formal hearing	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The district offered ADR to resolve the disagreement.
ALJ	Administrative Law Judge, the official who presides over special education due process hearings and issues decisions	School Planning, Compliance, and Policy	The ALJ issued a decision in the case.
APE	Adapted Physical Education, specialized physical education services designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The student receives APE services as part of the IEP.
ARD	Admission, Review, and Dismissal (Texas-based meeting where educators and families review and update a student's special education services)	Special Education	The ARD committee met to review the student's services.
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder, a disability category characterized by challenges with communication, social interaction, and behavior	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The student qualifies for services under ASD.
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan (a plan outlining strategies and supports to address and improve student behavior)	Special Education	The student has a BIP in place to support behavior.

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BCBA	Board Certified Behavior Analyst, a specialist trained in behavior analysis who designs and oversees behavior intervention plans	Student Support	The BCBA reviewed the student's behavior plan.
BT	Behavior Technician (staff member who implements behavior support plans, often under supervision of a specialist)	Staff / Support	The BT works with the student on behavior goals.
DHH	Deaf and Hard of Hearing, a disability category for students with hearing impairments that impact learning	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The student receives DHH services.
DIS	Designated Instruction and Services, also known as related services, includes supports such as therapy and counseling provided through an IEP	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The student receives DIS as part of the IEP.
ED	Emotional Disturbance (eligibility category for students with significant emotional or behavioral needs affecting learning)	Special Education	The student qualifies for services under ED.
ESY	Extended School Year (services provided outside the regular school year for students who need continued support)	Special Education	The student qualifies for ESY services.
FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education (legal requirement ensuring students with disabilities receive appropriate education services at no cost)	Special Education	Services are provided under FAPE.
FBA	Functional Behavior Assessment (evaluation used to identify the causes and triggers of student behavior)	Special Education	An FBA was conducted to understand behavior patterns.
FIE	Full Individual Evaluation (a comprehensive assessment used to determine if a student qualifies for special education services and what supports are needed)	Special Education	The school will conduct an FIE to evaluate the student's needs.
HI	Hearing Impairment (eligibility category for students with hearing-related disabilities)	Special Education	The student receives services under HI.
IA	Instructional Aide (staff member who supports classroom instruction and assists students with learning tasks)	Staff / Support	The IA supports small group instruction.

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IAES	Interim Alternative Education Setting, a temporary placement used when a student is removed from their current placement due to disciplinary action	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The student was placed in an IAES during the disciplinary process.
ID	Intellectual Disability, a disability category involving significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The student qualifies under ID.
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (federal law governing special education services and student rights)	Special Education	IDEA governs how IEP services are delivered.
IEE	Independent Educational Evaluation, an evaluation conducted by a qualified examiner not employed by the school district, often requested by parents	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The parent requested an IEE at public expense.
IEP	Individualized Education Program (a legally required plan outlining services, accommodations, and goals for students with disabilities)	Special Education	The IEP outlines the student's goals and services.
IFSP	Individualized Family Services Plan, a plan for early intervention services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The child transitioned from an IFSP to an IEP.
ITP	Individualized Transition Plan, a component of the IEP that outlines postsecondary goals and transition services for students	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The ITP outlines goals for life after high school.
LRE	Least Restrictive Environment (requirement that students with disabilities are educated with peers to the greatest extent appropriate)	Special Education	Placement decisions follow LRE guidelines.
LSSP	Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (professional who conducts evaluations and supports student mental health and behavior)	Student Support	The LSSP completed the student evaluation.
MD	Manifestation Determination, a review process used to determine whether a student's behavior is related to their disability	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The team conducted an MD after the suspension.
OAH	Office of Administrative Hearings, the agency that conducts due process	School Planning, Compliance, and Policy	The case was filed with OAH for a hearing.

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	hearings and resolves special education disputes		
OHI	Other Health Impairment (eligibility category for students with health conditions that affect learning, such as ADHD)	Special Education	The student qualifies under OHI.
OI	Orthopedic Impairment, a disability category involving physical impairments that affect mobility or physical functioning	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The student receives services under OI.
O&M	Orientation and Mobility, services that support students with visual impairments in navigating their environment safely	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The student receives O&M training for campus navigation.
OT	Occupational Therapist (specialist who supports motor skills and daily functioning needed for school tasks)	Student Support	The OT works with the student on fine motor skills.
Para	Paraprofessional (staff member who provides instructional and behavioral support under teacher supervision)	Staff / Support	The para assists the student during reading time.
PRT	Pivotal Response Treatment, a behavioral intervention approach often used with students with autism to improve communication and social skills	Student Support	The student receives PRT services to support communication.
PT	Physical Therapist (specialist who supports mobility, strength, and physical access in the school environment)	Student Support	The PT supports the student's mobility needs.
PWN	Prior Written Notice, a required document that explains the school's decisions regarding identification, evaluation, placement, or services	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The district issued PWN after the IEP meeting.
RBT	Registered Behavior Technician (certified staff member who implements behavior plans under supervision of a behavior analyst)	Staff / Support	The RBT supports the student's behavior plan.
RN	Registered Nurse	Student Support	The RN supports student health.
RSP	Resource Specialist Program, a service delivery model where students receive	Special Education	The student receives RSP support in math.

Acronym	Definition	Category	Use case
	targeted support from a resource specialist teacher	Programs and Student Support	
RTI	Response to Intervention	Student Support	The student receives RTI support.
SAI	Specialized Academic Instruction, individualized instruction provided to support students with disabilities in accessing the general education curriculum	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The student receives SAI for reading support.
SLD	Specific Learning Disability, a disability category involving difficulties in areas such as reading, writing, or math	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The student qualifies under SLD.
SLI	Speech or Language Impairment, a disability category involving communication disorders such as stuttering or language delays	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The student qualifies under SLI.
SLP	Speech-Language Pathologist (specialist who supports speech, language, and communication development)	Student Support	The SLP works with the student on speech skills.
SPED	Special Education (program and services designed to support students with disabilities)	Special Education	She teaches in SPED.
SST	Student Study Team, a school-based team that reviews student concerns and develops intervention strategies prior to special education referral	Student Support	The SST reviewed the student's progress and interventions.
SWD	Students with Disabilities, a general term used in reporting and data to refer to students receiving special education services	Special Education Programs and Student Support	The report includes outcomes for SWD.
TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury (eligibility category for students with brain injuries affecting learning and functioning)	Special Education	The student receives services under TBI.
TEACCH	Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children, a structured teaching approach used to support students with autism	Student Support	The classroom uses TEACCH strategies.

Acronym	Definition	Category	Use case
Tier 1	Core instruction level	Student Support	All students receive Tier 1 instruction.
Tier 2	Targeted support level	Student Support	The student receives Tier 2 support.
Tier 3	Intensive support level	Student Support	Tier 3 provides individualized support.
VI	Visual Impairment (eligibility category for students with vision-related disabilities)	Special Education	The student receives VI services.