

## Understanding Special Education: Key Terms for Parents

### ARD Meeting-Specific Terms

**Accommodations** - Changes to how a student accesses the curriculum or demonstrates learning, such as extended time on tests or seating arrangements.

**ARD Committee** - A group that includes parents, teachers, school administrators, and other professionals who collaborate to create the student's IEP.

**ARD Meeting** - A meeting held in Texas to develop, review, or revise a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) as part of special education services.

**Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)** - A plan based on a Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) that outlines strategies to address challenging behaviors.

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** - A legal requirement under IDEA that guarantees students with disabilities receive educational services tailored to their needs at no cost to the family.

**Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)** - An evaluation process used to identify the purpose or function of a student's challenging behavior.

**Individualized Education Program (IEP)** - A legally binding document that outlines the special education services, supports, goals, and accommodations for a student with a disability.

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)** - The setting that allows a student with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled peers to the greatest extent appropriate.

**Modifications** - Changes to what a student is expected to learn, such as reducing the number of test questions or simplifying assignments.

**Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)** - A statement in the IEP that describes a student's current academic and functional performance and serves as the foundation for setting goals.

**Prior Written Notice (PWN)** - A document provided to parents when the school proposes or refuses to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the student.

### Special Needs Support Terms

**Assistive Technology (AT)** - Devices or services that help a student with a disability access the curriculum and communicate effectively.

**Child Find** - A legal requirement for schools to identify, locate, and evaluate children who may need special education services.

**Extended School Year (ESY)** - Special education services provided during school breaks to prevent significant regression in skills.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** - A federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities, governing how states provide early intervention, special education, and related services.

**Parental Rights and Procedural Safeguards** - A document provided to parents that explains their rights under IDEA, including the right to dispute decisions made by the school.

**Related Services** - Support services necessary for a student to benefit from special education, such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, or counseling.

**Section 504 Plan** - A plan developed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that outlines accommodations for students with disabilities who do not qualify for an IEP.

**Transition Plan** - A required component of the IEP for students aged 16 and older, outlining goals and services for the transition to adulthood.

**Transition Services** - Services designed to prepare students with disabilities for life after high school, including post-secondary education, employment, and independent living.

### Common Disabilities and Acronyms

**504 Coordinator** - A school official responsible for implementing Section 504 accommodations.

**Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** - A condition marked by inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity.

**Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** - A developmental disability affecting communication, behavior, and social interaction.

**Developmental Delay (DD)** - A delay in physical, cognitive, communication, social, emotional, or adaptive development in young children.

**Emotional Disturbance (ED)** - A condition affecting a student's ability to learn due to emotional or behavioral challenges.

**Intellectual Disability (ID)** - A disability characterized by significant limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior.

**Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP)** - A school psychologist that supports students' academic and social emotional needs through assessments and interventions. LSSPs collaborate with students, parents, and professionals to create a supportive learning environment.

**Occupational Therapy (OT)** - Therapy focused on improving a student's fine motor skills, sensory processing, and daily living skills.

**Physical Therapy (PT)** - Therapy designed to improve a student's gross motor skills and mobility.

**Specific Learning Disability (SLD)** - A disorder in one or more basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, which may affect reading, writing, or math skills.

**Speech or Language Impairment (SLI)** - A disorder in one or more basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, which may affect reading, writing, or math skills.