



Commonly Used Acronyms in Special Education

General Lingo

AAC: Augmentative and Alternative Communication

- AAC refers to all forms of communication outside of oral speech. Some students will use AAC devices and technology to communicate.
- For more information: <https://www.asha.org/public/speech/disorders/aac/>

ABA: Applied Behavior Analysis

- ABA is a type of therapy that focuses on improving behaviors including social and communication skills.
- For more information: <https://www.bacb.com/about-behavior-analysis/> or <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapy-types/applied-behavior-analysis>

ABC: Antecedent, Behavior, and Consequence

- The ABCs of behavior is a functional behavior assessment that is commonly used to better understand inappropriate or disruptive behaviors that students may have. Antecedent is the event or circumstance that is happening right before the behavior. Behavior is the observed behavior that follows. Consequence is what happens right after the behavior and is usually in the form of a reinforcement or punishment.

AT: Assistive Technology

- AT is used to assist students with disabilities to increase their overall capacity to work and fully participate in the classroom. AT includes any “device, piece of equipment, or product system” that is used to improve functional capabilities on students with disabilities.
- For more information: <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/ds/ttap.html>

BIP: Behavior Intervention Plan

- A BIP targets a student’s problem behavior with interventions that are linked to the function of the behavior. Each intervention addresses a behavior that is explicitly stated and measurable. A BIP can include prevention and/or replacement strategies.
- For more information: <https://www.tn.gov/education/student-support/special-education/behavior.html>



CTE: Career and Technical Education

- CTE is a general education program that focuses on preparing students for specific careers.
- For more information: <https://www.tn.gov/education/career-and-technical-education.html>

ESL/ELL: English as a Second Language/English Language Learners

- A student whose first language is other than English and who are limited in their English language proficiency
- For more information: <https://www.tn.gov/education/instruction/academic-standards/english-as-a-second-language.html>

FAPE: Free and Appropriate Public Education

- FAPE is the concept that all students with disabilities will receive free and appropriate public education. An appropriate education can vary from self-contained to general education classes. FAPE is guaranteed to students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
- For more information: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/edlite-FAPE504.html>

FBA: Functional Behavior Assessment

- FBA is the process of describing and observing a student's disruptive or inappropriate behaviors to understand the function of that behavior, or reason why they may be engaging in a particular behavior. Understanding the function of certain behaviors is the first step in determining strategies for addressing and improving these behaviors.
- For more information: <https://tennesseebps.org/resources/tier-iii-2/>

IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

- IDEA is a law that mandates access to free and appropriate public education for individuals with disabilities, as well as access to accommodations and services.
- For more information: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/about-idea/>

IEP: Individualized Education Plan

- An IEP is a written document that is developed to evaluate the needs of a student with a disability and implement a plan for how the school will provide supports to address those needs.
- For more information: https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/education/special-education/framework/sped_framework.pdf

IPE: Individualized Plan for Employment

- The IPE is a plan created with the help of a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor that outlines a program of services that leads to successful employment. The types of services provided are based on the needs of the individual and are designed to help them become employable.
- For more information: <https://www.tn.gov/humanservices/ds/vocational-rehabilitation/vr-services-to-eligible-individuals.html>

ITP: Individualized Transition Plan

- An ITP is a section within the IEP that is introduced as soon as a student turns 14 in Tennessee. The ITP is used to determine goals for a student to accomplish while they are in high school to prepare for transition to postsecondary education, employment, or community participation
- For more information: <http://www.tennesseeworks.org/getting-to-work/transition-planning/>

LEA: Local Educational Agency

- LEA is a public board of education or other public authority within a state that maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a school district. School districts and county offices of education are both LEAs.
- For more information: <https://edsources.org/glossary/local-education-agency-lea>

LRE: Least Restrictive Environment

- LRE is a principle within the IDEA that helps determine where a student with disabilities will spend their time in school and how their services will be provided. LRE guarantees that students with disabilities must receive their education alongside their peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate and should not be removed unless learning cannot be achieved in such environment even with appropriate supports.
- For more information: https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/wp-content/uploads/pdf_info_briefs/IRIS_Least_Restrictive_Environment_InfoBrief_092519.pdf

PBIS: Positive Behavior Interventions and Support

- PBIS is a three-tiered method for providing behavioral support for all students. Tier 1 involves basic foundational support that all students receive. Tier 2 provides supports for students who are at risk of developing more serious problem behaviors. Tier 3 is where students receive intensive and individualized behavior supports.
- For more information: <https://www.pbis.org/topics/disability>

PLEP: Present Levels of Educational Performance

- PLEP is a description of what a student is currently able to do. This information is usually located in the IEP.
- For more information: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/iep01/cresource/q3/p06/>

RTI: Response to Intervention

- RTI is a multi-tiered approach to early identification of students with complex learning and behavior needs. The first tier of RTI is where all students start. They receive high-quality, research-based instruction. Students who struggle in Tier 1 receive targeted interventions in Tier 2. These services are provided in a small group setting. The third tier involves intensive interventions where students are then referred for a comprehensive evaluation to see if they qualify for special education services under the IDEA.
- For more information: <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what/whatisrti>



Section 504 Plan

- Section 504 plans ensure that a child with a disability has equal access to education as their peers. It is guided by the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students who do not qualify for an IEP might still qualify for a Section 504 plan.
- For more information: <https://www.wrightslaw.com/info/sec504.index.htm>

SKEMA: Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment

- To earn an occupational diploma a student must meet the criteria on the Skills, Knowledge, and Experience Mastery Assessment. This assessment looks at the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary to be successful in the workplace. All required skills must be completed at a score of 3 or higher and 8 out of 10 critical skills must be completed at 3 or higher.
- For more information: <https://www.tennesseeworks.org/wp-content/uploads/OD-Overview.pdf>

SOP: Summary of Performance

- The SOP is a summary of a student's functional performance and includes recommendations for ways to help the student meet their postsecondary goals. This is usually completed during the final year of the student's high school education.
- For more information: <https://www.wrightslaw.com/info/trans.sop.htm>

Disability Categories in Tennessee Special Education

Adapted from <https://www.tn.gov/education/student-support/special-education/special-education-evaluation-eligibility.html>

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

ASD is a developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, and behavioral challenges. Autism is a spectrum which means that no two people with autism are alike. Some may have difficulties with communication and eye contact while others may struggle without having a set schedule.

Visual Impairment

Visual Impairment is defined as impairment in vision (even with correction) that adversely affects a child's educational performance. This term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Deaf-Blindness

Deaf-Blindness means a hearing and visual impairment, the combination of which causes severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that cannot be accommodated in special education programs by just addressing one of the impairments.

Deafness

Deafness means that a person has a very severe hearing loss and relies primarily on lip reading or sign language for communication.



ID: Intellectual Disability

ID is a disability that is characterized by significant limitation in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. An intellectual disability originates before the age of 18.

Developmental Delay

Developmental Delay refers to children between the ages 3-9 who are experiencing delays in one or more of the following areas: physical, cognitive, communication, social or emotional, or adaptive behavior that adversely affects their educational performance.

Emotional Disturbance

Emotional Disturbance means a condition exhibiting one (1) or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance: (A) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors. (B) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers. (C) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances. (D) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression. (E) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Functional Delay

Functional Delay means a continuing significant disability in intellectual functioning and achievement which adversely affects the student's ability to progress in the general school program, but adaptive behavior in the home or community is not significantly impaired and is at or near a level appropriate to the student's chronological age

Hearing Impairment

Hearing Impairment means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but does not include Deafness.

Intellectually Gifted

Intellectually Gifted means a child whose intellectual abilities, creativity, and potential for achievement are so outstanding that the child's needs exceed differentiated general education programming, adversely affects educational performance, and requires specifically designed instruction or support services

Multiple Disabilities

Multiple Disabilities means concomitant impairments (such as Intellectual Disability, Deafness, Intellectual Disability-Orthopedic Impairment), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated by addressing only one of the impairments. The term does not include Deaf-Blindness.

Orthopedic Impairment

Orthopedic Impairment means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes, but is not limited to, impairments caused by congenital anomaly (e.g. club foot, absence of some member), impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g. cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures)



OHI: Other Health Impairment

OHI is a category that encompasses a wide range of conditions. OHI's include health conditions like asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, and any other health condition that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

SLD: Specific Learning Disability

The term Specific Learning Disability means 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 the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations and that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Such term includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities (e.g., visual processing), brain injury that is not caused by an external physical force, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.

Speech or Language Impairment

A Speech or Language Impairment means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or voice impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

TBI: Traumatic Brain Injury

A TBI is an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external force which resulted in a functional disability that adversely affects a student's educational performance.

People

BCBA: Board Certified Behavior Analyst

- A BCBA is a graduate-level certification in behavior analysis, which is the science of behavior. BCBA's work to improve human condition through behavior change.
- For more information: <https://www.bacb.com/bcba/>

OT: Occupational Therapist

- School-based OT is designed to enhance the student's ability to fully access and be successful in the learning environment. Their job is to help the student in achieving their goals in order to improve quality of life, whether that be fine motor skills, sorting, or handwriting.
- For more information: [https://www.aota.org/about-occupational-therapy/patients-clients/childrenandyouth/schools/schools.aspx#:~:text=Occupational%20therapy%20\(OT\)%20is%20a,OT%20is%20a%20supportive%20service](https://www.aota.org/about-occupational-therapy/patients-clients/childrenandyouth/schools/schools.aspx#:~:text=Occupational%20therapy%20(OT)%20is%20a,OT%20is%20a%20supportive%20service)

Para: Paraprofessional

- Paras are assistants in a classroom that provide instructional and behavioral support to students. Paraprofessionals are not certified teachers, but are still crucial members of a school's support staff. Paras are also often referred to as instructional aides or teacher assistants.
- For more information: <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/for-educators/learning-and-thinking-differences-basics/paraprofessionals-what-you-need-to-know>



PT: Physical Therapist

- A PT is a movement expert who improves a student's quality of life through exercise and gross motor skill development.
- For more information: <https://www.apta.org/your-career/careers-in-physical-therapy/becoming-a-pt>

SLP: Speech Language Pathologist

- An SLP works with students who struggle with language and communication skills. Their goal is to improve a student's performance in the classroom by targeting their language abilities. They can either work with students in a one-on-one or small group setting.
- For more information: <https://www.asha.org/public/Who-Are-Speech-Language-Pathologists/>