

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Accommodations** - Changes in curriculum or instructions that do not substantially modify the requirements of the class or alter the content standards or benchmarks. Accommodations are determined by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and are documented in the student IEP.

**Adapted Physical Education (APE)** - A diversified program of developmental activities including games, sports, and rhythm and movement, suited to the interests, capabilities and needs of children with disabilities who may not successfully engage in a regular physical education program.

**Age Appropriate** - Activities, materials, curriculum, and environment consistent with the chronological age of the child being served.

**Aphasia** - The inability or the complete or partial loss of ability to use or understand language.

**Apraxia** - A disorder of voluntary movement, consisting of partial or total incapacity to execute purposeful movements, without impairment of muscular power, sensibility and coordination. The person has difficulty sequencing movements in the service of a goal. May be specific to speech

**Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)** - A style of teaching which uses a series of “trials” to shape a desired behavior or response. Skills are broken down to their simplest components and taught through a system of reinforcement. Prompts are given as needed when the child is learning a skill. As a skill is mastered the prompts are faded until the child can perform the task independently. It is a step-by step approach, complete with curriculum that teaches: attention, language, self-help, play, motor and social skills. It is a data based program in which the child's progress is documented. This documentation is reviewed daily.

**Asperger's Disorder** – One of the five autism spectrum disorders that includes individuals who appear to demonstrate normal cognitive and language development (though the onset of speech may be slightly delayed). Language is often pedantic, with difficulties in conversation and topic maintenance. They are less obviously socially impaired than children with autism, and may develop relationships with parents and other family members. It is with peers that the qualitative impairments in reciprocal social interaction become most apparent. They may also have unusual or elaborate preoccupations with objects or topics.

**Asperger's Disorder Diagnostic Criteria** - A) Qualitative impairment in social interaction; B) Restricted and repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests and activities; C) Causes clinically significant impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning; D) There is no clinically significant general delay in

language; E) There is no clinically significant delay in cognitive development or in the development of age-appropriate self-help skills, adaptive behavior and curiosity about the environment in childhood; F) Criteria are not met for another specific Pervasive Developmental Disorder or Schizophrenia.

**Assessment** - A collecting and bringing together of information about a child's learning needs, which may include social, psychological, and educational evaluations used to determine assignment to special programs or services; a process using observation, testing and test analysis to determine an individual's strengths and weaknesses to plan, for example, his or her educational services.

**Assistive Technology Device** - Any item, piece of equipment, or product that is used to increase, maintain, or improve functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities. Assistive technology needs are determined by the IEP team.

**Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)** - A condition in which a child exhibits signs of being easily distracted and has difficulty in staying focused on an individual activity for any period of time. ADD affects 3-5% of all students.

**Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** - A condition in which a child exhibits signs of developmentally inappropriate hyperactivity, impulsivity, and inattention. These characteristics are usually present before the age of 7.

**Atypical Autism** - A general term for conditions that are close to but do not quite fit the set of conditions for autism or other specific conditions.

**Auditory Training** - About 40 percent of children with autism are reported to show very sensitive hearing. Auditory training is training to overcome the hypersensitivity. It consists of the use of electronic devices to modulate sounds in such a way that hypersensitive hearing and certain other hearing problems can be remedied.

**Augmentative Communication** - Any approach designed to support, enhance, or supplement the communication of individuals who are not independent verbal communicators in all situations.

**Autism Diagnostic Interview Revised (ADI)** – An evaluator based interview, frequently used in the assessment and diagnosis of pervasive developmental disorders (PDD), that obtains detailed information on developmental behaviors focused primarily in areas of reciprocal social interactions, language, communication and play, and on restricted behaviors and interests.

**Autism Diagnostic Observation Scale (ADOS)** - A standardized, semi-structured play session that allows the examiner to observe communicative and social behaviors that are associated with autism. It requires 30-45 minutes to administer. This evaluation has been often used in the diagnosis of any autism spectrum disorder.

**Autistic Savant** - An autistic individual who displays incredible aptitude for one or two skills (e.g. amazing musical or artistic ability).

**Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)** - A developmental disorder that is characterized by problems in three areas: social development, communication and stereotypic behaviors. It encompasses a number of disorders including Autism, Retts Syndrome, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder and Aspergers Disorder.

**Basic-Skills Approach** - Pertaining to instruction that lays the ground work for further development and higher levels of functioning.

**Behavior Checklist** - Objective protocols that permit an observer to count or check for the existence or absence of a given behavior or set of behaviors through direct observation of the individual being evaluated.

**Behavior Disorder (BD)** - A disability with one or more behavioral characteristics that are: 1) exhibited at either a much higher or much lower rate than is appropriate for one's age; 2) documented as occurring over an extensive period of time in different environmental settings within the school and community; and 3) interfering consistently with the student's educational performance and is not the result of intellectual, sensory, cultural or health factors that have not received appropriate attention.

**Behavior Intervention Plan** - A plan of positive behavioral intervention, as part of the IEP for a child whose behaviors interfere with his/her learning or of the learning of others.

**Behavior Management** – A series of interventions that are intended to develop, strengthen, maintain, decrease or eliminate behaviors in a planned or systematic way.

**Behavior Modification** - A technique of changing human behavior based on the theory of operant behavior and conditioning. Careful observation of events preceding and following the behavior in question is required. The environment is manipulated to reinforce the desired responses, thereby bringing about the desired change in behavior.

**Childhood Autism Rating Scale (CARS)** – A rating scale developed at TEACCH to diagnose autism. The child is rated in 15 areas on a scale ranging from 0- 4. These scores are used to predict whether the child is considered to be “non-autistic; autistic; or severely autistic.”

**Case Management** - A service that assists persons to obtain and coordinate community resources such as income assistance, education, housing, medical care, treatment, vocational preparation, and recreation.

**Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (CHAT) & Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers (MCHAT)** – These two instruments are short questionnaires which are filled out by parents and a primary health care worker at the 18 month developmental check-up. They are used to identify children who are at risk for social-communication disorders, including autism.

**Childhood Disintegrative Disorder** – A neurodevelopmental disorder that is usually characterized by normal development during the first two years of life with age-

appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication, social skills, play, etc. However, subsequently (after 2 years of age and before 10 years) there is marked regression in skills in multiple areas, and the development of various autistic-like features. This disorder is also sometimes referred to as Heller's Syndrome.

**Curriculum-Based Assessment** – A methodology in special education whereupon a student's progress in the curriculum is measured at frequent intervals.

**Developmental Disability** – A condition that occurs early in development, such as in infancy and indicates the following: Individuals from birth to age 5 who have substantial developmental delay or specific congenital or acquired conditions with a high probability of resulting in developmental disabilities if services are not provided. For persons 5 years of age or older it means: A severe, chronic disability which is attributable to a mental or physical impairment or combination of mental and physical impairments; and is manifested before the person attains age twenty-two and is likely to continue indefinitely and results in substantial functional limitations in three or more of the following areas of major life activity: self care, receptive and expressive language, learning, mobility. Self-direction, capacity for independent living and economic self-sufficiency; and reflects the person's need for a combination and sequence of special, interdisciplinary, or generic care, treatment or other services which are of lifelong or extended duration and are individually planned and coordinated.

**Developmental Tests** - Standardized tests that measure a child's development as it compares to the development of all other children at that age.

**Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-IV)** – The official system for classification of psychological and psychiatric disorders prepared by and published by the American Psychiatric Association. The DSM is the diagnostic system most often used by North American clinicians.

**Diagnostic Criteria for Asperger's Disorder** - 1. Qualitative impairment in social interactions; 2. Restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests and activities; 3. The disturbance causes clinically significant impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning; 4. There is no clinically significant general delay in language; 5. There is no clinically significant delay in cognitive development or in the development of age-appropriate self-help skills, adaptive behavior 6. Criteria are not met for another specific Pervasive Developmental Disorder or schizophrenia.

**Diagnostic Criteria for Autistic Disorder** - 1. Qualitative impairment in social interaction; 2. Qualitative impairments in communication; 3. Restricted repetitive and stereotyped patterns of behavior, interests, and activities; 4. Delays or abnormal functioning in at least one of the following areas, with onset prior to age 3: a) social interaction; b) language as used in social communication; c) symbolic or imaginative play; 5. The disturbance is not better accounted for by Rett's Disorder or Childhood Disintegrative Disorder; 6. The disturbance is not better accounted for by another specific Pervasive Developmental Disorder.

**Disability** – A physical, sensory, cognitive or affective impairment that causes the student to need special education. (NOTE: There are significant differences in the definitions of disability in IDEA and Section 504.)

**Discrete Trial Training** - A short, instructional sequence which has three distinct parts: e.g. a direction/command - a behavior/response - a consequence. Many discrete trial programs include specific directions or commands as the signal to begin the discrete trial.

**Due Process** – In general, a term that indicates the elements of an appropriate legal process and includes: the elements of notice; opportunity to be heard; and to defend ones' self. With regard to IDEA, due process refers to a specific set of procedures described in 23 IAC Part 226. With regard to Section 504, procedures are less clearly specified. With regard to student discipline matters, the amount of process that is due is largely dependent upon the degree of jeopardy involved.

**Echolalia** - The repetition or parroting of words or phrases.

**Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA)** - More commonly identified as P.L. 94-142. It became effective in 1975 and has been significantly modified by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1977).

**Emotional Disability** - A condition whereby a child exhibits one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects the child's performance in the educational environment: an inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors; an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. This condition may also include children who are schizophrenic but does not include children who are socially maladjusted unless they are also determined to have an emotional disability as determined by evaluation.

**Facilitated Communication** - is a method whereby a person with autism is able to point to letters or type out letters on a keyboard or electronic device or computer - provided the person with autism receives the support of the touch of another person or "facilitator" on wrist, elbow or shoulder. The elements of facilitated communication are: physical support; progressing from initial training to practice and finally to fluency; maintaining focus; emotional support; and fading physical support.

**Family Support Program Services** - Services, supports, and other assistance to families in providing care for their children or adult members with developmental disabilities so they can remain in the home. These services are designed to strengthen the family's role as primary caregiver, prevent inappropriate out of the home placement and maintain family unity, and reunite families with members who have been placed out of the home. The services include respite care, assistive, technology, personal assistance, parent training and counseling, support for elderly parents, vehicular and home modifications, and assistance with extraordinary expenses associated with the needs of the person with a developmental disability.

**Fragile X Syndrome** - A genetic disorder that shares many of the characteristics of autism. Individuals can be tested for "Fragile X" by having a genetic test (chromosome analysis.)

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)** - Special education and related services that (1) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; (2) meet the standards of the State educational agency; (3) include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the State involved; and (4) are provided in conformity with the individualized education program.

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)** - A federal law that regulates the management of student records and disclosure of information from those records. The Act has its own administrative enforcement mechanism.

**Fine Motor** - The use of small muscle groups for controlled movements, particularly in object manipulation.

**Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)** - A process of attempting to understand the purpose, motivation and correlates of a problem behavior. The result of the process is the development of an appropriate behavior support and management plan.

**Gross Motor** - Movement that involves balance, coordination and large muscle activity.

**Handicap** - Pejorative term no longer in accepted use.

**Inclusion** - The process of taking children out of segregated settings and placing them in regular education classrooms with supports.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** - Law that modifies and extends the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA).

**Individualized Educational Program (IEP)** - A written education plan for a school aged child with disabilities developed by a team of professionals and the child's parents. IEP's are based on a multidisciplinary evaluation of the child, describes how the child is presently doing, what the child's learning needs are, and what services the child will need. They are reviewed and updated yearly.

**Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)** - Document which outlines the services to be delivered to families of infants and toddlers receiving special services.

**In-home Interventions** - Special education services delivered in a child's own home. This is sometimes done to facilitate generalization for children with cognitive disabilities and to generalize self-control strategies for children with behavioral problems.

**Interdisciplinary Team** - A team whose members come from multiple disciplines, who interact and rely on the others for information and suggestions.

**Joint Attention** – The ability to share (through eye contact, pointing and verbalizations) with another person an object of interest that is not in proximity to the child. Joint attention generally emerges between 8 and 12 months of age. Joint attention involves a three step process whereby a child looks at an object, then looks back at another person (as if to see if they are looking at it also, or to draw their attention to the object) and then looks back to the object again.

**Landau-Kleffner Syndrome (LKS)** - A rare disorder marked by sudden loss of language between the ages of 3-7, after a period of normal development. Individuals with LKS are also characterized by an abnormal EEG.

**Lanterman Act** – The state Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act of 1969 entitles individuals with developmental disabilities to a variety of services, which are overseen by the state Department of Developmental Services (DDS). A developmental disability is defined as a condition that is related to certain mental or neurological impairments (mental retardation, autism, epilepsy, or cerebral palsy) that originates before a person's eighteenth birthday, constitutes a substantial handicap, and is expected to continue indefinitely. Services may include care coordination, assessment and diagnosis, residential services, vocational services, day programs, respite, transportation, advocacy, and other services that support activities of daily living over a person's lifetime.

**Learning Disability (LD)** - A disability in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations. This includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, and developmental aphasia. The term does not apply to individuals who have learning problems that are primarily the result of physical or mental disabilities, behavior disorder, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

**Mediation** - Procedural safeguard to resolve disputes between parents and schools; must be voluntary, cannot be used to deny or delay right to a due process hearing; must be conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques.

**Mainstreaming** - Placement of a child in a class room with non-disabled peers versus a separate classroom. This term does not actually appear in law. It refers to IDEA's preference that every child receive their education in the least restrictive environment for and has been most widely used to refer to the return of children with mild disabilities to a regular classroom for a portion of each school day.

**Non-Verbal Communication** – Facial expressions, tone of voice, gestures, eye contact, spatial arrangements, patterns of touch, expressive movement, cultural differences and other acts of expression involving no or minimal use of spoken language. Research suggests that nonverbal communication is more important in understanding human behavior than words alone and critical to social development and comprehension.

**Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)** - Having a tendency to perform certain repetitive acts or ritualistic behavior to relieve anxiety.

**Occupational Therapy** - A therapy, treatment, or instructional support provided by an occupational therapist to the child, family, and/or pertinent members of the child's environment. Occupational therapy helps develop adaptive or physical skills that will aid in daily living and improve interactions with a person's physical and social world.

**Perseveration** - Repetitive movement or speech, or sticking to one idea or task that has a compulsive quality to it. This differs from OCD in that people with OCD are generally bothered by their compulsions and know that they are non-functional. People with ASD tend to not show a desire to cease their behaviors, nor identify them as not meaningful.

**Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD)** - is used as a non-specific, generic term referring to a group of related disorders which share certain essential features: qualitative impairments in both verbal and non-verbal communication, difficulty with reciprocal social interaction and a restricted stereotypic pattern of behaviors. The most well known example of PDD is autism.

**Pervasive Developmental Disorder Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)** - This category is used when there are impairments across all three areas of characteristics for autism, but the number of symptoms needed to meet criteria for other types of PDD are not met. In some children it is very difficult to distinguish the subtle differences between Autism and PDD NOS.

**Phenotype** – The visible properties of an organism that are produced by the interaction of the genes and of the environment.

**Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)** – A communication program that utilizes pictures and other visual clues. The program is developed by linking visual clues to areas of interest that attract the child. After the adult knows what a child wants by having watched the child, a picture is made of the object. The picture is then paired with the real item. Physical help is given to pick up the picture and this prompt is slowly faded out over time. The process is then expanded to make sentences with the pictures. PECS has six phases: 1) requesting items or routines by physically assisting the picture exchange; 2) expanding spontaneous use of the picture exchange; 3) Discriminating between pictures; 4) Building Sentence Structure; 5) Responding to verbal questions/prompts such as "What do you want?"; 6) Commenting about a question. Often two trainers are used to develop spontaneous communication: communicative partner and a physical prompter.

**Pivotal Response Therapy (PRT)** - PRT is a form of Applied Behavior Analysis that aims to provide opportunities for learning within the context of the child's natural environment. "Pivotal Areas" are developmental domains that when targeted by PRT interventions lead to large collateral changes in other – often untargeted – areas of functioning and responding. The two primary pivotal areas are motivation and self-initiations. The other three are self-management, empathy, and the ability to respond to multiple signals, or cues. Pivotal response therapy uses a play environment to teach skills

such as turn-taking, communication, and language. This training is child-directed: the child makes choices that direct the therapy (PRT also emphasizes parents as the primary intervention agents). Drs. Lynn & Robert Koegel have been the leaders in developing PRT.

**Pragmatics** – The analysis of language in terms of the situational context within which utterances are made.

**Procedural Safeguards Notice** – A requirement that schools provide full easily understood explanation of procedural safeguards that describe parent’s right to an independent educational evaluation, to examine records, to request mediation and due process.

**Prosody** – Refers to the use of vocal stress and intonation to convey a meaning.

**Reasonable Accommodation** - Adoption of a facility or program that can be accomplished without undue administrative or financial burden.

**Refrigerator Mother** - Slang jargon phrase (and now considered pejorative) that was previously used to describe mothers of children with autism who were perceived as “acting coldly” and erroneously thought by some researchers to be the underlying cause of the child’s autism.

**Regional Center** – A statewide system of twenty-one locally based, state funded, private nonprofit agencies that provide diagnostic, case management and other services to individuals with developmental disabilities and that help individuals and their families find and access those services.

**Rehabilitation Counseling Services** - Related service; includes career development, preparation for employment, vocational rehabilitation services funded under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

**Rett’s Disorder** – This neurobiological disorder is a condition found only in females who have apparently normal pre and perinatal development, with onset of symptoms after 5 months of age. These include decelerated head growth, loss of purposeful hand movements, and development of psychomotor retardation.

**Screening** – A brief process designed to identify individuals with an increased risk of having disorders that warrant immediate attention, interventions or more comprehensive review. Screening is not intended to provide an accurate diagnosis, but to distinguish those individuals who are particularly at risk and may require a more comprehensive evaluation in order to identify specific deficits.

**Section 504** - Provision of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 which prohibits recipients of federal funds from discrimination against persons with disabilities.

**Sensory Integration Theory** - The sensory integration theory of the relationship of brain function and behavior is based on consideration of three important postulates: a) Learning is dependent on the ability of the child to take in sensory information from the environment and from his body movements, to process and integrate this sensory input within his central nervous system and to use this sensory information to plan and organize behavior; 2) If the child has deficits in processing and integrating sensory input, conceptual and motor learning suffer from loss of the ability to plan and act on productive behavior; 3) Conceptual and motor learning will be enhanced by providing repeated opportunities for expanded sensory intake. Meaningful activities promote planning and organizing of adaptive behavior by improving the planning and organizing of adaptive behavior by improving the ability of the child's central nervous system to process and integrate sensory input.

**Social Reciprocity** – A term that describes the concept of “mutual responsiveness” in the context of interpersonal contact, such as awareness of and ability to respond appropriately to other people.

**Social Referencing** – An aspect of early social development whereby the infant or toddler uses the nonverbal social cues of another to express or share excitement, pleasure or other emotions with another individual. This is often impaired or absent in children with autism.

**Special Education Local Planning Area (SELPA)** – A local educational agency that is intended to provide countywide support to special education staff and administrators. These services may include the following areas: professional development; assessment; classroom management; inclusion of students with disabilities; Individual Education Program (IEP) development; materials selection; research-based instruction; resource specialist certification; special education legal compliance; and work to school transition.

**Special Education** - Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including (1) instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and (2) instruction in physical education. (20 U.S.C. §1401)

**Speech/Language Impairment (SLI)** - A communication disorder such as stuttering, impaired articulation, severe disorders of syntax, semantics or vocabulary, or functional language skills, or a voice impairment, as determined by evaluation pursuant to section 15-766, to the extent that it calls attention to itself, interferes with communication or is seen as a primary cause of behavioral difficulties.

**Speech/Language Therapy** - A planned program to improve and correct speech and/or language or communication problems in people who are not thought to be able to improve without such help.

**Splinter Skills** – An isolated area of strength that often does not generalize across learning environments. These abilities are often widely discrepant from other areas of functioning.

**Stereotypic Behavior** – Repetitive movements of objects or repetitive and complex motor mannerisms including hand or whole body movement such as clapping, hand flapping, whole-body rocking, dipping, swaying, finger flicking etc.

**Stimming** - The informal term for self-stimulation or stereotypic behaviors.

**Syndrome** – A set of clinical signs or a series of behaviors occurring together that often point to a single disorder or condition as the cause.

**Tactile Defensiveness (hypersensitivity to touch)** - An individual with tactile defensiveness appears to overreact to sensation that most people do not particularly notice, or are not bothered by. Common signs of tactile defensiveness include: sensitivity to certain types of clothes or fabrics; preference or aversion to foods which seems texture related; avoidance of touching substances such as finger paint or mud, or of getting one's hands messy; avoidance of walking barefoot on particular surfaces such as sand or grass; a greater than normal resistance to having teeth brushed, hair combed or face washed; and a tendency to prefer to touch rather than be touched, especially when the touching is unexpected.

**Theory of Mind** - The ability to infer mental states in others, to understand that others have beliefs, desires and intentions that are different from one's own. This function is often impaired in individuals with autism.

**Transition Planning** - At a minimum, this is planning for adolescents' post-school lives and must begin by age 14-1/2. This involves preparation of a document called an Individual Transition Program (ITP). Good practice may involve planning for earlier transitions as well as incorporating such plans into the child's IEP.

**Treatment & Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH)** - A therapeutic approach that is broadly based on the idea that individuals with autism are able to more effectively use and understand visual cues. It focuses on promoting independence by using items such as picture schedules to break down tasks step-by-step. This enables an individual to better comprehend and perform the task independently. This approach often aids receptive communication and sequential memory. This program was developed at the University of North Carolina.

**Transition** - The process of bridging the time and environments between two settings, programs, or life situations.

**Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales** – A scale that assesses personal and social sufficiency of individuals from birth to adulthood. These scales are applicable to individuals with a wide array of abilities and are sometimes used to evaluate students possibly requiring special education.