



Glossary of Special Education Terms for Parents

(Bison Bridge Behavioral Insights Parent Resource — K–12 Edition)



Common Terms You Might Hear

This glossary is designed to help families better understand the language used in school meetings and documents. These are terms you may encounter when navigating special education services in Kansas.

A

Accommodations – Changes to how a student learns or accesses information without changing the learning goal (for example, extended time on a test)

Annual Review – A required yearly meeting where the IEP team reviews and updates a student’s plan

Assessment – Tools or strategies used to gather information about a student’s skills, behavior, or needs

B

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) – A written plan to help prevent and respond to specific behaviors by teaching new skills

C

Consent – A parent’s written permission for evaluations or services; must be informed and voluntary

Continuum of Services – A range of placement options from general education to more specialized settings based on student needs

D



Due Process – A formal way to resolve disagreements between families and schools, often involving mediation or hearings

E

Eligibility – A decision made by the IEP team based on data to determine if a child qualifies for special education services under IDEA

Evaluation – A set of tests and observations used to understand a student’s strengths and challenges and determine eligibility

Extended School Year (ESY) – Services provided beyond the regular school year for students who need them to maintain progress

F

FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) – A legal right under IDEA requiring schools to provide individualized support that allows a student with disabilities to make progress in school

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA) – A process used to understand why a behavior is happening and guide a Behavior Intervention Plan

G

General Education – The standard education program for all students, which includes access to the curriculum and participation with peers

I

IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) – The federal law that governs special education

IEE (Independent Educational Evaluation) – A second opinion evaluation done by a professional not employed by the school

IEP (Individualized Education Program) – A legal document outlining goals, services, and supports for a student with a disability

IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan) – A plan for children from birth to age 3 receiving early intervention services

L



LRE (Least Restrictive Environment) – The setting where a student can make progress while learning alongside peers as much as possible

M

Modification – A change to what a student is expected to learn (for example, simplified assignments)

MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) – A framework schools use to provide layers of academic and behavioral support for all students

P

Parent Rights – Legal protections that ensure families can participate in and challenge decisions made by the school

Present Levels of Performance (PLOP) – A section of the IEP that describes how the student is currently doing in school

Prior Written Notice (PWN) – A written explanation the school must give before changing or refusing services

R

Related Services – Support services that help a student benefit from special education (such as speech therapy or transportation)

Recoupment – The time it takes for a student to regain skills after a break; often used in ESY decisions

S

Section 504 Plan – A plan for students with disabilities who do not need special education but still need accommodations

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) – Customized teaching methods or strategies used to meet a student's unique learning needs

Supplementary Aids and Services – Tools or supports provided in general education classrooms to help students succeed



Important Reminder

Understanding special education terms can help you feel more confident and informed. You never have to be afraid to ask a team member to explain something in plain language.

For more definitions and support, visit www.ksde.org or bring this glossary with you to your next meeting.