



## Vocabulary

A PEATC  
Do You Know  
Factsheet for Virginia's Parents

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Special education has an entire vocabulary of its own! When parents are familiar with this vocabulary they are more confident and competent in planning with school personnel.

This list provides families with basic vocabulary words and terms they are likely to read in school reports or hear when they participate in school meetings.

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## Do You Know Key Special Education Vocabulary?

**Assistive Technology** – Devices, or services, or both that are made available if required as part of a child's special education or related services. School purchased or leased AT devices in the child's home or other setting are required if the child's IEP team decides that the student needs access to those devices in order to receive FAPE.

**BIP - Behavioral Intervention Plan** – Following the conduct of a functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), and IEP team develops the BIP. The BIP uses positive behavioral interventions and supports to address behaviors that interfere with the learning of the child, or interfere with the learning of others, or require disciplinary action.

**Buckley Amendment** – More commonly known as the Family educational rights and Privacy Act of 1974. The law gives parents and students (over age 18) the right to see, correct and control access to school records.

**Due Process** – A system of procedures ensuring that an individual will be notified of, and have opportunity to contest, decisions made about him. As it pertains to Special Education, due process refers to the legal right to appeal any decision regarding any portion of the process (evaluation, eligibility, IEP or IFSP, placement, etc.)

**Due Process Hearing** – A formal session conducted by an impartial hearing officer to resolve special education disagreements between parents and school systems.

**Eligibility** – The determination of whether or not a child qualifies to receive early intervention or special education services based on meeting established criteria.

**ESY – Extended School Year** – Special education provided during summer months to students found to require year-round services to receive an appropriate education.

**Evaluation** – The process of collecting information about a student's learning strengths and needs through a series of tests, observations, and talks with the student, the family, and others. (May also be called Assessment.)

**FAPE – Free Appropriate Public Education** – The words used in the federal law (IDEA) to describe a student's right to a special education program that will meet his or her individual special learning needs, at no cost to the family.

**FBA - Functional Behavioral Assessment** – A process to determine the underlying causes or *functions* of a child's behavior that is keeping him from learning or causing him to disrupt his peers' learning. (See Behavioral Intervention Plan.)

**Functional Life Skills** - Skills that will allow students to participate in in-school and out-of-school activities with other students of the same age.

**General Curriculum** – The same curriculum used with children without disabilities adopted by the school for all children from preschool through high school. The term relates to the content of the curriculum and not to the place where the curriculum is taught.

**IDEA** – The Individual with Disabilities Education Act of 2004

**IEP** – Individualized Educational Plan

**IFSP** – Individualized Family Service Plan for children with disabilities under age 3.

**Inclusion** – An effort to make sure students with disabilities go to school with their friends and neighbors, while also receiving the “specially designed instruction and support” they need to achieve high standards and succeed as learners.

**LRE – Least Restrictive Environment** – The legal requirement to educate children with disabilities in general education classrooms with children who are not disabled to the maximum extent possible.

**Manifestation Determination Review** – A process to review all relevant information regarding the relationship between a child’s disability and his/her behavior that is subject to disciplinary action.

**Referral** – A formal notification to the early intervention system or local school system that a child is experiencing learning or developmental difficulties and may require a full evaluation for early intervention or special education. A referral should be in writing and may be made by a family member, teacher, or other professional.

**Related Services** – Special services offered by the school to support the student’s success in achieving high expectations for his academic and post school goals. Examples of related services include physical and occupational therapy, speech-language therapy, transportation, counseling, job shadowing opportunities, etc.

**Section 504** – The section of the federal rehabilitation act that requires that students with disabilities be given equal access to education. The regulations of this civil rights law are less comprehensive than the regulations of IDEA but offer similar benefits.

**SOLs – Standards of Learning** – In Virginia, the SOLs set expectations for teaching and learning. They are statements of knowledge and skills that all children are expected to learn and use in solving day-to-day problems and in becoming productive citizens. Student learning is measured through the Standards of Learning assessments in grades three through eight and for certain courses in high school.

**Transition Services** – services designed to enhance the movement from school to the workplace, technical training or to higher education. Transition services may be incorporated into a child’s IEP as early as the third grade.

## Resources

**Parent’s Guide to Special Education, Revised 2010**, Virginia Department of Education, Division of Special Education and Student Services <http://www.doe.virginia.gov>

**Negotiating the Special Education Maze, a Guide for Parents and Teachers, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition**, Anderson, Chitwood, Hayden & Takemoto, woodbine House, Inc., 6510 Bells Mill Rd., Bethesda, Maryland 20817. 2008.



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