A Teacher’s Guide to Special Education

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* A reminder to check for updates as special education law is constantly changing
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As our classrooms become populated with more mentally, physically, and learning disabled students, our teachers often find themselves wondering how to conduct their classrooms. Today, there are a variety of disabilities and each has its own unique set of characteristics. Based upon this simple fact, it makes sense that teachers do not always have the necessary knowledge to conduct their lessons and help their students in the most effective ways possible. This guide to special education has been created to help inform elementary and secondary teachers about the special education students that they are teaching and effective methods that they can use in their classrooms. We have included information that will help a teacher associate themselves with the services a special education student might require and what you can do to have the most positive impact on each student.

Although there is a great deal of controversy surrounding the topic of full inclusion (in which disabled students attend regular education classes on a full time basis,) the best approach that teachers can take in tackling the controversy, is learning the best methods and strategies to implement in teaching each of their students. Therefore, whether or not inclusion is beneficial to all students or not, is unimportant. What is important is that teachers gain a general knowledge about services that special education students may need. Therefore, teachers need to know what the common traits, habits, and environments are of each individual student. This further means that the strategies they use need to be appropriate for general education students as well. Lastly, and most importantly, elementary and secondary education teachers need to familiarize themselves with the state laws and mandates that dictate what and how they teach in their classroom.

The definitions, answers, possible solutions, and strategic methods that answer the above questions are contained in the following pages. This guide to special education is meant to be precise and to the point. It is intended for the elementary and secondary teacher who is struggling to maintain the attention of his or her special education students and is questioning whether or not they are even learning. This collection of information is a guide for teachers who have found themselves in both pleasant and unpleasant teaching situations, and who constantly questions about what and how they are teaching their students.
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IEPs According to Dr. Seuss

Do you like these IEPs?

I do not like these IEPs.  
I do not like them, Jeeze Louise.  
We test, we check  
We plan, we meet,  
But nothing ever seems complete.

Would you, could you  
Like the form?

I do not like the form I see.  
Not page 1, not 2, not 3.  
Another change  
A bland new box.  
I think we all  
Have lost our rocks.

Could you all meet here or there?

We could not all meet here or there.  
We cannot all fit anywhere.  
Not in a room  
Not in the hall.  
There seems to be no space at all.

Would you, could you meet again?

I cannot meet again next week.  
No lunch, no prep.  
Please hear me speak.  
No, not at dusk. No, not at dawn.  
At 4 PM I should be gone.

Could you hear while all speak out?  
Would you write the words they sprout?
I could not hear, I would not write.
This does not need to be a fight.
Sign here, date there,
Mark this, check that.
Beware the students’ ad-vo-cat(e)

You do not like them
So you say.
Try again! Try again!
And you may.

If you will let me be,
I will try again
You will see.

Say!

I almost like these IEPs.
I think I’ll write 6,003.
And I will practice day and night
Until they say
“You got it right!”
Common Questions Regarding Special Education

What are some pertinent regulations regarding Special Education today?
Some pertinent regulations regarding special education in Pennsylvania today are Chapter 14, Chapter 711, Chapter 15: Protecting Handicapped Students, IDEA, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

What are the categories of disabilities?
According to IDEA, there are 14 specific terms associated with the term “child with a disability.” They are: autism, deaf-blindness, deafness, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment including blindness.

What do I need to know about teaching students with disabilities?
There are different strategies for teaching students with each individual disability. Turn to page 12 of the Teachers Guide to Special Education for a list of teaching strategies and ideas on how to adapt and modify teaching strategies to fit these students’ needs.

As a general education teacher, what do I need to do?
General education teachers need to work with the special education teachers to create a welcoming environment for every student. They also must be able to change his or her curriculum and teaching styles to support the academic abilities of each individual student.

Isn't it the Learning Support teacher’s job to provide all special education services?
No, the general education teacher and the special education teacher must work together and bring their skills, training, and perspectives to come up with ideas and curriculum plans that is in the best interest of each child. Together, you can develop lessons and activities that match the learning styles, strengths, and special needs of the child.

What is inclusion?
Inclusion is the idea that all children, including those with disabilities, should and can learn in a regular classroom.

What is FAPE?
FAPE stands for Free and Appropriate Public Education. Under IDEA, every child with a disability is entitled to free and appropriate public education.

What is an IEP?
An IEP is a written plan of specially designed instruction for the appropriate education of an exceptional student.

IEP→ Individualized Education Program
**Who is required to attend an IEP meeting?**
There are several people that are required to attend an IEP meeting: one of both of the student’s parents, the student (age 16 or earlier), the regular education teacher, the special education teacher, others deemed appropriate by parents or school personnel, a representative of the school district.

**What is progress monitoring and who is required to do it?**
Progress monitoring is a scientifically-based practice that is used to assess students’ academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring involves:
- Collecting and analyzing data to determine student progress toward specific skills or general outcomes.
- Making instructional decisions based on the review and analysis of student data.
Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class.

The classroom teacher is expected to progress monitor each student in the class to determine their current academic performance levels throughout the school year.

**What is the difference between accommodations and modifications?**
Accommodations are changes in formats or procedures that enable students to participate readily rather than be limited by disabilities. Modifications are more extensive changes of both difficulty level and/or content quantity.

**Why make adaptations?**
Adaptations are required when materials are appropriate for the students but need simple modifications to make them more accessible to the students.

**What is a continuum of services?**
A continuum of services insures all students will receive or have access to the services he or she may need to meet their academic needs.

**What are positive behavior supports?**
Positive Behavior Supports consider what is important to the person and for the person and implements those values into a comprehensive plan to address challenging behavior. Positive behavior supports focus on valued outcomes such as teaching or strengthening skills, enhancing relationships, and increasing participation in the community.

**What is a Functional Behavior Assessment?**
Functional Behavior Assessment is generally considered to be a problem-solving process for addressing student problem-behavior.

**What are related services?**
Related service is the term for those services a disabled child needs in order to benefit from special education.
What are transition services?
Transition services are defined as a coordinated set of activities that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, based on the individual student’s needs, preferences and interests.

What are supplementary services?
Supplementary services are services a child needs to participate with non-disabled children in the regular classroom and in other education-related settings, such as in extracurricular activities nonacademic settings, to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate in the least restrictive environment.

What is assistive technology?
Assistive technology is a term that includes assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices for people with disabilities and includes the process used in selecting, locating, and using them.

What is the purpose of an extended school year?
Extended School Year (ESY) is a program that may provide a disabled child with services during the summer months. ESY programming should be offered to a student who regresses significantly in academic, social and/or related skills that are outlined in that child’s Individualized Educational Program when the child is out of school for an extended period of time.
Special Education Regulations

Chapter 14
The Special Education regulations in Pennsylvania for school districts are found under the 22 PA Code, Chapter 14. Chapter 14 provides regulatory guidance to ensure compliance with the federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, and its regulations. The provisions of Chapter 14 ensure that all students with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that is designed to enable the students to participate fully and independently in the community, including preparation for employment or higher education. Chapter 14 also ensures that the rights of students with disabilities and parents of these students are protected.

Chapter 711
Charter School and Cyber Charter School Services and Programs for Children with Disabilities, specifies how the Commonwealth, through the Department of Education, will meet its obligation to ensure that charter schools comply with the IDEA and its implementing regulations in 34 CFR Part 300 (relating to assistance to states for the education of children with disabilities).

Chapter 15: Protecting Handicapped Students
This chapter addresses a school district's responsibility to comply with the requirements of Section 504 and its implementing regulations at 34 CFR Part 104 (relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap in programs and activities receiving or benefiting from federal financial assistance) and implements the statutory and regulatory requirements of Section 504.

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 1997
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, as PL 94-142 is now called, makes special education and related services (physical education, counseling, transportation, etc.) a federal entitlement for students with disabilities. It requires that these students be offered a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment and focuses on parent participation, procedural safeguards and confidentiality. Amendments have extended the entitlement for education to students three to five and addressed the needs of infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. States receiving federal education funds are required to identify and evaluate students with disabilities and offer them an individualized education plan (IEP) or, in the case of infants and toddlers, an individual family service plan (IFSP) of special education and related services.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
This law protects people with disabilities from discrimination in any program or activity receiving federal funding. Students with disabilities that substantially limit a major life activity such as learning, working, hearing, speaking, etc. may require an individual accommodation plan or specific services to ensure access to education and school sponsored activities.
Categories of Disabilities

There are 14 specific primary terms included in IDEA under the lead definition of "child with a disability." These federal terms and definitions guide how States define disability and who is eligible for a free appropriate public education under special education law. In order to fully meet the definition (and eligibility for special education and related services) as a "child with a disability," a child's educational performance must be adversely affected due to the disability.

1. **Autism** means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engaging in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences. The term *autism* does not apply if the child’s educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined in #5 below.

A child who shows the characteristics of autism after age 3 could be diagnosed as having autism if the criteria above are satisfied.

2. **Deaf-Blindness** means concomitant [simultaneous] hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness.

3. **Deafness** means a hearing impairment so severe that a child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

4. **Developmental Delay** for children from birth to age three (under IDEA Part C) and children from ages three through nine (under IDEA Part B), the term developmental delay, as defined by each State, means a delay in one or more of the following areas: physical development; cognitive development; communication; social or emotional development; or adaptive [behavioral] development.

5. **Emotional Disturbance** means a condition exhibiting one 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:
   - 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.

The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance

6. **Hearing Impairment** means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance but is not included under the definition of “deafness.”

7. **Mental Retardation** means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently [at the same time] with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

8. **Multiple Disabilities** means concomitant [simultaneous] impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in a special education program solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blindness.

9. **Orthopedic Impairment** means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

10. **Other Health Impairment** means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that—

(a) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome; and

(b) adversely affects a child’s educational performance.

11. **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, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily
the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities; of mental retardation; of emotional disturbance; or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

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

13. **Traumatic Brain Injury** means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. The term does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

14. **Visual Impairment Including Blindness** means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.
Teaching Students with Disabilities

It is inevitable that you will have the opportunity (and pleasure) of working with special needs students in your classroom. You may need to make accommodations for some and modifications for others. Providing for the needs of special education students will certainly be one of your greatest challenges as a professional educator. Consider these tips and strategies:

Students with Learning Disabilities:
Teaching learning disabled students will present you with some unique and distinctive challenges. Not only will these students demand more of your time and patience; so, too, will they require specialized instructional strategies in a structured environment that supports and enhances their learning potential. It is important to remember that learning disabled students are not students who are incapacitated or unable to learn; rather, they need differentiated instruction tailored to their distinctive learning abilities. Use these appropriate strategies with learning disabled students:

- Provide oral instruction for students with reading disabilities. Present tests and reading materials in an oral format so the assessment is not unduly influenced by lack of reading ability.
- Provide learning disabled students with frequent progress checks. Let them know how well they are progressing toward an individual or class goal.
- Give immediate feedback to learning disabled students. They need to see quickly the relationship between what was taught and what was learned.
- Make activities concise and short, whenever possible. Long, drawn-out projects are particularly frustrating for a learning disabled child.
- Learning disabled youngsters have difficulty learning abstract terms and concepts. Whenever possible, provide them with concrete objects and events—items they can touch, hear, smell, etc.
- Learning disabled students need and should get lots of specific praise. Instead of just saying, “You did well,” or “I like your work,” be sure you provide specific praising comments that link the activity directly with the recognition; for example, “I was particularly pleased by the way in which you organized the rock collection for Karin and Miranda.”
- When necessary, plan to repeat instructions or offer information in both written and verbal formats. Again, it is vitally necessary that learning disabled children utilize as many of their sensory modalities as possible.
- Encourage cooperative learning activities when possible. Invite students of varying abilities to work together on a specific project or toward a common goal. Create an atmosphere in which a true “community of learners” is facilitated and enhanced.

Students with Hearing Impairments
Hearing impairment may range from mildly impaired to total deafness. Although you may not have any deaf students in your classroom, it is quite possible that you will have one or more who will need to wear one or two hearing aids. Here are some teaching strategies:
o Provide written or pictorial directions.
o Physically act out the steps for an activity. You or one of the other students in the class can do this.
o Seat a hearing impaired child in the front of the classroom and in a place where he or she has a good field of vision of both you and the chalkboard.
o Many hearing impaired youngsters have been taught to read lips. When addressing the class, be sure to enunciate your words (but don't overdo it) and look directly at the hearing impaired student or in his or her general direction.
o Provide a variety of multisensory experiences for students. Allow students to capitalize on their other learning modalities.
o It may be necessary to wait longer than usual for a response from a hearing impaired student. Be patient.
o Whenever possible, use lots of concrete objects such as models, diagrams, samples, and the like. Try to demonstrate what you are saying by using touchable items.

**Students with Visual Impairments**

All students exhibit different levels of visual acuity. However, it is quite likely that you will have students whose vision is severely hampered or restricted. These students may need to wear special glasses and require the use of special equipment. It is conceivable that you will need to provide a modified instructional plan for visually limited students. Consider these tips:
o Tape-record portions of textbooks, trade books, and other printed materials so students can listen (with earphones) to an oral presentation of necessary material.
o When using the chalkboard, use white chalk and bold lines. Also, be sure to say out loud whatever you write on the chalkboard.
o As with hearing impaired student, it is important to seat the visually impaired student close to the main instructional area.
o Provide clear oral instructions.
o Be aware of any terminology you may use that would demand visual acuity the student is not capable of. For example, phrases such as “over there” and “like that one” would be inappropriate.
o Partner the student with other students who can assist or help.

**Students who have Physical Impairments**

Physically challenged students include those who require the aid of a wheelchair, canes, walkers, braces, crutches, or other physical aids for getting around. As with other impairments, these students’ exceptionalities may range from severe to mild and may be the result of one or more factors. What is of primary importance is the fact that these students are no different intellectually than the more mobile students in your classroom. Here are some techniques to remember:
o Be sure there is adequate access to all parts of the classroom. Keep aisles between desks clear, and provide sufficient space around demonstration tables and other apparatus for physically disabled students to maneuver.
o Encourage students to participate in all activities to the fullest extent possible.
Establish a rotating series of “helpers” to assist any physically disabled students in moving about the room. Students often enjoy this responsibility and the opportunity to assist whenever necessary.

Focus on the intellectual investment in an activity. That is, help the child use his or her problem-solving abilities and thinking skills in completing an assignment without regard to his or her ability to get to an area that requires object manipulation.

When designing an activity or constructing necessary equipment, be on the lookout for alternative methods of display, manipulation, or presentation.

Physically impaired students will, quite naturally, be frustrated at not being able to do everything the other students can accomplish. Be sure to take some time periodically to talk with those students and help them get their feelings and/or frustrations out in the open. Help the child understand that those feelings are natural but also that they need to be discussed periodically.

### Students with Emotional or Behavioral Problems

Although you will certainly not be expected to remediate all the emotional difficulties of students, you need to understand that you can and do have a positive impact on students' ability to seek solutions and work in concert with those trying to help them. Here are some guidelines for your classroom:

- Whenever possible, give the student a sense of responsibility. Put the student in charge of something (operating an overhead projector, cleaning the classroom aquarium, re-potting a plant), and be sure to recognize the effort the student put into completing the assigned task.
- Provide opportunities for the student to self-select an activity or two he or she would like to pursue independently. Invite the student to share his or her findings or discoveries with the rest of the class.
- Get the student involved in activities with other students—particularly those students who can serve as good role models for the child. It is important that the emotionally disturbed child has opportunities to interact with fellow students who can provide appropriate behavioral guidelines through their actions.
- Discuss appropriate classroom behavior at frequent intervals. Don't expect students to remember in May all the classroom rules that were established in September. Provide “refresher courses” on expected behavior throughout the year.
- Emotionally disabled students benefit from a highly structured program—one in which the sequence of activities and procedures is constant and stable. You will certainly want to consider a varied academic program for all your students, but you will also want to think about an internal structure that provides the support emotionally impaired youngsters need.
- Be sure to seat an emotionally impaired child away from any distractions (highly verbal students, equipment, tools, etc.).
- Whenever possible, keep the activities short and quick. Provide immediate feedback, reinforcement, and a sufficient amount of praise.
Students with ADD or ADHD
Students with ADHD generally have difficulties with attention, hyperactivity, impulse control, emotional stability, or a combination of those factors. When working with ADHD students in your classroom, keep the following in mind:

- Make your instructions brief and clear, and teach one step at a time.
- Be sure to make behavioral expectations clear.
- Carefully monitor work, especially when students move from one activity to another.
- Make frequent eye contact. Interestingly, students in the second row are more focused than those in the first.
- Adjust work time so it matches attention spans. Provide frequent breaks as necessary.
- Provide a quiet work area where students can move for better concentration.
- Establish and use a secret signal to let students know when they are off task or misbehaving.
- Use physical contact (a hand on the shoulder) to focus attention.
- Combine both visual and auditory information when giving directions.
- Ease transitions by providing cues and warnings.
- Teach relaxation techniques for longer work periods or tests.
- Each day be sure students have one task they can complete successfully.
- Limit the amount of homework.
- Whenever possible, break an assignment into manageable segments.
**As a general education teacher, what do I need to do?**

**Teacher competencies needed**

What competencies do general education teachers and special education teachers need to be competent inclusive teachers?

- **Ability to problem solve**, to be able to informally assess the skills a student needs (rather than relying solely on standardized curriculum)
- **Ability to take advantage of children’s individual interests and use their internal motivation for developing needed skills**
- **Ability to set high but alternative expectations that are suitable for the students; this means developing alternative assessments**
- **Ability to make appropriate expectations for EACH student, regardless of the student’s capabilities. If teachers can do this, it allows all students to be included in a class and school**
- **Ability to determine how to modify assignments for students; how to design classroom activities with so many levels that all students have a part. This teaching skill can apply not just at the elementary or secondary level, but at the college level as well. It will mean more activity-based teaching rather than seat-based teaching.**
- **Ability to learn how to value all kinds of skills that students bring to a class, not just the academic skills. In doing this, teachers will make it explicit that in their classrooms they value all skills, even if that is not a clear value of a whole school.**
- **Ability to provide daily success for all students. Teachers have to work to counteract the message all students get when certain students are continually taken out of class for special work.**

Some other competencies that will help general education teachers in an inclusive classroom environment include:

- **A realization that every child in the class is their responsibility. Teachers need to find out how to work with each child rather than assuming someone else will tell them how to educate a child**
- **Knowing a variety of instructional strategies and how to use them effectively. This includes the ability to adapt materials and rewrite objectives for a child’s needs.**
- **Working as a team with parents and special education teachers to learn what skills a child needs and to provide the best teaching approach**
- **Viewing each child in the class as an opportunity to become a better teacher rather than a problem to be coped with or have someone else fix**
- **Flexibility and a high tolerance for ambiguity**
Collaborations Between General and Special Education Teachers

Today, the philosophy in schools is to include all students in the same class, which has brought about teams of general education and special education teachers working collaboratively or cooperatively to combine their professional knowledge, perspectives, and skills.

What role does each teacher play in the classroom?

In the best interest of the child, the general education and special education teachers each bring their skills, training, and perspectives to the team. Resources are combined to strengthen teaching and learning opportunities, methods, and effectiveness.

Typically the primary responsibility of general education teachers is to use their skills to instruct students in curricula dictated by the school system. Typically the primary responsibility of special education teachers is to provide instruction by adapting and developing materials to match the learning styles, strengths, and special needs of each of their students. In special education situations, individual learners' needs often dictate the curricula.

General educators bring content specialization, special education teachers bring assessment and adaptation specializations. Both bring training and experience in teaching techniques and learning processes. Their collaborative goal is that all students in their class are provided with appropriate classroom and homework assignments so that each is learning, is challenged, and is participating in the classroom process.
Inclusion

What is inclusion?
Inclusion is the idea that all children, including those with disabilities, should and can learn in a regular classroom.

Inclusion is a term which expresses commitment to educate each child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the school and classroom he or she would otherwise attend. It involves bringing the support services to the child (rather than moving the child to the services) and requires only that the child will benefit from being in the class (rather than having to keep up with the other students).

Those who support inclusion believe that the child always should begin in the regular environment and be removed only when appropriate services cannot be provided in the regular classroom.

Inclusion is being a part of what everyone else is, and being welcomed and embraces as a member who belongs.

What is mainstreaming?
Mainstreaming refers to the selective placement of special education students in one or more “regular” education classes. Proponents of mainstreaming generally assume that a student must “earn” his or her opportunity to be places in regular classes by demonstrating an ability to “keep up” with the work assigned by the regular teacher.

Those who support mainstreaming believe that a child with disabilities first belongs in the special education environment and that the child must earn his or her way into the regular education environment.

What is full inclusion?
Full inclusion means that all students, regardless of handicapping condition or severity, will be in a regular classroom/program full time. All services must be take to the child in that setting.

Inclusion means:
- Educating all children with disabilities in regular classrooms regardless of the nature of their disabling condition(s).
- Providing all students enhanced opportunities to learn from each other’s contributions.
- Providing necessary services within the regular schools.
- Supporting regular teachers and administrators (e.g., by providing time, training, teamwork, resources, and strategies).
- Having students with disabilities follow the same schedules as non-disabled students.
• Involving students with disabilities in age-appropriate academic classes and extracurricular activities, including art, music, gym, field trips, assemblies, and graduation exercises.
• Students with disabilities using school cafeteria, library, playground, and other facilities along with non-disabled students.
• Encouraging friendships between non-disabled and disabled students.
• Students with disabilities receiving their education and job training in regular community environments when appropriate.
• Teaching all children to understand and accept human differences.
• Placing children with disabilities in the same schools they would attend if they did not have disabilities.
• Taking parents’ concerns seriously.
• Providing an appropriate individualized educational program.

INCLUSION DOES NOT MEAN:
• It does not mean “dumping” students with disabilities into regular programs without preparation or support.
• It does not mean providing special education services in separate or isolated places.
• It does not mean ignoring children’s’ individual needs.
• It does not mean jeopardizing students’ safety or well being.
• It does not mean placing unreasonable demands on teachers and administrators.
• It does not mean ignoring parents’ concerns.
• It does not mean isolating students with disabilities in regular schools.
• It does not mean placing students with disabilities in schools or classes that are not age-appropriate.
• It does not mean requiring that students be “ready” and “earn” their way into regular classrooms based on cognitive or social skills.

Making inclusion work.
Inclusion in school requires a shift in the paradigm, instead of getting the child ready for the regular class, the regular class gets ready for the child. It’s not a decision of zero or one hundred percent, but whatever balance that can be achieved to maximize meeting all of the child’s needs. The regular class is not looked at as how it is, but how it “can be.” Adaptations are made to the materials, the curriculum and/or the expectations of the activities for the individual child, maintaining achievement of all individual and academic goals. The purpose isn’t simply social or academic, but to meet all of a child’s needs together where ever possible.
Here is a list of provisions to make inclusion work:

- "adequate supports and services for the student,
- well-designed individualized education programs,
- professional development for all teachers involved, general and special educators alike;
- time for teachers to plan, meet, create, and evaluate the students together;
- reduced class size based on the severity of the student needs,
- professional skill development in the areas of cooperative learning, peer tutoring, adaptive curriculum, varied learning styles, etc.,
- collaboration between parents, teachers and administrators,
- sufficient funding so that schools will be able to develop programs for students based on student need instead of the availability of funding, or lack thereof."

What does an inclusive classroom look like?

Inclusive classrooms look different all the time because the environment is created by whatever interactions the teacher and students have as a group or as individuals in the group.

It's a lot of students doing different things with people helping them, students moving from one environment to another. It's also a classroom where everybody is smiling, the students are actively engaged, and the teacher is delighted to be there. It sounds like pandemonium and looks messy.

Students spend a lot of time in learning centers where they make a lot of choices about what they're working on. It's a classroom where learning often happens in small groups with peer helping and supporting each others.

It's a classroom with a lot of time for social interaction that means something to curriculum expectations.

It's a classroom that is student-centered. Students have a high level of responsibility for creating their community. They help structure the rules and are expected to follow them and to meet contracted expectations for curriculum.

It's a classroom where students know others will be doing different things and the issue of fairness doesn't come into play because that's just the way it is.

It's a classroom that reaches beyond the classroom and into the community as a resource for learning new skills.

*Inclusion without resources, without support, without teacher preparation time, without commitment, without a vision statement, without restructuring, without staff development, won't work.* -- Mara Sapon-Shevin
Ideas for content area instruction in an inclusive classroom.
- Inclusive education is nothing more than good teaching for all students
- Students take responsibility for their education; they help create the structure of the classroom, including helping to establish rules and academic program
- Teachers have high expectations that all students will meet the rules and academic challenges
- Families are involved
- Curriculum is focused on humanity, on one another’s worth. The students tell their own stories or other’s stories and learn about things that matter in their lives
- Teachers throw out the worksheets and basal reader system: they create curriculum that involves the students.

Ideas for behavior strategies in an inclusive classroom.
Teachers should reconceptualize the classroom and not automatically think bad behavior is the student’s problem and something that needs to be controlled. Here are some ways to begin:
- Classrooms need one main rule-respect one another. After this, if students and teachers create interesting curriculum with material that matters in the students’ lives, then students will be interested, involved, and focused on what they’ve designed
- Teachers need excellent observational skills to determine what caused a behavior problem
- Structure the environment so students are actively engaged and motivated. That will be good teaching for all students. This will involve collaboration and networking. It also means the teacher is not always in control, but is one of a team of problem solvers including students, parents, and other teachers.
- Other common strategies for content area instruction and solving behavior problems include peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and reciprocal teaching. These are all instructional techniques that provide ways for a class to work together toward a common goal, but don’t mean that everyone is doing the same thing.
Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

What is FAPE?
FAPE stands for Free and Appropriate Public Education. Under IDEA, every child with a disability is entitled to free and appropriate public education.

Who is entitled to FAPE?
All qualified persons with disabilities within the jurisdiction of a school district are entitled to a free appropriate public education. The ED Section 504 regulation defines a person with a disability as “any person who (i) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities, (ii) has a record of such an impairment, or (iii) is regarded as having such an impairment.”

For elementary and secondary education programs, a qualified person with a disability is a person with a disability who is:
- of an age during which it is mandatory under state law to provide such services to persons with disabilities;
- of an age during which persons without disabilities are provided such services; or
- a person for whom a state is required to provide a free appropriate public education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). (IDEA is discussed later in the pamphlet.)

In general, all school-age children who are individuals with disabilities as defined by Section 504 and IDEA are entitled to FAPE.

How is an appropriate education defined?
An appropriate education may comprise education in regular classes, education in regular classes with the use of related aids and services, or special education and related services in separate classrooms for all or portions of the school day. Special education may include specially designed instruction in classrooms, at home, or in private or public institutions, and may be accompanied by related services such as speech therapy, occupational and physical therapy, psychological counseling, and medical diagnostic services necessary to the child’s education.

An appropriate education will include:
- education services designed to meet the individual education needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of nondisabled students are met;
- the education of each student with a disability with nondisabled students, to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the student with a disability;
- evaluation and placement procedures established to guard against misclassification or inappropriate placement of students, and a periodic reevaluation of students who have been provided special education or related services; and
- establishment of due process procedures that enable parents and guardians to receive required notices, review their child’s records, and challenge identification, evaluation and placement decisions, and that provide for an impartial hearing with the opportunity for participation by parents and representation by counsel, and a review procedure.
**Education services must meet individual needs**

To be appropriate, education programs for students with disabilities must be designed to meet their individual needs to the same extent that the needs of nondisabled students are met. An appropriate education may include regular or special education and related aids and services to accommodate the unique needs of individuals with disabilities.

One way for ensuring that programs meet individual needs is through the development of an individualized education program (IEP) for each student with a disability. IEPs are required for students participating in the special education programs of recipients of funding under the *IDEA*.

The quality of education services provided to students with disabilities must equal the quality of services provided to nondisabled students. Teachers of students with disabilities must be trained in the instruction of individuals with disabilities. Facilities must be comparable, and appropriate materials and equipment must be available.

Students with disabilities may not be excluded from participating in nonacademic services and extracurricular activities on the basis of disability. Persons with disabilities must be provided an opportunity to participate in nonacademic services that is equal to that provided to persons without disabilities. These services may include physical education and recreational athletics, transportation, health services, recreational activities, special interest groups or clubs sponsored by the school, and referrals to agencies that provide assistance to persons with disabilities and employment of students.

**Students with disabilities must be educated with nondisabled students**

Students with disabilities and students without disabilities must be placed in the same setting, to the maximum extent appropriate to the education needs of the students with disabilities. A recipient of ED funds must place a person with a disability in the regular education environment, unless it is demonstrated by the recipient that the student’s needs cannot be met satisfactorily with the use of supplementary aids and services. Students with disabilities must participate with nondisabled students in both academic and nonacademic services, including meals, recess, and physical education, to the maximum extent appropriate to their individual needs.

As necessary, specific related aids and services must be provided for students with disabilities to ensure an appropriate education setting. Supplementary aids may include interpreters for students who are deaf, readers for students who are blind, and equipment to make physical accommodations for students with mobility impairments.

A recipient of ED funds that places an individual with disabilities in another school is responsible for taking into account the proximity of the other school to the student’s home. If a recipient operates a facility for persons with disabilities, the facility and associated activities must be comparable to other facilities, services, and activities of the recipient.
IEPs - Individualized Education Programs

What is an IEP?
A written plan of specifically designed instruction for the appropriate education of an exceptional student.

Who needs an IEP?
Every student eligible for special education services who
• Has one or more of the recognized disabilities; and
• As a result of the disability, needs specially designed instruction.

For whom is an IEP conference held?
Students who have had a Multidisciplinary Evaluation (MDE).

Who is required to attend an IEP meeting?
- One or both of the student’s parents
- The student, at age 16 or earlier
- A regular education teacher of the child
- A special education teacher of the child
- Others deemed appropriate by parents and/or school personnel
- An individual who can interpret instructional implications of the MDE results
- A representative of the district other than the student’s teacher who
  - Is qualified to provide or supervise the provision of special education
  - Can ensure that the services specified in the student’s IEP will be provided
  - Is knowledgeable about the general curriculum requirements of the district
  - Understands the extent of the district’s resources
  - Will serve as the chairperson on the IEP team

What should teachers do at IEP meetings?
- Provide input in all areas of discussion
- Articulate and advocate for the “educational needs of the student
- Provide as appropriate a “listing” of adaptations, modifications, and resources necessary to help the student be successful in the general education curriculum to the extent that is possible
- Convince parents and school administrators to adequately support personnel so students will succeed
What is the purpose of an IEP?
- For the teacher, an IEP identifies the student’s present education levels, the annual goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks of learning, specially designed instruction, modifications necessary to the general curriculum, and procedures for assessing and reporting the student’s achievement and progress to the parents.
- For the school and program administrators, an IEP provides a mechanism that aids in the procurement of necessary resources, including professional training needs, development of student rosters, and staffing needs.
- For the parent, an IEP explains what is “special” about the child’s instructional program including information about the content if the child’s curriculum, what additional non-instructional services the students will receive and how student progress will be measured and communicated at home.

What information does an IEP contain?
- Current levels of educational performance including how the disability affects the student’s involvement and progress in the general education instructional program
- Measurable annual learning goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks for on-going monitoring and assessment
- An explanation of the extent the student will participate with non-disabled peers and/or in the general curriculum
- A statement about district-wide or statewide assessments such as PA State Assessment (PSSA) including the need for alternative assessments
- Specially designed instruction
- Related services
- Special considerations based on student need
- Personnel supports needed like training, access to materials, etc.
- Projected date for beginning the services as well as a statement concerning the frequency, duration, and location of these services
- Transition services (At age 14 these services should focus on the student’s course of study; at age 16, the services must stress preparation of life skills)
- A behavior management plan is student’s behavior impedes his/her own or learning of others
- Graduation planning
- Exit criteria

What are the timelines for IEP development and implementation?
- After informed consent is received from the parent, the evaluation and report must be completed in 60 calendar day (except for summer break)
- At a minimum, existing IEPs must be revised annually
- An IEP must be implemented within 10 days of its development
Progress Monitoring

What is progress monitoring?
Progress monitoring is a scientifically-based practice that is used to assess students’ academic performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. Progress monitoring involves:

• Collecting and analyzing data to determine student progress toward specific skills or general outcomes.
• Making instructional decisions based on the review and analysis of student data.

Progress monitoring is a way of helping the child learn and the teacher teach.

Progress monitoring can be implemented with individual students or an entire class. To implement progress monitoring we determine the student’s current performance levels, and then identify learning goals that will take place over time. We then regularly measure the student’s academic performance (weekly or monthly), which allows us to compare the student’s expected and actual rates of learning. Thus, we can assess the student’s progress meeting the learning goals, and determine if teaching adjustments are needed to meet the individual student’s learning needs.

Why monitor student progress?
Monitoring student progress through data collection and analysis is an effective way to determine if the classroom instruction is meeting the needs of the student, and benefits all those involved in the education process.

• Teachers can evaluate their instruction based on data, not hunches
• Parents are kept well informed about their child’s progress, supported by specific information about how their child is responding to instruction. Parents can review the data and make suggestions for instructional adjustments when necessary.
• Students know what is expected of them. They receive specific feedback about their performance along the way, and not just at the end of the marking period.
• The IEP team has the data-based information needed to:
  o Determine the current instructional levels
  o Write measurable goals and objectives
  o Determine if the student still meets eligibility for special education and needs specially designed instruction.

Who should be practicing progress monitoring?
Anyone who is interested in improving results for children should be implementing progress monitoring. Whether you are a regular educator, special educator, related services provider, administrator, or family member, you should be interested in implementing research-based progress monitoring practices.
**How does progress monitoring work?**
To implement progress monitoring, the student’s current levels of performance are determined and goals are identified for learning that will take place over time. The student’s academic performance is measured on a regular basis (weekly or monthly). Progress toward meeting the student’s goals is measured by comparing expected and actual rates of learning.

If the child is meeting or exceeding the expectation, the teacher continues to teach the child in the same way. If the child’s performance on the measurement does not meet the expectation, then the teacher *changes the teaching*. The teacher might change the method being used, the amount of instructional time, the grouping arrangement (for example, individual instruction verses small-group instruction), or some other aspect of teaching. In this process, the teacher is looking for the type and amount of instruction that will enable the child to make enough progress toward meeting the goal.

**What are the benefits of progress monitoring?**
When progress monitoring is implemented correctly, the benefits are great for everyone involved. Some benefits include:
- Accelerated learning because students are receiving more appropriate instruction
- More informed instructional decisions
- Documentation of student progress for accountability purposes
- More efficient communication with families and other professionals about students’ progress
- Higher expectations for students by teachers
- Fewer Special Education referrals

Overall, the use of progress monitoring results in more efficient and appropriately targeted instructional techniques and goals, which together, move all students to faster attainment of important state standards of achievement.

**What challenges face progress monitoring?**
- Educators and families need information about the effectiveness of progress monitoring that would encourage them to adopt the practice.
- Teachers and other practitioners need support in translating progress monitoring research into easily implemented, usable strategies.
- Technical assistance on progress monitoring must transfer knowledge in ways that accommodate differences in background, training, and beliefs, as well as differences in the nature and philosophy of the instructional programs and practices already in place.
- This information dissemination must take place in a variety of formats, in usable forms, and at different levels of specificity.
Accommodations and Modifications

Modifications and accommodations are necessary for special needs learners in both instruction and assessments. The teacher’s objective is to facilitate learning, stimulate growth, and provide assessment on specific benchmarks, certification, or mastery.

Accommodations
Accommodations adjust the setting, the input or output of the student, or the conditions under which the student is working.

Purpose: to adjust the learning environment and/or working conditions in order to allow the student to gain access to instruction or to facilitate assessments.

They typically do not include adjustments in the content, test constructs, nor quantity of material for which the learner is responsible. Accommodations may be used in either instruction or testing.

Accommodations for a specific child should be similar from test to test or assignment to assignment. The choices of accommodations used must give students optimal opportunity to demonstrate what they know.

Accommodations are adjustments that make children with special needs capable of participation in their regular grade level educational program or to work more closely with that level than would be possible without any accommodations. Once an accommodation is made, however, the standards of achievement remain the same. Accommodations offer alternative ways for students to acquire information or share what they have learned with you. They do not lower the difficulty level or expectations for the student’s achievement, although there may be changes in teaching materials used, testing materials, or even in the instructional environment. Educators often make accommodations for individual students informally as they teach, but children with special needs may require more formally documenting the need for specific accommodation through an IEP or a 504 plan.
How to make accommodations
Accommodations are changes in formats or procedures that enable students to participate readily rather than be limited by disabilities.

- They “level the playing field”
- Many are shaped by state guidelines
- They are grouped into separate types:
  - **Presentation**: how material is presented to the child
    - How the test looks (is layout clear and uncluttered)
    - Increase of the size of type font
    - Repetition of directions
    - Braille
    - Use of taped books instead of print copy
    - Enlarging worksheets
    - Highlighting key vocabulary terms
    - Drawing boxes around individual math problems
  - **Responses**: how the child demonstrates knowledge
    - Allowing child to mark answers in book instead of paper
    - Oral testing vs. written work
    - Short answers instead of essay
    - Giving non-verbal answers such as pointing to answers
  - **Setting**: when and where the student works
    - The use of a study carrel
    - Providing a quiet environment
    - Special lighting
    - Background music
    - Separate room
  - **Timing/Schedule**: extended time, frequent breaks, time of day
  - **Pacing**: the rate at which new content is presented and the frequency of review. Slower students require more time spent per lesson while gifted students advance more easily and rapidly
**Example of Good Accommodations**

**Reading Test Accommodations**

Use Word Banks on fill-in-the-blank tests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>list choices vertically</th>
<th>underline key words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>single page</td>
<td>short sentences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>limited number of answers</td>
<td>long lines to matching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. It is easier for students with visual problems to read a list when you ______ instead of running across the page.

2. Some students cannot handle processing multiple choices, so you need to adapt the test with a ____________.

3. Long sentences are more difficult to process, so some students need instruction and testing with ____________.

4. Young children and ADD students are more easily motivated when assignments are on a ____________.

5. You can help reading comprehension when you ________________.

6. You should not ask students with visual or motor problems to draw ____________ questions and answers.
Example of Good Accommodations

**MATH ADAPTATIONS**

1. Use blocks to help keep work straight.
   
   Make sure they have enough space --

   
   \[
   \begin{array}{cccc}
   12 & 20 & 51 & 14 \\
   +5 & +4 & +3 & +4 \\
   \end{array}
   \]

2. Use highlighting to help keep columns aligned.

   \[258\times 40\]

3. Give an example to keep alongside homework – remember that generalizing one problem to a new one may not come naturally.

4. Have students do the same problem multiple times so they learn the STEPS instead of the numbers.

5. LET them use a times (X) chart if they must! It reinforces the answers every time they do! This helps with multiplication and division.

6. Use a file card with a diagonal arrow in the lower right corner to navigate times charts. Position the card to the left of the column containing the multiplier; position it above the row with the multiplicand. (The other columns reveal lowest term fractions if you use it correctly.)

7. Arrange worksheets by grouping problems with the same arithmetic signs (e.g., plus, minus). If books are not done that way, help your child arrange his work sheet to do it that way and leave spaces for those skipped. Use rulers to help maintain clean visual lines.
Accommodation Ideas
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Preparation</th>
<th>Setting</th>
<th>Assisting Devices</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Read directions to the students.</td>
<td>28. Allow student to use adaptive or special furniture, such as a study carrel.</td>
<td>36. Allow augmentative communication systems or strategies, including letter boards, picture communication systems, and voice output systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Use sign language or the student's native language to give directions.</td>
<td>29. Test in a separate room or in a small group to reduce distractions.</td>
<td>37. Use FM or other type of assistive listening device.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Quietly repeat directions to individual students.</td>
<td>30. Test in a special education or bilingual classroom, if appropriate.</td>
<td>38. Provide magnifier, large print, or Braille materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Accompany oral directions with written directions.</td>
<td>32. Provide appropriate lighting.</td>
<td>40. Use mounting systems, including slant boards and easels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Provide audiotape directions verbatim.</td>
<td>33. Use preferential seating.</td>
<td>41. Allow counting devices such as a calculator or abacus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Provide entire section(s) of test audiotape verbatim.</td>
<td>34. Secure papers to work area with tape or magnets.</td>
<td>42. Provide pencil grips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Prompt the student to remain on task.</td>
<td>35. Provide for reduced acoustical distraction.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Read test items.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Check periodically to make sure student is marking in correct spaces.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Provide physical assistance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Obtain and use Braille or large print versions of the tests.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Provide written steps for directions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Highlight key words or phrases in directions.</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Mask portions of test to direct student's attention to specific areas.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Change position of paper or alter student's test taking position.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Use colored stickers or highlighters for visual cues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Test Response</strong></td>
<td><strong>Setting</strong></td>
<td><strong>Assistive Devices</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Allow student to answer question orally.</td>
<td></td>
<td>36. Allow augmentative communication systems or strategies, including letter boards, picture communication systems, and voice output systems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Use enlarged answer sheets.</td>
<td></td>
<td>37. Use FM or other type of assistive listening device.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Allow students to mark responses in test booklet.</td>
<td></td>
<td>38. Provide magnifier, large print, or Braille materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Allow student to point to response.</td>
<td></td>
<td>39. Allow alternate writing systems, including portable writing devices and computers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Allow student to answer on a typewriter or computer.</td>
<td></td>
<td>40. Use mounting systems, including slant boards and easels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Allow student to respond on audiotape or videotape.</td>
<td></td>
<td>41. Allow counting devices such as a calculator or abacus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Timing/Scheduling</strong></td>
<td><strong>Other Options</strong></td>
<td><strong>Intentionally teach students to decrease their reliance on accommodations, whenever possible</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Increase or decrease opportunity for movement.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Permit additional breaks or extended rest breaks during test session.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Increase test time.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Provide flexible scheduling.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Intentionally teach students to decrease their reliance on accommodations, whenever possible!*
**Modifications**

Modifications alter choice of content and what is covered – either in scope, difficulty level, or quantity.

*Purpose:* to enable the student to master skills or obtain new learning appropriate to individual needs.

Modifications are more extensive changes of both difficulty level and/or content quantity. Modifications may also change the way material is presented and the nature of testing. Modifications create a different standard for children whose disabilities require more intense adjustments. Modifications are also typically included in an IEP.

In some cases, the teacher modifies the learning task in the beginning stages to permit the student to develop skills that are going to be needed to master the final outcome. While these are technically “modifications,” there is no alteration of the final objective.

An example of a modification may be seen in a spelling test that reduces the number of words to be studied.

Modifications may require using a different textbook with easier reading difficulty and fewer new concepts included in the material. It is perfectly acceptable for a child with special needs to be working on different grade level material in each area of curriculum, but these decisions should be documented in the child’s IEP.

**How to modify materials**

Seek texts with clear page designs, and ample room for the eye to roam. Avoid pages with excessive visual art or distractions.

If you cannot find a text that is appropriate, you can alter one that is marginally useful to make it suitable:

- alter physical appearance – underline text, or cut it up
- break into smaller visual bits
  - by blocking with clear file cards or stiff cardboard
  - cutting up worksheets to shorten activities
- highlight key words in one color
- draw a block around each math problem
- rewrite by hand, or enlarge using a copy machine
- darken faint or "sloppy copies"
- put colored border around pages
- on answer bubble-sheets, use light colored marker to mark off answers by tens
- draw an arrow to selected content
Adaptations

Why make adaptations?
Adaptations are required when materials are appropriate for the students but need simple modifications to make them more accessible to the students.

Accommodations and modifications are two types of adaptations that are made to the environment, curriculum, instruction, or assessment practices in order for students with disabilities to be successful learners and to participate actively with other students in the general education classroom and in school-wide activities.

Adapting existing materials
To adapt existing materials, you can physically alter them to make them sensitive to the learning needs of each individual student. You can rewrite, reorganize, add to, or recast the information so that the student can access regular curriculum material independently.

Example of adapting an existing material:
Teacher can prepare an audiotape and study guide for the student to use while the other students read the text material. This enables the student to hear the material and study the important points that are on the study guide.
Continuum of Services

What is a continuum of services?
A continuum of services insures all students will receive or have access to the resources he or she may need to meet their academic needs.

Services for students with disabilities shall ensure the following:
- education of students in their home school unless the IEP requires some other arrangement
- education with non-disabled students to the maximum extent appropriate
- removal of students from general education setting only when it is documented that education in general education classes using supplementary aides and services cannot be satisfactorily achieved
- access to the general curriculum
- services based upon the students IEP regardless of students disability

Least Restrictive Environment
In most cases, the student with disabilities will be given an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment. In other words, children with disabilities will be educated with their typically developing peers to the maximum extent possible.

The Least Restrictive Environment means children with special needs have the same rights as their typically developing peers to participate in extra-curricular and nonacademic activities unless their disabilities make participation inappropriate. Least Restrictive Environment also means all children with disabilities have the right to attend the school they would have attended is not disabled, unless the Individualized Education Program (IEP) requires other arrangements. It requires the provision of appropriate special education services in a variety of settings.
Positive Behavior Intervention

What are positive behavior interventions (PBI)?
Positive Behavior Interventions consider what is important to the person and for the person and implements those values into a comprehensive plan to address challenging behavior. Positive behavior interventions focus on valued outcomes such as teaching or strengthening skills, enhancing relationships, and increasing participation in the community.

Positive Behavioral Intervention (PBI) is an empirically validated, function-based approach to eliminate challenging behaviors and replace them with prosocial skills. Use of PBI decreases the need for more intrusive or aversive interventions (i.e., punishment or suspension) and can lead to both systemic as well as individualized change.

Positive Behavior Intervention can target an individual student or an entire school, as it does not focus exclusively on the student, but also includes changing environmental variables such as the physical setting, task demands, curriculum, instructional pace and individualized reinforcement. Thus it is successful with a wide range of students, in a wide range of contexts, with a wide range of behaviors.

According to IDEA, PBI is the recommended form of intervention for dealing with challenging behavior in children with disabilities.

How is positive behavior intervention implemented?
PBI is based on behavioral theory; problem behavior continues to occur because it is consistently followed by the child getting something positive or escaping something negative. By focusing on the contexts and outcomes of the behavior, it is possible to determine the functions of the behavior, make the problem behavior less effective and efficient, and make the desired behavior more functional. This often involves changing systems, altering environments and teaching new skills, as well as focusing on the problem behavior.

The most crucial part of devising PBI plans is the Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA), which reveals information about the antecedents, consequences, and frequency of challenging behavior. FBAs also help to identify any co-occurring variables. Conducting FBAs doubles the success rate of an intervention.

PBI plans are individualized and data-based and include procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reassessing the process. PBI should be a collaborative effort among parents, school psychologists, teachers, counselors and administrators; all partners should be committed to the plan and its implementation. PBI is more effective when it includes the target individual as well as other significant individuals (i.e., peers, teachers, and parents).
What are the benefits of positive behavior intervention?
All students, both disabled and non-disabled, can benefit from PBI:

- Research conducted over the past 15 years has shown that PBI is effective in promoting positive behavior in students and schools. Use of PBI as a strategy to maintain appropriate social behavior will make schools safer. Safer schools are more effective learning environments.
- Schools that implement system-wide interventions also report increased time engaged in academic activities and improved academic performance.
- Schools that employ system-wide interventions for problem behavior prevention indicate reductions in office discipline referrals of 20-60%.
- Appropriately implemented PBI can lead to dramatic improvements that have long-term effects on the lifestyle, functional communication skills, and problem behavior in individuals with disabilities.
- A review of research on PBI effectiveness showed that there was over a 90% reduction in problem behavior in over half of the studies; the problem behavior stopped completely in over 26% of the studies.
**Functional Behavioral Assessments**

**What is a Functional Behavior Assessment?**
This is the process of determining the cause (or “function”) of behavior before developing an intervention. The intervention is then based on the hypothesized cause (function) of the behavior.

Functional Behavior Assessment is generally considered to be a problem-solving process for addressing student problem-behavior. It relies on a variety of techniques and strategies to identify the purposes of specific behavior and to help IEP teams select interventions to directly address the problem behavior. Functional behavior assessment should be integrated, as appropriate throughout the process of developing, reviewing, and, if necessary, revising the student’s IEP.

A functional behavioral assessment looks beyond the behavior itself. The focus when conducting a functional behavioral assessment is on identifying significant, pupil-specific social, affective, cognitive, and/or environmental factors associated with the occurrence (and non-occurrence) of specific behaviors. This broader perspective offers a better understanding of the function or purpose behind student behavior. Behavioral intervention plans based on an understanding of "why" a student misbehaves are extremely useful in addressing a wide range of problem behaviors.

**Why do Functional Behavior Assessments?**
Failure to base the intervention on the specific cause (function) very often results in ineffective and unnecessarily restrictive procedures. Without an adequate functional behavior assessment, it is difficult to determine the true function of a problem and therefore, we may select an inappropriate intervention.

**How do you determine the cause or function of a behavior?**
There are three ways of getting at the function (cause) of the behavior:
- interviews and rating scales,
- direct and systematic observation of the person's behavior, and
- manipulating different environmental events to see how behavior changes

The first two are generally referred to as functional assessments whereas the third is generally referred to as a functional analysis.

Several different interviews and rating scales have been developed to try to get at the function (cause) of behavior. However, reliability is usually poor and these should be used only as a starting point for systematic and direct observation of the person’s behavior. Relying exclusively on interviews and rating scales should never be considered a functional assessment. Besides having poor reliability, it would never hold up in court with an expert witness.

A more reliable method involves directly observing the person's behavior in his or her natural environment and analyzing the behavior’s antecedents (environmental events
that immediately precede the problem behavior) and consequences (environmental
events that immediately follow the problem behavior).

Types of problem behavior
Problem behavior typically falls into one or more of these general categories:

- behavior that produces attention and other desired events (e.g., access to
toys, desired activities),
- behavior that has to do with physical environment (too many people,
physical arrangement of the room, lighting in the classroom)
- behavior that has to do with the instruction environment (is the work too
hard? Too easy? Is the pace too fast? Too slow?)
- behavior that has to do with social and non-school factors (has the student
had enough sleep? Enough to eat?)
- behavior that allows the person to avoid or escape demands or other
undesired events/activities, and
- behavior that occurs because of its sensory consequences (relieves pain,
feels good, etc.).

The antecedents and consequences are analyzed to see which function(s) the behavior
fulfills. Problem behavior can also serve more than one function, further complicating
the matter. The interview, combined with direct observation of the behavior is what most
people use in determining the function of the behavior. This is fine when the data
collected on the antecedents and consequences is clear. Most of the time this is
sufficient in determining the behavior’s function(s).

Who should be involved in the Functional Behavior Analysis?
An important question is "Who should be involved in the functional behavioral
assessment?" The interview is important in gathering preliminary information that will
guide later direct observation. As such, it is important to talk to the people who know the
child the best: parents, teachers and significant others.

Direct observation should be carried out only by a person who has been thoroughly
trained on collecting and analyzing this type of information. Directly manipulating
environment events should be conducted only by a well-trained behavior analyst or
someone else with a high degree of training and experience conducting these
manipulations for they can pose danger to the person if not done correctly.

As can be seen, a functional behavioral assessment is more than a group of people
sitting around a table trying to determine the cause. Although it is important to gather
information from significant people in the person’s life, it is not enough.

Someone knowledgeable about behavior must be in the classroom and/or family home
directly observing and measuring the behavior. Although this takes time, it is usually
time well spent because the intervention is more likely to be effective than one
developed without careful consideration of the behavior’s function(s).
Steps in conducting a Functional Behavior Analysis

IDEA does not define how a Functional Behavior Analysis should be done because the process will vary with the needs of each individual child. However, there are several specific steps that are part of every FBA. If a child has many different problem behaviors, it is important to focus on the most serious one or two behaviors. The problem behavior should be described in a way that helps everyone understand exactly what the problems are.

1.) Identify and agree on the behavior(s) that most need to change
2.) Determine where the behaviors occur and where they do not. Identify also what may contribute to these behaviors.
3.) Collect data on the child’s performance from as many sources as possible.
4.) Develop a hypothesis about why problem behaviors occur (the function of the behaviors).
5.) Identify other behaviors that can be taught that will serve the same function for the child.
6.) Test the hypothesis. The team develops and uses positive behavioral interventions that are written into the child’s IEP or behavior intervention plan.
7.) Evaluate the success of interventions.
Related Services

What are related services?
Related services is the term for those services a disabled child needs in order to benefit from special education.

According to IDEA, related services is defined as "transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education..." The following are included within the definition of related services:

• speech-language pathology and audiology services;
• psychological services;
• physical and occupational therapy;
• recreation, including therapeutic recreation;
• early identification and assessment of disabilities in children;
• counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling;
• orientation and mobility services;
• medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes;
• school health services;
• social work services in schools;
• parent counseling and training; and
• transportation

Who is eligible for related services?
Under IDEA, a student must need special education to be considered eligible for related services (unless the related service needed by the child is considered special education rather than a related service under State standards). A child must have a full and individual evaluation to determine:

• if he or she has a disability as defined under IDEA '97, and
• if, because of that disability, he or she needs special education and related services.

The law requires that a child be assessed in all areas related to his or her suspected disability. This includes, if appropriate, evaluating the child's:

• health,
• vision,
• hearing,
• social and emotional status,
• general intelligence,
• academic performance,
• communicative status, and
• motor abilities. [Section 300.532(g)]

A variety of assessment tools and strategies must be used to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child. The evaluation must be sufficiently comprehensive so as to identify all of the child's special education and related services needs, whether or not those needs are commonly linked to the disability category in which he or she has been classified. If the evaluation shows that the child does, indeed,
have a disability and that, because of that disability, he or she needs special education and related services, then he or she meets the criteria for special education and related services.

**Who provides related services?**

Providers of related services in the schools typically include (but are not limited to) professionals such as: school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school health professionals, speech-language pathologists, and occupational and physical therapists. IDEA requires that related services are provided by qualified personnel.

**How are related services provided?**

**Direct Services:**

Direct services usually refers to hands-on, face-to-face interactions between the related services professional and the student. These interactions can take place in a variety of settings, such as the classroom, gym, health office, resource room, counseling office, or playground. Typically, the related service professional analyzes student responses and uses specific techniques to develop or improve particular skills. The professional should also:

- monitor the student's performance within the educational setting so that adjustments can be made to improve student performance, as needed, and
- consult with teachers and parents on an ongoing basis, so that relevant strategies can be carried out through indirect means (see below) at other times.

**Indirect Services:**

Indirect services may involve teaching, consulting with, and/or directly supervising other personnel (including paraprofessionals and parents) so that they can carry out therapeutically-appropriate activities. Good practice is generally thought to include the following aspects:

- The intervention procedure is designed by the related service professional (with IEP team input) for an individual student.
- The related service professional has regular opportunities to interact with the student.
- The related service professional provides ongoing training, monitoring, supervision, procedural evaluation, and support to staff members and parents.

**Where are related services provided?**

Today, schools are emphasizing providing some services to students in natural activities and environments. It is not unusual to find speech-language services integrated into instructional activities in the regular education classroom.

Of course, there may be some services that need to be delivered in a separate setting such as a counseling room or office in order to assure confidentiality for the student and family. Such services may include individual and group counseling, parent counseling, and, frequently, consultation with staff and parents about individual students.
Supplementary Services

What are supplementary services?
Supplementary services are services a child needs to participate with non-disabled children in the regular classroom and in other education-related settings, such as in extracurricular activities. They are one of the most powerful types of interventions available to children with disabilities because they allow the children to be able to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent possible.

Supplementary aids and services can be accommodations and modifications to the curriculum under study or the manner in which that content is presented or a child’s progress is measured. But that’s not all they are or can be. Supplementary aids and services can also include direct services and interventions to the child, as well as support and training for staff who work with that child.

What do supplementary services include?
Supplementary services can include:

- Modifications to the curriculum
- Modifications to the classroom
- Adapted materials
  - Books on tape, large print, highlighted notes
- Adapted equipment
  - Special seat or a cut-out cup for drinking
- Extended time to complete tasks
- Extended test-taking time
- Assistive technology devices
  - Word processor, special software, communication system
- One-on-one Aide
- Training for staff, student, and/or peers
- Note-taker
- Peer tutor
- Collaboration/consultation among staff, parents, and other professionals
- Other accommodations to allow regular classroom participation

The IEP team, which includes the parents, is the group that decides which supplementary aids and services a child needs to support his or her access to and participation in the school environment. The IEP team must really work together to make sure that a child gets the supplementary aids and services that he or she needs to be successful. Team members talk about the child’s needs, the curriculum, and school routine, and openly explore all options to make sure the right supports for the specific child are included.
Transition Services

What are transition services?
Transition services are defined as a coordinated set of activities that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, based on the individual student’s needs, preferences and interests.

Transition services are measurable, postsecondary goals for students based on age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills,

What do transition services provide?
Transition services are aimed at providing students and their families with the practical and experiential skills and knowledge that will assist in a successful transition to adult life. While transition services are provided in each of the following areas, it is important to understand that not every student with disabilities will need to receive all of these services. The available services included in the transition process are:

- instruction
- employment
- post school activities
- community experiences
- activities of daily living
- functional vocational evaluations

More specifically, the intent of transition services is to explore and plan a variety of areas that will allow the student with disabilities to construct a useful and practical bridge to the adult world. This planning is a process that can begin by age 14 years of age or younger (if necessary).

Successful transition services.
Successful transition for students with disabilities results in one of the following outcomes:

- Placement in an appropriate post-secondary education program (community college, four-year college, vocational college, or other training institution that trains individuals for employment);
- Placement in a job that pays a livable wage and provides health benefits, and that the student likes,
- Placement in a supported employment position with an ongoing support system in place and a plan for insuring health benefits; or
- Placement in an ongoing treatment program that the student, the parents, and other care providers deem as appropriate for the student.
**Assistive Technology**

**What is assistive technology?**
Assistive technology is a term that includes assistive, adaptive, and rehabilitative devices for people with disabilities and includes the process used in selecting, locating, and using them.

Assistive technology is technology used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible. Assistive technology can include mobility devices such as walkers and wheelchairs, as well as hardware, software, and peripherals that assist people with disabilities in accessing computers or other information technologies.

Choices of assistive technology must reflect the genuine need of an individual student and it is not always in the best interests of a child to simply replace basic learning foundations with technological programs and aides. However, when selected and used appropriately, technology opens up a wider range of opportunities for the child to take in new learning as well as demonstrate learning with a greater range of choices.

**Examples of assistive technology**

**Reading Technology:**
- Optical character recognition (OCR) technology for scanning written text
  - Large desk-top scanners that are used to scan a page of text
  - Small pen-sized units that are hand-drawn along text one line at a time
- Tape recorders for reading aloud as well as dictation

**Writing Technology:**
- The word processor, a well-known software technology for manipulating text
- Dictation software with a microphone, to create typewritten text from speech
- Spellcheck technology
- Word prediction software that completes a word once the first letter is typed
- Software that “maps” the brainstorming process, making a visual map or flow chart

**Math Technology:**
- Calculators
- Talking calculators with built-in speech synthesizers that state a number, math symbol, or answer
- Touch screens
- Talking-math worksheets that position the cursor and speak the numerals shown on the screen
Constraints on use of assistive technology devices.

- An assistive technology device will be allowed as an accommodation or test modification when it is an integral part of the student’s instructional program.
- Certain test manufacturers state allowable uses of assistive technology on their websites—but not all technological accommodations are considered “standard.”
- Non-standard accommodations mean that the student’s test scores cannot be aggregated into the total collection of test scores from a group.
**Extended School Year**

**What is an extended school year?**
Extended School Year (ESY) is a program which may provide a disabled child with services during the summer months. ESY programming should be offered to a student who regresses significantly in academic, social and/or related skills that are outlined in that child’s Individualized Educational Program when the child is out of school for an extended period of time.

ESY services are individualized instructional programs provided beyond the length of the regular school year for students with disabilities. While ESY services are typically provided during the summer, some students may need ESY services during other breaks, such as holidays.

ESY services must be:
- individualized to meet the unique needs of each eligible student;
- inclusive of instructional and related services (transportation, behavioral support or transition services);
- provided in the least restrictive environment.

School districts may not unilaterally limit the type, amount or duration of ESY services. The number of weeks, days per week and hours per day of services must be based on each student’s unique needs.

**What services are provided as a requirement of Extended School Year?**
Once the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Family Support Plan (FSP) team determines the student’s eligibility, the team must consider all his/her needs to identify the necessary services, which may include:
- instructional
- transportation
- behavioral support
- transition

Since ESY services must be individualized to the unique goals of each eligible student, the team must develop an ESY IEP – a new document or an addendum to the current IEP – that clearly describes the following:
- measurable goals and objectives to be addressed by ESY services;
- type of services, such as instructional, behavioral, transition;
- the amount and duration of each service
- the least restrictive environment in which the services will be provided.

**Who is eligible for Extended School Year?**
Eligibility for ESY services should be determined for each student with a disability and not be limited to specific types of disabilities (although not all students with disabilities require ESY services).
- Students receiving services in Part B programs;
- Students transitioning from Part C to Part B programs whose third birthday is during the summer months;
- Students placed by their parents in private school, but who are dually enrolled in public school;
- Students eligible for services under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

**NOTE:** Students who are eligible for gifted services only are not eligible for ESY services.

### How is eligibility determined?

Several criteria must be considered each year:

- **Regression/recoupment:** When, without ESY services, a student will regress during a school break and will not recover lost skills in a reasonable period of time after the break.
- **Critical point of instruction:** When a student is at a critical point in learning and ESY services are needed to prevent a loss of general education class time; to prevent an increase in special education service time that would result from a lack of academic or social skill development; or to prevent loss of progress made toward a critical skill (self-help, community access, social or behavioral).
- **Emerging skills:** When a student has almost achieved or recently achieved a critical goal, and based on his/her past performance, the student could acquire or maintain the skill with ESY services.
- **Interfering behaviors:** When a student exhibits behaviors (stereotypic, ritualistic, aggressive, self-injurious, etc.) that impact and limit his/her progress on goals.
- **Nature or severity of disability:** When, without ESY services, the nature and/or severity of a student’s disability is likely to prevent him/her from receiving meaningful benefit from the instructional program during the regular school year.
- **Lack of progress:** When, without ESY services, a student’s progress toward a goal will prevent him/her from receiving meaningful benefit from the education program during the regular school year.
- **Special circumstances:** When other special circumstances require ESY services for a student.

### How are summer school and Extended School Year similar?

While general education summer school is not the same as ESY, the ESY needs of some students with disabilities can be met through traditional summer school programs – although students cannot be automatically limited to the length of such a program. Other students, however, require a different venue to receive their ESY services.

Again, the IEP or the FSP team must determine the amount and duration of ESY services for each student, and in some cases, will need more than one location to ensure that ESY services are not limited by the length of established summer school programs.

Students with disabilities who are not eligible for ESY services may elect to attend summer school, and those students must still receive accommodations and modifications identified by their IEP or FSP teams.
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<td>Applied Behavior Analysis</td>
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<td>ADA</td>
<td>Americans with Disabilities Act</td>
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<td>ADD</td>
<td>Attention Deficit Disorder</td>
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<td>ADHD</td>
<td>Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder</td>
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<td>ALD</td>
<td>Assistive Listening Device</td>
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<td>APS</td>
<td>Approved Private School</td>
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<td>ASD</td>
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<td>ASL</td>
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<td>AVTS</td>
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<td>AYP</td>
<td>Adequate Yearly Progress</td>
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<td>BEC</td>
<td>Basic Education Circular</td>
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<td>BICS</td>
<td>Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills</td>
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<td>BIP</td>
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<td>BSE</td>
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<td>CALP</td>
<td>Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency</td>
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<td>CAO</td>
<td>Chief Administrative Officer</td>
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<td>CART</td>
<td>Computer Aided Realtime Translation</td>
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<td>CASSP</td>
<td>Child &amp; Adolescent Service System Program</td>
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<td>CAVP</td>
<td>Corrective Action Verification Plan</td>
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<td>CBA</td>
<td>Curriculum-Based Assessment</td>
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<td>CERC</td>
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<td>CFR</td>
<td>Code of Federal Regulations</td>
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<td>CLD</td>
<td>Cultural and Linguistic Diversity</td>
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<td>COP</td>
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<td>CTC</td>
<td>Career and Technical Education Center</td>
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<td>DIBELS</td>
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<td>FBA</td>
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<td>FERPA</td>
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<td>IAES</td>
<td>Interim Alternative Educational Setting</td>
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<td>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</td>
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<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<td>IEE</td>
<td>Independent Educational Evaluation</td>
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<td>IEP</td>
<td>Individualized Education Program</td>
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<td>LEA</td>
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<td>LEP</td>
<td>Limited English Proficiency</td>
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<td>MAWA</td>
<td>Mutually Agreed Upon Written Arrangement</td>
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<td>MD</td>
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<td>MDT</td>
<td>Multidisciplinary Team</td>
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<td>MOU</td>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding</td>
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<td>MR</td>
<td>Mental Retardation</td>
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<td>NCLB</td>
<td>No Child Left Behind</td>
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<td>NOREP</td>
<td>Notice of Recommended Educational Placement</td>
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<td>O &amp; M</td>
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<td>OCD</td>
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<td>OCDEL</td>
<td>Office of Child Development and Early Learning</td>
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<td>PaTTAN</td>
<td>Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network</td>
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<td>PDD</td>
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<td>PDD-NOS</td>
<td>Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified</td>
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<td>PDE</td>
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<td>Pennsylvania Value Added Assessment System</td>
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<td>SDI</td>
<td>Specially Designed Instruction</td>
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<td>SEA</td>
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<td>SLD</td>
<td>Specific Learning Disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>STL</td>
<td>Short-Term Loan</td>
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<td>SWPBIS</td>
<td>Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support</td>
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<td>TBI</td>
<td>Traumatic Brain Injury</td>
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<td>TDD</td>
<td>Telecommunication Device for the Deaf</td>
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<td>TSS</td>
<td>Therapeutic Staff Support</td>
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<td>Teletypewriter</td>
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<td>UDL</td>
<td>Universal Design for Learning</td>
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<td>VI</td>
<td>Visual Impairment</td>
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FROM THE PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
While walking in a toy store
The day before today,
I over heard a Crayon Box
With many things to say.

"I don't like red!" said Yellow.
And Green said, "Nor do I !
And no one here likes Orange,
But no one knows quite why."

"We are a box of crayons
that really doesn't get along,"
Said Blue to all the others.
"Something here is wrong!
Well, I bought that box of crayons
And took it home with me
And laid out all the crayons
So the crayons could all see

They watched me as I colored
With Red and Blue and Green
And Black and White and Orange
And every color in between

They watched as Green became the grass
And Blue became the sky.
The Yellow sun was shining bright
On White clouds drifting by.

Colors changing as they touched,
Becoming something new.
They watched me as I colored.
They watched till I was through.

And when I'd finally finished,
I began to walk away.
And as I did the Crayon box
Had something more to say........

"I do like Red!" said the Yellow
And Green said, "So do I!"
And Blue you are terrific!
So high up in the sky."

"We are a Box of Crayons
Each of us unique,
But when we get together
The picture is complete"