

## **SPECIAL NEEDS DEFINITIONS/TERMS:**

*Disclaimer: Please check your local LEA or state agency for the most up to date and accurate information on the following terms. Definitions are meant to be a brief overview and are not intended as final authority on any subject.*

**IEP**- Individualized Education Plan. This is a special education plan written to meet the academic goals and objectives of a student receiving special education services. It is to be reviewed annually.

**IFSP**- Individualized Family Service Plan. This is a special education plan for a student who is preschool age and may only receive one or more services either at school or as home based instruction. The plan is also considered a commitment to the family for early intervention.

**Amendment**-Amendments are changes to the annual IEP or IFSP. Only the portions of the document that have been changed are included in the amendment. It is not a complete IEP/IFSP, but a portion of these documents. Always provide schools with a copy of the original IEP that was amended so, the school has a complete document to review.

**Initial Referral**-When an individual first suspects a child may have a learning disability, an initial referral is made and the process begins to access the current situation. Many localities have teams who review initial referrals called Child Study Teams.

**Child Study Teams (CS)**- A team of professionals to include special education teachers, school psychologists, nurses, doctors, therapist (s) and always the parents who gather to review an initial referral for special education services.

**Evaluations**-Special Education Evaluations are norm-referenced tests that compare your child's abilities and performance with other children on the same competencies, in the same peer group. Standardized scoring is obtained which helps to determine eligibility or non-eligibility for special education services.

**Primary Service** (Disability)-This category identifies your child's primary learning disability. Your child must first be found eligible for a primary service in order to receive related services. Students can be served with a primary service category, a secondary service category and also receive additional related services. (i.e.; Primary Developmental Delay, Secondary Speech and Language, Related Occupational Therapy).

**Related Services**-Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy are the most common related services. Speech and Language services can be primary, secondary or a related service, but not all at once.

**Physical Therapy**-Students meeting this service requirement have difficulty with gross motor skills (large body muscles).

**Occupational Therapy**-Students meeting this service requirement have difficulty with fine motor skills. Handwriting skills and mathematical computations are often most impacted.

**IDEA**- Individual Disabilities Education Act. IDEA is the basis for special education programs and serves as the guiding principles that govern special education services from all localities. OCONUS and CONUS schools implement IDEA in their special education programs. However, each locality may interpret portions of IDEA differently, but still have to adhere to its guiding principles as foundation for their special education programs. Each localities special education regulations are posted on each state's department of education website and available to download. OCONUS localities can locate versions on the DoDEA websites.

**FBA**- Functional Behavior Assessment. This is a tool used to collect data to determine the reason for a child's behavior. Data is collected that ascertains when the behavior took place, where, what occurred before/after the incident (triggers), payoff the child received, etc... Once the behavior can be identified and assessed, the CS Team can write a Behavior Intervention Plan.

**BIP**- Behavior Intervention Plan. This is a plan that addresses unwanted behaviors and determines intervention strategies to replace the unwanted behaviors with positive behaviors. A variety of methods are used which may include positive reinforcement of good behaviors, consequences, opportunities to earn tokens, rewards, etc... so, the child prefers the benefits of the positive behavior and negative behaviors are reduced.

**504 Plan**- Students who have a 504 Plan are general education students. These students have been evaluated and found ineligible to receive special education services because they do not meet the definition and criteria of a student with a learning disability (required process). These students have a documented medical diagnosis that impacts them in the classroom setting. Students in this category, sometimes require classroom accommodations and modifications to help them become successful in the classroom environment. Commonly, many students with ADD/ADHD have this type of educational service plan. These students do not have annual goals and objectives as seen in IEP's.

Examples of possible 504 Plan accommodations:

- a) Extended time to complete a classroom assignment
- b) Small group setting during testing to reduce distractibility
- c) Use of timer, checklist or other visual cue to keep student on task
- d) Preferential seating in academic settings to reduce distractibility