

IEP Terms Glossary

Plain-language definitions of frequently used special education terms

Term	Plain-language meaning
FAPE	Free appropriate public education: special education and related services provided under public supervision and at no cost, consistent with the student's IEP.
IDEA	The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
IEP	A written individualized education program developed by the student's team.
LRE	Least restrictive environment: educating students with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.
Specially designed instruction	Adaptations to content, method, or delivery that address disability-related needs and provide access to the curriculum.
Related services	Supportive services needed for a student to benefit from special education, such as transportation, speech-language, occupational therapy, counseling, or others as appropriate.
Present levels	Current academic achievement and functional performance, including how disability affects involvement and progress.
Annual goal	A measurable statement of what the student is expected to accomplish in about one year.
Accommodation	A change in how a student learns or demonstrates learning without changing the intended standard.
Modification	A change in what a student is expected to learn or demonstrate.
PWN	Prior written notice explaining a proposed or refused action and the basis for the decision.
Procedural safeguards	Written protections explaining parent and student rights under IDEA.

Terms I want clarified

Term	
What I was told	
My follow-up question	

Important: This educational resource provides general information and is not legal advice or legal representation. Special education procedures and timelines may vary by state. Review your state safeguards and consult a qualified professional about your circumstances.

Primary reference: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act regulations, 34 CFR Part 300, and U.S. Department of Education IDEA resources at sites.ed.gov/idea.