

Glossary of Terms

A

Advocate: Someone who takes action to help someone else (as in “educational advocate”); also, to take action on someone’s behalf.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): Federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, state and local government, public accommodations, commercial facilities, transportation and telecommunications.

Apgar: Each newborn is examined and evaluated at 1 minute and 5 minutes after delivery. The system of evaluation, called the Apgar score, is a method of evaluating the overall well-being of the newborn infant.

Appeal: A written request for a change in a decision; also, to make such a request.

Area Board: Located throughout the state. Area Boards were established to monitor and review the service delivery system for persons with developmental disabilities in each region. There are 13 in California.

Assessment: The observing and testing of children in order to identify their strengths and needs, to develop appropriate educational programs, and to monitor progress.

At-risk: A term used to describe children who have, or could have, developmental problems that may affect later learning.

B

Bayley Scales of Infant Development: A widely used infant scale that provides a diagnostic measure of an infant’s mental abilities. The purpose of the Bayley is to verify the nature and extent of a child’s developmental delay.

C

Community Advisory Council (CAC): A group of parents of children with disabilities, members of the community, students and special education professionals who advise the school board and school district administration about special education programs.

California Children Services (CCS): California’s Title V program for children with special health care needs. (Title V is the federal funding source.) CCS arranges, directs

and pays for medical care, equipment and rehabilitation for CCS-eligible conditions. Eligibility rules apply.

Child Health and Disability Prevention Program (CHDP): A preventative health program that provides early no-cost health care and information to children and youth. Eligibility rules apply.

D

Department of Developmental Services (DDS): The state agency that governs California's Early Start program, as well as other statewide programs for children and adults with disabilities. DDS provides services and supports to persons with developmental disabilities through 21 Regional Centers throughout California.

Developmental delay: A term used to describe the development of children when they are not able to perform the skills that other children of the same age usually are able to perform.

Developmental history: The progress a child has made acquiring skills or milestones (such as reaching, rolling, crawling).

Developmental skills/milestones: Actions (such as reaching, rolling and crawling) that a child is expected to perform within a given age range.

Developmental tests: Standardized tests that measure a child's development as it compares to the development of all other children at that age.

Due Process: The procedures used to make sure parents and educators make fair decisions about the identification, assessment and placement of children with disabilities; due process rights are guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

E

Early Childhood Specialists: A childhood development counselor, someone who usually has a Master's degree or Ph.D. in early childhood development, related to early childhood education and/or development.

Early Intervention: Services and programs for infants and young children (under 3 years old) who are experiencing delay in reaching developmental milestones, have disabilities or who are at-risk for developing handicapping conditions.

EPSDT — Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment: Mandatory medicaid (Medi-Cal) benefits and services for Medicaid (Medi-Cal) eligible children and adolescents under age 21; designed to ensure children's access to early and comprehensive preventative health care and treatment. State Medicaid programs (Medi-Cal) must provide EPSDT benefits.

Early Start: California's term for early intervention services provided under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Entitlement: The legal right to certain services and benefits.

Evaluation: A way of collecting information about a child's learning needs, strengths and interests.

F

Fair hearing: A formal meeting held by an outside individual to resolve a disagreement about regional center services or a child's educational program.

Family Resource Center (FRC): Provides information, education and support to families of children with special health care needs.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): One of the key requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Requires that an education program be provided for all school age children (regardless of handicapping condition) without cost to families.

G

Goals: A list of skills and/or behaviors that a parent, teacher and child will be aiming for over the next year. They are based on the child's needs.

H

Head Start: A federally funded preschool program that services children from low income families to meet the child's educational, social, health, nutritional and emotional needs. (Ten percent of the class is reserved for children with special health care needs.)

Healthy Families: California's State Child Health Insurance Plan to provide health insurance for low-income children in families with incomes too high to qualify for Medi-Cal. Eligibility rules apply.

I

Inclusion: Being part of a whole. For children with special needs, to be part of activities and experiences with typical peers (including classrooms).

Individual Education Program (IEP): A plan of services for children receiving special education services through IDEA.

Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP): A plan of services and support for Early Start eligible children and their families, developed based on service needs. The plan includes services necessary to meet the unique needs of the child and family, beginning and end dates of services, and the way in which the services will be delivered.

Individualized Program Plan (IPP): The plan outlining services a child will receive from the Golden Gate Regional Center.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The federal law that mandates and regulates special education services for all children with disabilities ages 0-21.

Informed consent: A parent's written permission to assess his/her child, to provide services to the child, or to place the child in a special education setting.

Institutional deeming: Allows children with disabilities to qualify for Medi-Cal without regard to parent's income or assets. Eligibility rules apply.

Intake: The process an agency uses to determine if a child is eligible for the services they offer.

Interagency: Between or among agencies.

Interdisciplinary team: A team emphasizing interaction among a variety of disciplines.

L

Lanterman Act: California law that establishes the rights of persons with developmental disabilities to services and supports they need and choose. This law is administered through the Department of Developmental Services and services are provided through the California Regional Center system.

Lead agency: The state agency in charge of overseeing and coordinating early intervention services. In California, the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) is the lead agency.

Least restrictive environment (LRE): A term meaning that children with disabilities must be educated (to the maximum extent appropriate) with children without disabilities.

M

Mediation: A meeting of parents and school district personnel aimed at reaching an agreement regarding the child's educational program. This is also a part of the fair hearing process with the regional center.

Medical Therapy Unit (MTU): Also called Medical Therapy Program (MTP). Offered through California Children Services. The child receives therapy from specialists.

Medi-Cal: California's public program that pays for health and long term care services for low-income Californians, as well as others with very high medical expenses. Medi-Cal offers two types of coverage: Fee for Service and Managed Care. Eligibility rules apply. Also known as Medicaid.

Medi-Cal Waivers: These waivers allow some children with special needs, whose parents are over income limits, to qualify for Medi-Cal benefits. Waivers are administered by the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) or by the In-Home Operations division of Medi-Cal. Eligibility rules apply.

Multidisciplinary: The involvement of two or more disciplines or professions in the provision of services.

Multidisciplinary Team: Under state law, refers to the involvement of two or more disciplines or professions, and the parent or guardian, in the provision of integrated and coordinated services, including evaluation, assessment and IFSP development.

N

Natural Environments: Early intervention services provided in the natural environment to the maximum extent appropriate, including home and community settings in which the infant or toddler without disabilities participate.

O

Objectives: The steps to be accomplished to reach the child's goal(s). Objectives serve as a guide for planning and carrying out learning activities.

Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP): Special education office of the US Department of Education.

P

Part C: The part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that mandates and regulates early intervention services for infants and toddlers ages birth to three.

Parent Rights: An entitlement granted under law such as the right to appeal or the right to full access.

Payor of last resort: A term used to describe a situation where funds are not to be used to satisfy a financial commitment for services that would be otherwise paid for from another public or private source. For example, funds for early intervention may only be used for early intervention services that an eligible child needs but is not currently entitled to under any other federal, state, local or private source.

Placement: The classroom, program and/or therapy that is selected for a student with special needs.

Preschool: Public or private educational programs for children ages 3 to 5.

Protection and Advocacy, Inc. (PAI): The agency appointed under federal law to protect the civil, legal and service rights of Californians with disabilities.

Public Agency: An agency, office or organization that is supported by public funds and serves the community at large.

R

Referral: A recommendation for assessment to determine if a specialized service is required and at what level.

Regional Centers: Regional centers are nonprofit private corporations that have offices throughout California to provide a local resource to help find and access the many services available to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

Related services: Transportation and developmental, corrective and other support services that a child with disabilities requires in order to benefit from education. Examples are speech pathology and audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, counseling services, interpreters for the hearing impaired, and medical services for diagnostic and evaluation purposes.

S

Service Coordination: Activities carried out by a service coordinator/case manager to assist and enable a child and his/her family to receive services.

Section 504: Part of the federal Rehabilitation Act that prohibits discrimination in the education of children and youth with disabilities; vocational education; college and other post-secondary programs; employment; health, welfare and other social programs; and other programs and activities that receive federal funds.

Special day class: Special education service setting comprised entirely of special education students.

Special Education Local Planning Area: also referred to as SELPA.

State Department of Education: Also referred to as SDE in federal law.

T

Transition: A time in a person's life when she/he moves from one educational program to another (for example, from an infant program to preschool, or from high school to work.)

Transition Plan: A part of the IFSP which is done when a child is 2.6 years old. It is developed by the families, regional center service coordinator, public school personnel, and other members of the multi-agency team. The Transition Plan includes specific steps to help families and their children through