



Handy Handouts®

Free informational handouts for educators, parents, and students

Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Initialisms - Oh My!

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We've all seen those medical shows on television in which doctors burst into the emergency room demanding BPs, CBCs, PTs, PTTs, EKGs... "STAT!" While it makes for a very dramatic episode, there probably aren't many people who can really say that they understand exactly what the doctor is asking for.


Abbreviations, Acronyms, and Initialisms - What's the Difference?


Abbreviations, acronyms, and initialisms are all shortened forms of words or phrases used in place of whole words or phrases. Examples include: "misc" (miscellaneous), "ASAP" (as soon as possible), and "USA" (United States of America). We usually use them to speed up writing/reading, to make messages less wordy/easier to read, or to make text fit in a limited amount of space. While abbreviations, acronyms, and initialisms are often collectively referred to as "abbreviations," there are some differences.




Abbreviations, Acronyms, Initialisms... and IEPs

When attending your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting or reading your child's IEP, you may read and hear a LOT of abbreviations, acronyms, and initialisms (hereby collectively referred to as "abbreviations" - Whew! That's so much easier! LOL). Sometimes the IEP meeting might sound a lot like that doctor who dramatically bursts into the ER. When abbreviations are used, the people using them assume that everyone knows what they mean, but that's not always the case. During an IEP meeting, it is essential for you to understand what is being said. If you hear or read something that isn't familiar to you, write down unfamiliar words/abbreviations/definitions, ask questions, and take notes. We've listed abbreviations often used in special education on the next page. You might find it helpful to keep a copy with you during your child's IEP meeting.

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• An **abbreviation** is a shortened word or phrase that is substituted for the entire word or phrase. Examples include "ave" (avenue), "Mon" (Monday), and "appt" (appointment).
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• An **acronym** is a word that takes the place of a phrase. It is made from the beginning letters of each word in the phrase. An acronym can be read like a word. Examples include "PIN" (personal identification number), "BOGO" (buy one, get one), and "YOLO" (you only live once).
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• An **initialism** is also made from the beginning letters of each word in a phrase, however, unlike an acronym, an initialism is not read like a word. It's read by saying each letter individually. Examples include "UFO" (unidentified flying object), "FAQ" (frequently asked questions), and "ROFL" (rolling on the floor, laughing).

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Common Abbreviations in Special Education

2e	Twice Exceptional	ESY	Extended School Year
AAC	Augmentative and Alternative Communication	FAPE	Free Appropriate Public Education
ABA	Applied Behavioral Analysis	FBA	Functional Behavioral Assessment
ACEs	Adverse Childhood Experiences	FERPA	Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act	GE	General Education
ADHD	Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder	GT	Gifted and Talented
ADLs	Activities of Daily Living	HI	Hearing Impairment
AE	Adaptive Equipment	HIPAA	Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
APD	Auditory Processing Disorder	IA	Instructional Assistant
APE	Adaptive Physical Education	ID	Intellectual Disabilities
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
ASL	American Sign Language	IEP	Individualized Education Program
AT	Assistive Technology	IFSP	Individualized Family Service Plan
AYP	Adequate Yearly Progress	IQ	Intelligence Quotient
BCBA	Board Certified Behavior Analyst	LD	Learning Disability
BD	Behavior Disorder	LEA	Local Education Agency
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan	LEP	Limited English Proficiency
CAPD	Central Auditory Processing Disorder	LRE	Least Restrictive Environment
CBA/CBM	Curriculum Based Assessment/Measurement	MDT	Multidisciplinary Team
CBI	Community-Based Instruction	NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
CCC	Certificate of Clinical Competence	ODD	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
CCSS	Common Core State Standards	OHI	Other Health Impairment
CD	Communication Disorder	OI	Orthopedic Impairment
CEC	Council for Exceptional Children	OT	Occupational Therapist
COTA	Certified Occupational Therapist Assistant	PBS	Positive Behavioral Supports
CPS	Child Protective Services	PECS	Picture Exchange Communication System
CST	Child Study Team	PLEP	Present Levels of Educational Performance
DCD	Developmental Coordination Disorder	PT	Physical Therapist
DD	Developmental Delay or Developmental Disability	PTA	Physical Therapy Assistant
DHH/DHOH	Deaf and Hard of Hearing	RTI	Response to Intervention
DME	Durable Medical Equipment	SEL	Social-Emotional Learning
DNQ	Did Not Qualify	SI	Sensory Integration
DSM-V	Diagnostic Statistical Manual (5th edition)	SLD	Specific Learning Disability
DX	Diagnosis	SLI	Speech/Language Impairment
EBD	Emotional Behavioral Disability	SLP	Speech-Language Pathologist
EI	Early Intervention	SLPA	Speech-Language Pathology Assistant
ELA	English Language Arts	SPED	Special Education
ELL	English Language Learner	SSI	Supplemental Security Income
ESE	Exceptional Student Education	TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
ESL	English as a Second Language	VI	Visual Impairment
		WC	Wheelchair

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