



# WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

A PEATC Guide to Special Education and Disability Terms in Virginia



**SPECIAL  
EDUCATION  
TERMS**  
(Birth to 22)

**I:1 Aide:** A trained employee who is supervised by a special education teacher and is responsible for providing classroom assistance to the special education teacher, direct services to students with disabilities, and supervising students with disabilities outside the classroom

**504 Plan:** Written plan providing accommodations, supports, or services to students with any disability to ensure they have equal access at school and are not discriminated against based on their disability (Covered by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended)

**Accommodations:** Helps a student access their education; this change can be to the environment, curriculum format, or equipment

**Annual Goals:** Goals the student will be expected to do or learn by the end of the year that the IEP is in effect

**Applied Studies Diploma:** A diploma for students with significant disabilities who complete the requirements of their IEP but do not meet the requirements for other diplomas; it does not qualify the student for higher education, financial aid, or employment opportunities which require a high school diploma

**Assistive Technology (AT):** Any device, software, or equipment used to help people learn, communicate, and/or function at home, school, and in their communities

**Behavioral Intervention Plan (BIP):** A formal, written plan to address the needs of a student whose unwanted behaviors are preventing learning

**Benchmarks (Short-Term Objectives):** A break down annual goals into smaller parts that can be measured at specific time intervals (quarterly, semester, etc.)



**Business Days:** Monday through Friday, not including federal and state holidays unless specifically designated in the Code of Virginia

**Calendar Days:** Total amount of days includes weekends and holidays

**Career and Technical Education (CTE):** Programs that prepare young people for careers and meet the need for well-trained, industry-certified technical workers

**Career Assessment:** The process of gathering information to understand an individual's strengths, interests, and skills to determine appropriate career options

**Child Find:** The requirement for local school divisions to look for, find, and evaluate all children - ages birth through 21 - who live in their area and who need special education

**Children's Services Act (CSA):** A Virginia law that provides for a single state pool of funds from a number of different state agencies to support services for eligible youth and their families to keep students safely at home in their community, or if they require an out-of-home placement, to return home as soon as possible

**Child Study Team (CST):** A local school team that meets, consults, and/or evaluates children to determine eligibility for special education

**Community-Based Instruction:** Instruction provided to the student in a natural environment rather than in the classroom

**Compensatory Education:** Additional instruction for students with IEPs and 504 plans to make up for lost instructional time and services if the school has not provided FAPE



**Credit Accommodations:** Alternatives for students with disabilities to help them earn the standard and verified credits needed to graduate with a Standard Diploma

**Developmental Milestones:** Skills that most children can do within a certain age range

**Developmental Screening:** Tool designed to look at key areas of development and identify children's strengths and any areas that might need more help or practice

**Dispute Resolution (DR):** The process of resolving disagreements between parties; dispute resolution options include facilitated IEP meetings, mediation, complaints, and due process

**Due Process Hearing:** A dispute resolution option conducted by an impartial special education hearing officer to resolve disagreements between parents and schools regarding the identification, evaluation, placement, services, and the provision of FAPE

**Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):** Care and education from birth to when a child enters kindergarten that focuses on the development of the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs of the child

**Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE):** Special Education services for children ages 3 - 5, inclusive; in Virginia, a child can receive ECSE services as early as age 2

**Early Intervention (EI):** Supports and services for infants and toddlers from birth to age 3 who are not developing as expected or who have a medical condition that can delay normal development



**Eligibility:** The process of determining whether a child meets the criteria to receive special education and related services under IDEA

**Every Child Succeeds Act (ESSA):** Federal education law to help ensure success for students and schools, including high academic standards, equity, support of innovation and evidence-based practices, and investments in high quality preschool; it sets forth state accountability requirements; replaced the No Child Left Behind Act

**Extended School Year (ESY):** Special education and/or related services provided beyond the normal school year for the purpose of providing FAPE to a student with a disability

**Facilitated IEP:** A dispute resolution option available to parents and schools when they agree to have an impartial facilitator attend the IEP meeting to promote effective communication, ensure the agenda is followed, and reduce conflict

**Family Assessment Planning Team (FAPT):** A multi-disciplinary group through CSA that helps assess the strengths and needs of at-risk youth with certain disabilities and works with their families to decide what services to recommend, prepare a plan, and monitor progress toward accomplishing goals

**Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):** Under IDEA, public schools are required to provide an educational program to all eligible students with disabilities at no cost to the parents; it must meet the standards of the school division and the child's unique educational needs to prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living

**Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA):** A process that determines the cause of unwanted behaviors that interfere with a student's learning and what the team can do to help reduce the behaviors



**Functional Vocational Assessment:** Assessment to determine a student's strengths, abilities, and needs in an actual or simulated work setting or in real work sample experiences

**General Education (Gen ED):** Education in the regular curriculum; also called SOLs in Virginia

**Head Start, or Early Head Start (HS/EHS):** A national child development program for children from birth to age 5 which provides comprehensive education, health, nutrition, dental, mental health, social services, and parent involvement opportunities to low-income children and their families including children with disabilities

**Hearing Officer (HO):** An unbiased attorney assigned to protect the rights of everyone involved in a hearing and who makes a decision to resolve disputes under IDEA in a due process hearing

**IEP Case Manager:** School team member who makes sure a student's special education services and supports are in place and acts as the liaison to the parents

**Independent Educational Evaluation (IEE):** An evaluation conducted by a qualified professional who is not employed by the school division responsible for the education of the child in question; when a parent disagrees with a school evaluation an IEE is an option

**Individual Service Plan (ISP):** A plan paid for by the local school division for students with disabilities who attend private school or are home-schooled; students are entitled to "equitable services" based on available funding

**Individualized Education Program (IEP):** A legal document required under IDEA which describes the individualized education plan for a student with a disability





**Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team:** Parents/guardians, general education teacher, student (as appropriate), special education teacher, school division representative/administrator, related service providers, and others with knowledge or special expertise about the student; a person who can interpret evaluation results is also required when going over any new evaluations

**Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP):** A legal document required under IDEA which identifies early intervention supports and services for children birth to age 3 who have a developmental delay or are at risk for delay

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA):** Federal special education law that ensures all children with disabilities are entitled to FAPE to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living; includes early intervention and special education services

**Infant & Toddler Connection of Virginia (ITC):** Virginia's Part C Early Intervention system

**Informed Consent:** When the parent has been fully informed in their native language or another form of communication of all information about what they are giving consent to and they understand and have agreed in writing; the parent understands the consent is voluntary and can be withdrawn or denied at any time

**Instructional Assistant/Teaching Assistant (IA/TA):** A trained employee who is supervised by a special education teacher and is responsible for providing classroom assistance to the special education teacher, direct services to students with disabilities, and supervising students with disabilities outside the classroom

**Interpreter:** A person that translates oral speech into a language understood by the individual





**Lead Agency (LA):** State office that administers Part C early intervention services; Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) is Virginia's lead agency

**Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):** IDEA requires public schools to educate students with disabilities in regular classrooms with their classmates who do not have disabilities as much as possible; LRE is based on the student's individual needs

**Local Education Agency (LEA):** Commonly known as "School Division"

**Manifestation Determination Review (MDR):** A process to review important information and the relationship between a student's disability and unwanted behavior that could lead to the student being punished; MDR determines whether the unwanted behavior was because of the disability or because the school division failed to implement the IEP; if the unwanted behavior is because of the student's disability, discipline will be different and other actions to address the unwanted behavior will be put in place

**Mediation:** When parents and schools who disagree decide together to have a third party help them work toward a binding agreement

**Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission (MIC3):** An agreement between all 50 states that helps military children with the challenges they face because they move so often

**Modifications:** Changes what a student is taught or expected to learn in school; modifications may affect the ability to earn a Standard or Advanced Studies diploma in Virginia

**Natural Environment:** Locations that are natural or typical for an infant or toddler of the same age who does not have a disability



**Occupational Therapy (OT):** Therapy designed to help students with challenges in fine motor, visual motor, sensory-motor, and self-care skills that affect functional performance in school

**Office for Civil Rights (OCR):** Office in the U.S. Department of Education that ensures equal access to education and employment and investigates complaints of civil rights violations involving discrimination on the basis of disability

**Office of Dispute Resolution and Administrative Services (ODRAS):** Office within VDOE that handles and coordinates dispute resolution options including state complaints, due process requests, and mediation requests

**Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP):** Office in the U.S. Department of Education that ensures access to high quality education for educating infants, toddlers, and youth (birth through age 21) with disabilities

**Ombudsman:** An appointed official who works with people to help them figure out ways to resolve conflicts, problems, or concerns

**Paraprofessional (Para):** An appropriately trained employee who assists and is supervised by qualified professional staff in meeting the requirements for providing instructional or other supports under the special education regulations

**Parent / Guardian:** A person who is looking after and legally responsible for someone who cannot take care of their own affairs

**Parental Rights:** The rights of parents and their child with a disability under IDEA and state law including the right to participate in their child's education



**Part B:** Refers to the part in IDEA that authorizes special education and related services for students with disabilities from preschool through secondary school (up to the student's 22nd birthday) and outlines the requirements

**Part C:** Refers to the part in IDEA that authorizes early intervention services for infants and toddlers birth to age 3 and outlines the requirements

**Physical Therapy (PT):** Therapy for students with functional limitations due to a physical disability or other health-related conditions that impact their ability to move throughout the school environment and participate in all aspects of their education; services are focused on helping the student move parts of the body, assume and maintain postures, organize movement into gross motor skills, and build strength and endurance for functional mobility throughout school environment

**Placement:** Educational settings in a school division where a child's IEP can be implemented; placements include general education classroom, special education classroom, resource, homebound, hospital or facility, separate schools

**Positive Behavioral Intervention & Supports (PBIS):** An evidence-based approach to reducing or eliminating unwanted behavior that recognizes that behavior is communication with a focus on prevention and replacement of unwanted behaviors with more appropriate actions and ways of communication

**Post-Secondary Goals:** Goals that students want to achieve after high school related to further training, education, independent living, and employment



**Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP):** Often referred to as Present Levels; clearly defined statement in the IEP that describes a child's strengths, abilities, areas of need, and learning styles and serves as the foundation for the rest of the IEP

**Prior Written Notice (PWN):** Required written notice parents have the right to receive each time the school proposes or refuses to take certain actions related to their child

**Procedural Safeguards:** A document of parental and student legal rights that must be given to parents at least once a year; procedural safeguards cover informed consent, prior written notice, independent educational evaluation, access to records, etc. and must be easy to understand and in the parents' native language

**Related Services:** IDEA term for services a child with a disability needs in order to benefit from special education; related services include but are not limited to speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, counseling, orientation and mobility, and transportation

**Response to Intervention (RTI):** A multi-tiered proactive approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs; helps to identify any student who may be struggling so the school can provide extra help before a student falls far behind; may resolve academic issues without the need for an IEP but cannot be used to delay an eligibility determination for special education

**Screening:** A process that helps identify students who are at risk for not meeting grade-level learning goals and who may need more formal assessments or evaluations

**Service Coordinator (SC):** Main point of contact for families in early intervention; service coordinator is another name for a case manager

**Short-Term Learning Objectives:** See Benchmarks

**SMART Goals:** IEP goals should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Results-Oriented (or realistic) and Time-Bound

**Special Education (SPED):** Specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living

**Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC):** A group of parents and other appointees who advise the School Board on the unmet needs of students receiving special education services within their school division; members are appointed by the local School Board; all school divisions must have a local SEAC

**Special Education Committee (SEC):** Term used by some school divisions when a special education referral is forwarded by the administrator to the school-based team for review (also known as Child Study Team)

**Special Education Parent Teacher Association (SEPTA):** PTA organization specifically set up to address the unique needs of special education, special needs, and students with disabilities, and families; not all school divisions have SEPTAs

**Speech Language Pathology (SLP):** Therapy for speech or language impairments as well as oral movement impairments; can help students with learning how to communicate, assist with social skills, help with reading and writing, and determine if alternate communication systems are needed



**Standards of Learning (SOL):** Virginia's minimum expectations for what students should know and be able to do at the end of each school year in Math, English, Science, History, and Social Studies; SOL assessments are used to identify students' abilities and knowledge of the state standards in certain grades; high school students must pass a certain number of SOL End of Course tests in order to graduate with a Standard or Advanced diploma

**State Complaint:** A request that the state education agency investigate an alleged violation of the rights of a student eligible or suspected to be eligible for special education; can relate to identification, evaluation, educational placement, and/or the provision of FAPE; they focus on whether a law or regulation has been violated

**State Education Agency (SEA):** State agency responsible for administering state and federal education laws and regulations, distributing state and federal resources for education, and determining state education policy; VDOE is the state education agency in Virginia

**State Operated Programs (SOP):** Programs that provide educational services to children and youth who reside in facilities which are the responsibility of state boards, agencies, or institutions; examples of state operated programs would be the Virginia School for the Deaf and Blind and state operated behavioral health facilities

**State Special Education Advisory Committee (SSEAC):** Required under IDEA and state regulations, the SSEAC advises the state Board of Education on matters related to special education, including long range plans, unmet needs, priorities and strategies for meeting needs, review of state improvement plan, funds distribution, and rules and regulations

**Students with Disabilities (SWD):** Students found eligible for services under IDEA or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act

**Supplementary Aids and Services:** Aids, services, and other supports provided in general education classes or other education-related settings that allow children with disabilities to meet their IEP goals and be educated with children without disabilities as much as possible

**Surrogate Parent:** Person appointed by a school division to represent a child with a disability who has or may need special education services; this person can not be receiving public funds to educate or care for the child

**Transfer of Rights:** When a student turns 18 in Virginia their right to make decisions regarding their education transfers from the parent/guardian to the student; there are informal and formal (legal) processes that allow parents to continue to be involved in the decision-making process

**Transition Plan (Early Intervention):** Plan for when a child will leave EI services and is required in every IFSP; a transition conference must be held at least 90 days and up to nine months before the child's anticipated date of transition which must occur no later than the day prior to their 3rd birthday

**Transition Planning (Post-Secondary):** Formal planning process designed to help a student prepare for life after high school; a required part of the child's IEP beginning at age 14 in Virginia or earlier if appropriate

**Transition Services:** A coordinated set of activities focused on helping a student move from high school to life after high school; includes post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, independent living, and more





**Triennial Evaluation:** Requirement to reevaluate students with IEPs at least once every 3 years to determine if they still qualify for special education services and, if the student's needs have changed (also called Reevaluation)

**Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP):**

Assessment program designed to evaluate the performance of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are working on the Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning; formally Aligned Standards of Learning (ASOLs)

**Virginia Department of Education (VDOE):** SEA that administers state and federal education laws and regulations, hands out state and federal resources for education, sets forth state education policy, and provides guidance and support to local school divisions

**Virginia Essentialized Standards of Learning (VESOL):**

Reading, Mathematics, and Science SOLs that are reduced in depth and complexity to make them relevant, accessible, and appropriate for students with significant cognitive disabilities; formally ASOLs

**Vocational Evaluation:** Process to determine employment-related options for individuals with disabilities using work (real or simulated) and other tools to determine strengths, interests, preferences, and needs; it incorporates data such as a test scores, medical, education, and work experience, and which career options and choices the individual prefers

**Work-Based Learning (WBL):** Meaningful and engaging educational opportunities connecting classroom learning to learning on-the-job; supports youth in making career decisions; networks with potential employers; selects courses of study; and, develops job skills important to future employment





# **GENERAL DISABILITY TERMS**



**Apprenticeship:** Program combining on-the-job training with academic instruction for those entering the workforce

**Asynchronous Learning:** Learning on your own time instead of a set schedule; self-paced

**Auditory Learner:** Someone who learns better by hearing and listening

**Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC):**  
Any type of communication other than speech like sign language, symbol or picture boards, and electronic devices

**Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA):** An individual who has a Master's degree and has gone through training and certification to be a behavior analyst

**Care Manager / Case Coordinator:** Trained support coordinators who work with individuals receiving Waiver services; they develop and monitor support plans to ensure individuals know their service options, are able to select appropriate providers, and can fulfill their plans

**Case Management/Support Coordination (CM/SC):** A collaborative process to meet an individual and family's health, disability, and other support needs by assessing, planning, and facilitating access to resources, coordinating care, and advocating for appropriate options, services, and resources that promote safety, quality of care, and cost effective outcomes

**Centers for Independent Living (CILs):** Non-profit organizations providing services, tools, and resources for people with disabilities to ensure they are included in their communities and direct their own lives; CILs are unique in that they have people with all types of disabilities directly govern and staff the organization



**Competitive Employment:** Work performed on a full-time or part-time basis in a setting where an individual with a disability is paid and provided benefits at, or above, minimum wage and at a level paid by the employer for the same work performed by people without disabilities

## Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services

**(DARS):** State agency whose mission is to improve the employment, quality of life, security, and independence of older Virginians, Virginians with disabilities, and their families

### Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI):

State agency providing services to Virginia's citizens who are Blind, Deaf-blind, or Vision Impaired to help them achieve their maximum level of employment, education, and personal independence

**Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DDHH):**

State agency promoting accessible communication so people who are deaf and hard of hearing can participate in the Commonwealth's services, programs, and opportunities; manages state interpreter services, provides telecommunications equipment, and operates the Virginia Relay

**Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental**

**Services (DBHDS):** State agency which oversees and licenses developmental disability, behavioral health, and substance use services in the Commonwealth; supports individuals by promoting recovery, self-determination, and wellness in all aspects of life

**Department of Health (VDH):** State agency that protects the health and well-being of Virginians

**Department of Medical Assistance Services (DMAS):**

State agency that operates the Medicaid program which funds health care for low-income Virginians and Medicaid Home and Community-Based waiver programs





**Employment Services Organizations (ESO):** Private organizations that provide employment and vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities; DARS contracts with ESOs to provide services to its VR clients

**English Language Learner (ELL):** Someone who is learning the English language and has a native and primary language that is not English

**Evidence-Based Practices (EBP):** Practices built upon scientific evidence and data with an acceptable level of research

**Exceptional Education (EXED):** Term used by some school divisions to refer to Special Education and Gifted Education

**Exceptional Family Military Program (EFMP):** Program for military families to manage care and services for their family member with special needs; enrollment in the EFMP is mandatory for active duty service members who have dependent family members with ongoing medical, mental health, or special educational needs

**Executive Functioning (EF):** Skills we use every day to manage our time, organize and plan our day, remember to do what we need to do, control our emotions and behavior, analyze and solve problems, and think before we act

**Expressive Communication (Language):** The ability to communicate using verbal language and non-verbal cues, such as gesture and facial expression

**Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA):** Federal law that protects the privacy of student education records and gives parents certain rights with respect to accessing their student's educational records; rights transfer to the student at age 18 unless other legal options are in place

**Fine Motor Skills:** The ability to make movements using the small muscles in our hands and wrist like holding a pen or pencil, writing neatly, drawing pictures, using a keyboard, using scissors, or other tools

**Freedom of Information Act (FOIA):** Federal and state law that provides public access to information held by public authorities such as state agencies; requires public entities publish certain information about their activities; members of the public can request this information; provides required standards for public access to meetings of public entities

**Functional Academics (FA):** Academic skills a student with a disability needs in order to live independently like reading, writing, math, counting money, telling time, being able to write name and address, etc.

**Gross Motor Skills:** Skills that involve whole-body movements of the large muscles of the arms, legs, and torso like walking, running, and jumping

**Group Home:** Housing arrangement in the community where people with disabilities live and have support staff 24/7; provides supports needed for individuals to acquire, retain, or improve skills needed to live successfully in the community

**Group-Supported Employment:** Continuous employment-related support is provided to a group of individuals working on a competitive job site where persons without disabilities are employed and paid minimum wage or above

**Guardian:** An individual or organization appointed by the court to make decisions regarding an adult who has been deemed incapacitated by the court



**Guardian ad litem (GAL):** An attorney appointed by the court to represent the interests of an individual being considered for guardianship; appointee reviews the proposed case, interviews relevant people, and makes recommendation to the judge

**Health Care Power of Attorney:** A document that allows a person to legally make decisions about another person's medical care

**Health Insurance Premium Payment (HIPP):** A Medicaid-related assistance program that helps pay for all, or part, of the costs of health insurance provided by an employer if you or a member of your family is enrolled in a Medicaid program

**Home and Community-Based Waiver (HCBS):** A program that allows states to develop HCBS Waivers to meet the needs of people who want to receive long-term care services and supports in their home or community rather than in an institutional setting; in Virginia, the DD Waivers and CCC Plus waiver are HCBS waivers

**Housing Choice Vouchers:** A program designed to assist low-income families with their housing needs; participants receive assistance to rent apartments

**Hybrid Learning:** A mix of in-person and online education; also referred as blended learning

**Independent Living (IL):** Living just like everyone else; having opportunities to make decisions that affect one's life, able to pursue activities of one's own choosing

**Individual and Family Support Program:** A program operated by DBHDS that provides financial help to families and individuals who are on Virginia's DD Waitlists; funds help pay for items and services an individual needs to remain in the community

**Individual Supported Employment:** A single employee with a disability is placed in a competitive integrated work setting in the community and is employed by the business; ongoing support services are provided by an employment specialist who is employed by an approved provider of supported employment services

**Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE):** A written program that outlines an individual's vocational goal and the services to be provided to reach the goal by DARS

**Integrated Employment:** Jobs where people with disabilities work alongside people without disabilities who are doing the same or similar work for the same or similar pay

**Intellectual Disability / Developmental Disability (IDD or ID/DD):** An acronym that combines the terms intellectual disability and developmental disability

**Interest Inventory:** A survey used in career planning that matches a person's interests, likes, and dislikes with activities and possible career options

**Irrevocable Trust:** A legal relationship defined as an agreement where one person or organization puts the interests of another person ahead of their own and it cannot be modified, changed, or ended without the permission of the named beneficiary or beneficiaries

**Job Coach:** A specialist that trains an employee using structured intervention techniques to help the employee learn to perform job tasks to the employer's specifications and to learn the interpersonal skills necessary to be accepted as a worker at the job site and in related community contacts

**Job Shadowing:** Exploring different occupations and types of work environments by following and watching people performing the jobs

**Letter of Intent:** A document created to pass vital information about a person with a disability to future caregivers for the purpose of ensuring the person with a disability lives a good life and there is as much continuity as possible in the event of the loss of the primary caregiver

**Life Skills:** Skills needed to live independently as possible e.g., managing money, using transportation, using a phone, problem solving, making decisions, communicating effectively, taking care of one's health needs, etc.

**Limited Conservatorship:** The right to make decisions for an incapacitated individual on specific financial matters, such as paying bills or filing tax returns, as specified by a judge

**Limited Guardianship:** The right to make decisions for an incapacitated individual on specific issues (i.e. only health care or only financial matters) as determined by a judge

**Natural Supports:** Resources that are already present and available to all persons in community environments

**On-the-Job Training (OJT):** Workforce development strategy where employers train, mentor, and hire candidates as they become fully capable in a particular skill set or job function

**Orientation and Mobility (O&M):** Provides individuals who are Blind, Vision Impaired, or Deaf-Blind with skills needed to safely move within their settings; includes travel training, use of a cane or service animal, use of vision aids, and use of other senses

**Paratransit:** Service that supplements fixed-route mass transit (like buses) by providing rides to individuals who cannot use public transportation due to disability or illness

**Parent Resource Center (PRC):** Local center that provides families with information on the special education process and resources available to students with disabilities and their families; typically associated with a school system

**Parent Training and Information Center (PTI):** A nonprofit organization funded through OSEP that provides information, resources, and training to individuals with disabilities from birth through age 26 and their families; may provide additional programs and services through funding received from other sources or grants; PEATC is Virginia's PTI

**Person-Centered Planning (PCP):** A process that helps people with disabilities and their families plan for the future to enable the individual with a disability to be active and contributing members of the community through structured exercises focusing on the individual's strengths and preferences

**Personal Care Attendant (PCA):** An individual who helps a person with a disability with activities of daily living (ADLs) including feeding, hygiene, toileting, mobility needs, and more; they may also serve as a companion, arrange appointments, etc.

**Plan to Achieve Self Support (PASS):** A rule in the Social Security Act that lets a person with a disability set aside money and things they own to pay for items or services needed to achieve a specific work goal and reduce their need for SSI

**Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope (PATH):** An internationally recognized person-centered planning and goal-setting tool using graphics to map out a vision of a desirable future for an individual or group of people

**Power of Attorney (POA):** Written legal document in which a person appoints another person or organization to act on their behalf on specified matters





**Pre-Employment Transition Services (PRE-ETS):**

A VR service offered at both the middle school and high school level that prepares students with disabilities for work through exploration and experiences; schools often collaborate with DARS to provide Pre-ETS in Virginia

**Pre-Vocational Services:** Services that help an individual learn general, non-job specific tasks to help them become employed

**Protection and Advocacy System (P&A):** Federally authorized under the DD Act and other federal laws, these organizations protect individuals with disabilities by empowering them and advocating on their behalf; the disAbility Law Center of Virginia is Virginia's P&A

**Public Expense:** Service or program paid for by public agency (such as a school division) and provided at no cost to the individual or family

**Public Guardian:** A court-appointed person or organization who acts as the decision-maker for adults who are incapacitated, indigent, in need of someone to make medical, financial, or daily living decisions on their behalf, and who have no suitable person to serve as their guardian

**Public Housing/Vouchers:** Federally-funded housing and rental assistance made available to people who meet low income requirements

**Reasonable Accommodation:** An adjustment to a system, process, practice, or facility that ensures equal access and opportunity to a person with a disability and does not present an undue burden

**Receptive Communication (Language):** The ability to understand and comprehend spoken language that you hear or read



**Representative Payee:** A person appointed by the Social Security Administration (SSA) to receive Social Security and/or SSI benefits for someone who cannot manage his/her money

**Respite Care:** Short-term, time-limited relief for primary, unpaid caregivers of a child or adult who is sick, has a disability, or is aging

**Restraint:** A restriction of movement or behavior through the use of mechanical, medical, and/or physical interventions; in VA there are specific permitted and excluded actions in the regulations

**School Liaison Officer (SLO):** A civilian employed by military base commands to maintain the relationship between local schools and the base; service members use the SLO as a point of contact for school information and support

**School Resource Officer (SRO):** A certified law enforcement officer hired to provide law enforcement and security services to Virginia public elementary and secondary schools; SROs do not work for the school but rather for law enforcement

**Screen Reader:** Software used to echo text on a computer screen to audio output, often used by people who are blind, with visual impairments, or learning disabilities

**Seclusion:** The involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving; there are specific permitted and excluded actions in the regulations

**Selective Service System:** The agency who registers males and is responsible for running a draft (mandatory enrollment of individuals into the armed forces) if that occurs; all males must register for selective service at age 18, including individuals with disabilities; the only exemption is for individuals who were continually institutionalized or confined from 30 days before turning 18 through age 25



**Self-Advocacy:** Learning how to speak up for yourself, making your own decisions about your life, learning how to get information so you can understand things that are of interest to you, finding out who will support you in your journey, knowing your rights and responsibilities, problem solving, listening and learning, reaching out to others when you need help and friendship, and learning about self-determination

**Self-Determination:** Right and ability of a person to direct their own life, as well as the responsibility to accept the consequences of their choices

**Service Coordinator (Medicaid waiver):** The main point of contact for individuals receiving DD Waiver services

**Service Facilitator (SF):** A Medicaid-enrolled provider who supports eligible individuals (and, sometimes, their families) in properly using consumer-directed services

**Social Security Administration (SSA):** Federal agency that administers the Social Security Program, including SSI, SSDI, retirement, survivor benefits, etc.

**Social Security Disability Income (SSDI):** Cash benefits to workers or certain members of a worker's family, who may qualify based on a disability severe enough to prevent working for a year or more, or one that is expected to result in death; benefits continue as long as the person is medically disabled and not engaged in substantially gainful employment

**Special Needs Trust (SNT):** A trust is set up for a person with special needs to supplement any benefits the person may receive from government programs

**State Rental Assistance Program (SRAP):** Program managed by the DBHDS to provide rental assistance to single-person families who meet the eligibility requirements to help them lease housing that meets their needs



**Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA):** A monthly earnings dollar amount that a person who qualifies for disability benefits cannot earn more than; amount is determined by SSA

**Supplemental Security Income (SSI):** A federal cash assistance program for those with limited income and are either 65 years old or older, blind, or disabled

**Supported Decision Making (SDM):** A process through which an individual with a disability works with trusted supporters to make choices about their own lives and receive the help they need to understand and implement those choices

**Supported Employment (SE):** Competitive employment in an integrated setting with ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities

**Supports Intensity Scale (SIS):** An evaluation used to determine the continued support needs for individuals using the DD Waivers in Virginia

**Survivor's Benefits:** Allows a military retiree to ensure after their death a continuous lifetime annuity for their spouse, spouse and child, or special needs trust

**Synchronous Learning:** Learning that happens on a set schedule, in real-time

**Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TTY):** An electronic device for text communication over a telephone line for use by persons with hearing or speech difficulties

**Ticket to Work Program:** A free and voluntary program funded by SSA for eligible people ages 18 through 64 who are blind or have a disability and who receive SSDI or SSI benefits









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