

Top 23 Acronyms That Teachers Use

RTI, KWL, NCLB... you don't have to talk to a teacher for too long before you'll encounter an acronym or two. Before you head into your next parent-teacher conference or IEP meeting, here are twenty-three common education acronyms that teachers throw around all the time.

General Acronyms

Teachers use these acronyms to discuss academics, behavior, or what's going on in the wider world of education.

- **AYP:** Adequate Yearly Progress is each school's progress according to the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act. AYP tracks standardized test data in math, reading, and science. According to NCLB, all students in public schools must be proficient in reading and math by the 2013-14 school year. Schools that do not meet AYP towards that goal must notify parents and face sanctions.
- **DEAR:** Drop Everything and Read (or IR for Independent Reading) is a time during the school day when children read silently. (For some of the benefits of IR and DEAR, click [here](#).)
- **ELL:** Students who are English Language Learners do not speak English at home and are learning English at school.
- **ESEA:** The Elementary and Secondary Education Act is the federal law for K-12 education, it was reauthorized into NCLB in 2002.
- **FERPA:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is a federal law that protects access to student records. It's important that parents know about laws like these and how their children's rights might be affected.
- **KWL:** A Know, Wonder, Learned graphic organizer helps kids brainstorm and activate prior knowledge before a lesson, form questions to shape their learning, and reflect on their learning after the lesson. (For more info and ideas on this topic, click [here](#).)
- **NCLB:** No Child Left Behind is the federal law that currently governs education. The focus of NCLB is on measuring student achievement using test data and holding schools and districts accountable for student results. (Read more about this controversial law, click [here](#).)
- **RTI:** Response to Intervention is a problem-solving process in which a school team uses data to assess students' individual needs and provide interventions to support students who are struggling.
- **SEL:** Social Emotional Learning curriculums or programs that help students learn life skills including managing emotions, developing positive relationships, and making good decisions, among others. (For ten reasons SEL is important for schools, click [here](#).)
- **SES:** Under NCLB, schools that are not making AYP must provide Supplemental Education Service tutoring programs.
- **SST:** Student Study Teams or Student Services Teams are meetings of school staff that are focused on addressing student needs, including discussing interventions and making decisions about student needs.



For Special Education

You'll come across these acronyms if your child is being evaluated for or has a disability that affects his school experience.

- **504 Plan:** A 504 Plan is written for a child who has a disability that impacts his access to the curriculum in some way. The goal of a 504 Plan is to provide the student with accommodations and modifications in school that allow him to fully access the general curriculum. (Get info on the difference between [IEPs and 504 Plans](#).)
- **ADA:** The Americans with Disabilities Act is a 1992 law that prevents discrimination on the basis of disability by any public institution, including schools.
- **ADHD:** Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a condition that's characterized by inattentiveness, impulsivity, hyperactivity, or a combination of those characteristics that is out of the normal range for the child's age.
- **BIP:** A Behavior Intervention Plan is a plan that's focused on changing a students' behaviors, whether that's keeping hands to himself or turning in homework on time. A BIP may be written in a child's into an IEP or an informal plan between a child, parent, and teacher.
- **FBA:** A Functional Behavior Assessment is an analysis of a child's behavior that considers the antecedents of the behavior, the behavior and the consequences.
- **FAPE:** Each child is guaranteed a Free Appropriate Public Education, according to the law. An "appropriate education" may be any combination of general classes, special education interventions, specialized services (Speech, OT), or home instruction.
- **IDEA:** The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is a federal law that guarantees education to all students with disabilities.
- **IEP:** An Individual Education Plan (or program) is written for a child who is eligible to receive special education services. It includes a description of the child's strengths, educational needs, the services the school is going to provide, and educational goals.
- **LRE:** Students with disabilities are to be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment, or the classroom environment that provides them with the most exposure and access to the general education classroom and curriculum as possible.
- **OT:** Occupational Therapy is provided to students who have fine motor or sensory integration difficulties in school.
- **SLP:** A Speech Language Pathologist works with students who have trouble with articulation or language expression (grammar, syntax).
- **SLD:** Students who are identified as having a Specific Learning Disability have average or above average intelligence but struggle to learn in school.

Phew! It's a beafy but important list—and becoming familiar with these terms will only help you and your child on her path to academic success. Education has no shortage of acronyms, so understanding the ones that are relevant to your child will help you navigate your next conference or IEP meeting and make the most of your time with her teacher. After all, if you're better able to speak your teacher's language, the easier it will be to work together to give your child what she needs at home and at school.