Special Education Terms

**Accommodations:** Changes that allow a person with a disability to participate fully in an activity. Examples include, extended time, different test format, and alterations to a classroom.

**ADD/ADHD:** Attention deficit disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder are medical conditions characterized by a child’s inability to focus, while possessing impulsivity, fidgeting and inattention.

**Asperger’s Syndrome:** A type of pervasive developmental disorder (PDD) that involves delays in the development of basic skills, including socializing, coordination and the ability to communicate.

**Autism:** A brain development disorder characterized by impaired social interaction, communication and by restricted and repetitive behavior. Signs usually begin before a child is 3 years old.

**Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP):** Special education term used to describe the written plan used to address problem behavior that includes positive behavioral interventions, strategies and support. May include program modifications and supplementary aids and services.

**Disability:** Physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

**Inclusion:** Term used to describe services that place students with disabilities in general education classrooms with appropriate support services. Student may receive instruction from both a general education teacher and a special education teacher.

**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004):** The original legislation was written in 1975 guaranteeing students with disabilities a free and appropriate public education and the right to be educated with their non-disabled peers. Congress has reauthorized this federal law. The most recent revision occurred in 2004.

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** Special education term outlined by IDEA to define the written document that states the disabled child’s goals, objectives and services for students receiving special education.

**Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD):** OCD is an anxiety disorder that presents itself as recurrent, persistent obsessions or compulsions. Obsessions are intrusive ideas, thoughts or images while compulsions are repetitive behaviors or mental acts that the child feels they must perform.
**Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD):** A child who defies authority by disobeying, talking back, arguing or being hostile in a way that is excessive compared to other children and this pattern continues for more than six months may be determined to have ODD. ODD often occurs with other behavioral problems such as ADHD, learning disabilities and anxiety disorders.

**School Psychologist:** Assist in the identification of intellectual, social and emotional needs of students. They provide consultation and support to families and staff regarding behavior and conditions related to learning. They plan programs to meet the special needs of children and often serve as a facilitator during an IEP meeting.

**Specific Learning Disability:** Special education term used to define a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language spoken or written that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical equations.

**Tourette’s Syndrome:** Disorder that includes multiple motor and one or more vocal tics, which occur many times per day, nearly daily. If a child has Tourette’s syndrome, symptoms tend to appear between the ages of 3-10 years old.

Resources:
- http://www.understandingspecialeducation.com
- http://www.picnh.org