

Hypotonia is a term that means low muscle tone.

Incidental teaching teaches a child new skills while in their home or community “in the moment,” to help make sense of what they learn during formal teaching.

Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) is developed by a team including family as primary participant. It is a plan that helps identify goals and a process to meet those goals.

Individualized Education Program (IEP) identifies student's specific learning needs, how school will meet them, and methods to review progress. For students 14 & older, the IEP must contain a plan to transition to postsecondary education or the workplace, or to help the student live as independently as possible in the community.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the US law mandating the “Free and Public Education” of all persons with disabilities between ages 3 and 21.

Inclusion involves educating all children in regular classrooms with typically developing peers, regardless of disability.

Intellectual Disability describes limitations in mental functioning that cause an individual to develop more slowly. They may take longer to learn to speak, walk, and take care of personal needs such as dressing or eating, and are likely to have trouble learning in school. May be mild to severe and was previously referred to as mental retardation.

Joint attention is the process of sharing an experience with another person, often observable by following gaze or pointing gestures. Impairment in joint attention is a core deficit of ASD.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) a setting that least restricts opportunities for child with disabilities to be with peers without disabilities. The law mandates that every child with a disability be educated in a Least Restrictive Environment.

Mainstreaming means students are expected to participate in existing regular education classes. It may be a gradual, partial, or part-time process (e.g., student may attend separate classes within regular school, or participate in regular gym and lunch only).

Modified Checklist of Autism in Toddlers (MCHAT) is a screening tool for identifying toddlers who may be referred to specialist for further testing.

Motor deficits are physical skills that a person cannot perform or has difficulty performing.

Neurologist refers to a doctor specializing in medical problems associated with the nervous system, specifically the brain and spinal cord.

Nonverbal behaviors convey information or express emotions without words, including eye gaze, facial expressions, body postures, and gestures.

Occupational therapy (OT) assists development of motor skills that aid in daily living. OT may focus on sensory issues, coordination of movement, balance, and self-help skills such as dressing, eating with a fork, grooming, etc. May address visual perception and hand-eye coordination.

Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) used to be considered a subtype of autism, but is no longer used in the medical setting.

Physical therapy helps patients regain or improve their physical abilities.

Pica is persistent eating or mouthing of non-food substances for at least 1 month (older than 18–24 months). Substances may include items such as clay, dirt, pebbles, hair, plastic, etc.

Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) is a communication system using picture symbols. Individuals learn to use picture symbols to construct complete sentences, initiate communication, and answer questions.

Pivotal Response Treatment (PRT) is a therapy that helps change unwanted behaviors.

Receptive language is the ability to comprehend words and sentences.

Reinforcement or reinforcer is a reward given after a desired behavior.

Relationship Development Intervention (RDI) is a therapy based on building positive behaviors through social connection that normally develop in infancy and early childhood.

Respite care is temporary, short-term care provided to individuals with disabilities. Respite care allows caregivers to take a break in order to relieve stress and fatigue.

Self-regulation refers to self-control. Self-regulation helps individuals manage their emotions and behaviors, and to allow us to participate successfully in society, work, and family life.

Sensory defensiveness is a tendency to over-react negatively to sensory input. Also called hypersensitivity.

Sensory integration is the way the brain processes sensory stimulation or sensation from the body and then translates that information into specific, planned, coordinated motor activity.

Sensory integration dysfunction is a neurological difference causing difficulties processing information from the senses and positional sense (proprioception). Sensory information may be sensed normally, but perceived abnormally.

Sensory integration therapy is used to improve ability to use incoming sensory information.

Sleep hygiene refers to habits and environmental factors important for sound sleep, such as adjusting noise, light and temperature, avoiding naps and caffeine.

Social reciprocity is the back-and-forth flow of social interaction between people.

Social stories are simple stories that describe situations that may be difficult for a person with ASD to understand. For example, a social story might be written about

birthday parties if a child appears to have a difficult time understanding what is expected of him or how he is supposed to behave there.

Social worker is a trained specialist in the social, emotional and socioeconomic needs of families. Social workers often help families find the services they need.

Special education is a public school program at no cost to families, to meet unique needs of a child with a disability.

Speech and language therapy is provided with the goal of improving an individual's ability to communicate. This includes verbal and nonverbal communication.

Spoken language (also referred to as expressive) use of verbal behavior, or speech, to communicate thoughts, ideas, and feelings with others.

Stereotyped behaviors are repeated behaviors or actions. They may include repetitive movements like rocking, spinning, hand flapping or posturing of the body or fingers.

Stereotyped patterns of interest or restricted patterns of interest refer to a pattern of intense preoccupation with a narrow range of interests and activities.

Stim or "self-stimulation" behaviors help stimulate one's senses. Some "stims" may be helpful (calming, increasing concentration, or shutting out an overwhelming sound).

Symbolic play describes play in which children pretend to do things or to be something or someone else. It typically develops between the ages of two and three years. Also called make believe, or pretend play.

Tactile defensiveness is a strong negative response to a sensation that would not be upsetting to most people, such as touching something sticky or the feeling of soft foods in the mouth. The term is specific to touch.

Training and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children (TEACCH) is a therapy based on the idea that individuals with ASD more effectively use and understand visual cues to increase functional behaviors.

The above glossary is an edited version of the glossary from: The 100 Day Kit version 2.0 by the Autism Speaks organization. You can view the kit at: www.autismspeaks.org