Parents of children with developmental delays or disabilities face many challenges, including learning a whole new vocabulary. This list is intended as a reference, to help navigate the various systems of help more easily.

Acronym or Term	Stands for	Definition/Brief Explanation
ABA	Applied Behavior Analysis	A social analysis system for understanding behavior. The principles derived from a
ADD/ADHD	Attention Deficit Disorder/Attention Deficity Hyperactivity Disorder	A family of related chronic neurobiological disorders that interfere with an individual's capacity to regula
Asperger Syndrome		A diagnosis for individuals who are at the high-functioning end of the autism spectru
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	

Neurobiological disorder which affects a child's ability to interact, communicate, relate, play, imagine, a

BI

Behavior Interventionist

Person who works directly with child to carry out intervention.

BCABA

Board Certified Associate Behavior Analyst

Has a bachelors level education. Conducts descriptive and systematic (e.g., analogue) behavioral asse

BCBA

Board Certified Behavior Analyst

Has a masters level education. Conducts descriptive and systematic (e.g., analogue) behavioral asses

DTT

Discreet Trial Training

An intensive behavioral treatment that involves directly training a variety of skills that individuals with di

Echolalia or echolalic, also known as "Movie talk," "Scripting"

The repetition of words, phrases, intonation, or sounds of the speech of others, "echoing" what has bee

Hyper-responsiveness, also known as Over-reactivity to Sensory Input

Abnormal sensitivity or over reactivity to sensory input, feeling overwhelmed by what most people woul

Hypo-responsiveness, also known as Under-reactivity to Sensory Input

Abnormal insensitivity or under-reactivity to sensory input, in which the brain fails to register incoming sti

IDEA The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

Passed in 1990, this law is the basis for all educational law as it related to individuals with disabilities.

Incidental Teaching

Capturing the motivation of the learner using events or activities natrually occuring within the environm

IEP

Individualized Educational Program

A legal document which defines a child with disabilities' personal goals and educational modifications.

Joint Attention, also known as: Shared Attention and 3-Point Gaze

When two people intentionally look at the same thing. Infants learn early to seek joint attention spontan

LCSW

Licensed Clinical Social Worker

A professional with at least masters-level education who can provide counseling, case management, an

LD

Learning Disability

A childhood disorder characterized by difficulty with certain skills such as reading or writing.

MR

Mental Retardation

Limitations in mental functioning which cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than a typical chi

NET Naturalistic Environment Training

Using the principles of ABA to teach skills in the natural environment versus more structured skill buildin

NPA

Non-Public Agency

An independent service provider, certified by the state to provide behavioral intervention in schools.

Nonverbal

A term that is often used to describe someone who does not use vocal verbal communication. Accordi

Obsessions

Obsessions are repetitive thoughts that are persistent and intrusive. In young children, preoccupations

OCD

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Some children with autism are also diagnosed with ODD.

OT

Occupational Therapy or Therapist

A profession that seeks to enable people to participate in the activities of everyday life. Occupational th

Perseveration Repeating or "getting stuck" carrying out a behavior such as repeatedly putting in ar

Perseverative Speech Repeating the same phrase or bringing up the same topic rep

Repetitive Use of Language

Pervasive Existing in multiple areas at the same time. In autism and related disorders, "pervas

PDD-NOS

Pervasive Developmental Disorder--Not Otherwise Specified

A diagnosis for children who meet most, but not all, of the criteria for autism. PDD-NOS does not speci

PDD

Pervasive Developmental Disorders

An umbrella term for a wide spectrum of disorders referred to as Autism or Autism Spectrum Disorders

PT

Physical Therapy or Therapist

A branch of rehabilitative health that uses specially designed exercises and equipment to help patients

PECS Picture Exchange Communication System A system which uses pictures to help non-verbal children communicate.

PRT Pivotal Response Training A naturalistic behavioral treatment that involves training key "pivotal" behavi

Pragmatics Social rules for using functional spoken language in a meaningful context or convers

RC

Regional Center

In California, an independent non-profit organization contracted by the state to provide information, refe

Repetitive Behaviors

Odd or unusual recurring behaviors such as frequent and unusual movements with the body or with ob

Repetitive Motor Movements Stereotyped or recurrent movements or posturing of the body, including mannerisms

Rituals	Specific and seemingly meaningless behaviors that are performed repeatedly in cer
Scripting, also known as Echolalia	The repetition of words, phrases, intonation, or sounds of the speech of others, som
Self-Injurious Behavior, also known as Self-Injury	The biological or neurologically based intentional infliction of bodily harm such as b
Self-Stimulating Behaviors or "Stimming," also known as Repetitive Motor Mannerisms, Stereotypic	Behaviors or "Stimming," also known as Repetitive Motor Mannerisms, Stereotypic
Sensory Defensiveness	An abnormal reaction to ordinary sensory input.
Sensory Input	Both internal (e.g., heart rate, temperature) and external (e.g., sights, sounds, tastes
SLP	
Speech	Language Pathologist

Also known as a Speech Therapist, they help people develop their speech and communication skills.

Stereotyped Behaviors

Behaviors that are repeated in an abnormal or excessive manner over time.

Stereotyped Language An abnormal or excessive repetition of a word or phrase over time.

Stereotyped Pattern of Interest A pattern of preoccupation with a narrow range of interests and activities.

Symbolic or Pretend Play Play in which an individual uses their imagination to act as if they are playing, and Symbolic Ph

Tactile Defensiveness A strong negative response to a sensation of touching that would not ordinarily be u

VB Verbal Behavior The behavior of communicating with others which involves both speaker and