# Modifications and Accommodations Information Packet

- **School Accommodations & Modifications - Alliance Article**
- **Accommodations and Modifications - PEAK Parent Center**
- **Accommodations Fidelity Checklist - TRAID**
- **School Accommodations and Modifications - MPACT**
- **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in High School - National Center on Secondary Education and Transition**
- **School Accommodation and Modification Ideas for Students Who Receive Special Education Services - PACER Center**
- **Activity Involvement and Modificatin Planning Form**
- **Student Modifications Summary Sheet - EdPro Development, Inc.**
- **Curriculum Modification Planning Form**
- **Determining Appropriate Accommodations for Students with Disabilities - TN Dept. of Education**
- **Accommodations and Modifications: Wait, they're not the same? - NICHCY**

**Additional Website Resources: http://www.bridges4kids.org/IEP/iep.goal.bank.pdf**

# School Accommodations and Modifications

Some students with disabilities need accommodations or modifications in their educational program in order to be successful in school. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and its regulations do not offer a definition for an accommodation or modification. However, there is general agreement as to what the terms mean.

An accommodation allows a student to complete the same assignments as other students, but permits a change in the timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response or presentation. An accommodation does not alter what the test or assignment measures. Examples of accommodations include a student who is blind taking a Braille version of a test, or a student taking a test alone in a quiet room.

A modification adjusts the expectations for an assignment or a test. It permits a change in what a test or assignment measures. Examples include: a) a child is permitted to complete only part of a standard; b) a child is given an alternate assignment at a different level instead of the standard assignment.

Accommodations or modifications should be written into a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Some children may have a disability that is not severe enough for them to receive special education. An option for this child may be to develop a Section 504 Plan. Section 504 is a federal law that prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. A Section 504 plan may list the changes needed in a child's educational program for him or her to be successful. Any changes must be based on the child's disability and fulfill the purpose of meeting individual needs. It's important to include the student, if appropriate, when discussing accommodations and modifications. A first step is to ask the child what would be helpful in classes where he or she is having difficulty.

Below are examples of modifications and/or accommodations. These ideas may be helpful when educating students with disabilities. Keep in mind that any accommodation or modification an IEP team or Section 504 team chooses must be based on individual needs. Accommodations or modifications must be provided if written in the child's IEP or 504 plan.

## Textbooks and Curriculum

### Books

- ☐ Provide alternative books at a simpler reading level.

- ☐ Provide audiotapes of textbooks. Have the child follow the text while listening.

- ☐ Provide summaries of chapters.

- ☐ Provide high interest reading material at or slightly above the student's comfortable reading level.

- ☐ Use peer readers.

- ☐ Use marker to highlight important text sections of assignments.

- ☐ Use word-for-word sentence fill-ins.

- ☐ Provide two sets of textbooks. Keep one at home for the forgetful student.

- ☐ Use index cards to write down major themes.

- ☐ Provide the student with a list of discussion questions before reading the material.

- ☐ Give page numbers to help the student find answers.

- ☐ Provide written materials in alternative formats such as Braille or large print.

### Curriculum

- ☐ Shorten assignments to focus on mastery of key concepts.

- ☐ Shorten spelling tests to the most functional words.

- ☐ Substitute alternatives for written assignments (clay models, posters, panoramas, collections, etc.).

- ☐ Specify and review often exactly what the student will need to learn to pass.

- ☐ Modify expectations based on student needs (e.g., "When you have read this chapter, you should be able to list three reasons for the Civil War.").

- ☐ Give alternatives to long written reports (e.g., several short reports, preview new audiovisual materials and write a short review, give an oral report).

## Classroom Environment

- ☐ Review the classroom rules frequently.

- ☐ Evaluate classroom structure against the student's needs (flexible structure, firm limits, etc.).

- ☐ Keep workspace clear of unrelated materials.

- ☐ Keep classroom quiet during intense learning times.

- ☐ Reduce visual distractions in the classroom (mobiles, etc.).

- ☐ Provide a computer for written work.

- ☐ Seat the student close to the teacher or a positive role model.

- ☐ Permit use of a study carrel. (Have more than one so that a student is not singled out.)

- ☐ Seat the student away from windows or doorways.

- ☐ Provide a clear view of the chalkboard, teacher, movie screen, etc.

- ☐ Keep extra supplies of classroom materials (pencils, books) on hand.

- ☐ Use alternatives to word puzzles or word finds.

- ☐ Maintain adequate space between desks.

## Instruction and Assignments

### Directions

- ☐ Use both oral and printed directions.

- ☐ Give directions in small steps and in as few words as possible.

- ☐ Number and sequence the steps in a task.

- ☐ Have student repeat the directions for a task.

- ☐ Provide visual aids.

- ☐ Show a model of the end product of directions (e.g., a completed math problem or quiz).

- ☐ Stand near the student when giving directions or presenting a lesson.

## Time/transitions

- ☐ Alert student several minutes before a transition from one activity to another is planned; give several reminders.

- ☐ Provide additional time to complete a task.

- ☐ Allow extra time to turn in homework without penalty.

- ☐ Provide assistance when moving about the building.

## Handwriting

- ☐ Use worksheets that require minimal writing.

- ☐ Use fill-in questions with space for a brief response rather than a short essay.

- ☐ Provide a "designated notetaker" or photocopy of other student or teacher notes. (Do not require a poor notetaker or a student with no friends to make this arrangement.)

- ☐ Provide a print outline to accompany each videotape of filmstrip.

- ☐ Provide a print copy of assignments or directions written on the blackboard.

- ☐ Omit assignments that require copying, or let the student use a tape recorder to dictate answers.

## Grading

- ☐ Use daily or frequent grading averaged into a grade for the quarter.

- ☐ Weight daily work higher than tests for a student who performs poorly on tests.

- ☐ Mark the correct answers rather than the incorrect ones.

- ☐ Permit a student to rework missed problems for a better grade.

- ☐ Average grades out when assignments are reworked, or grade on corrected work.

- ☐ Use a pass-fail or an alternative grading system where the student is assessed on his or her own growth.

## Tests

- ☐ Go over directions orally.
- ☐ Teach the student how to take tests (e.g., how to review, to plan time for each section).
- ☐ Provide a vocabulary list with definitions.
- ☐ Permit as much time as needed to finish tests.
- ☐ Allow tests to be taken in a room with few distractions (e.g., the library).
- ☐ Read test materials to the student, and allow oral responses.
- ☐ Divide tests into small sections of similar questions or problems.
- ☐ Use recognition tests (true-false, multiple choice, or matching) instead of essays.
- ☐ Allow the student to complete an independent project as an alternative test.
- ☐ Give progress reports instead of grades.
- ☐ Grade spelling separately from content.
- ☐ Provide typed test materials, not tests written in cursive.
- ☐ Allow take-home or open-book tests.
- ☐ Provide possible answers for fill-in-the blank sections.
- ☐ Provide the first letter of the missing word.

## Math

- ☐ Allow the student to use a calculator without penalty.
- ☐ Group similar problems together (e.g., all addition in one section).
- ☐ Provide fewer problems on a worksheet (e.g., 4 to 6 problems on a page, rather than 20.).
- ☐ Require fewer problems completed to attain passing grades.
- ☐ Use enlarged graph paper to write problems to help the student keep numbers in columns.
- ☐ Provide a table of math facts for reference.
- ☐ Tape a number line to the student's desk.
- ☐ Read and explain story problems, or break problems into smaller steps.
- ☐ Use pictures or graphics.

## Other

- ☐ Use Post-it notes to mark assignments in textbooks.
- ☐ Check progress and provide feedback often in the first few minutes of each assignment.
- ☐ Place a ruler under sentences being read for better tracking.
- ☐ Provide overview of long-term assignments so the student knows what to do, and due dates.
- ☐ Break long-term assignments into small steps, with daily monitoring and frequent grading.
- ☐ Have the student practice presenting in a small group before presenting to the class.
- ☐ Hand out worksheets one at a time.
- ☐ Sequence work, with the easiest part first.
- ☐ Provide study guides and study questions that directly relate to tests.
- ☐ Praise student for recording assignments and due dates in a notebook.
- ☐ Draw arrows on worksheets, chalkboard, or overheads to show how ideas are related, or use other graphic organizers such as flow charts.

## Behavior

- ☐ Arrange a "check-in" time to organize the day.
- ☐ Pair the student with a student who is a good behavior model for class projects.
- ☐ Modify classroom policies that may discriminate against the student (e.g., provide frequent breaks for the student who cannot pay attention for long periods of time)
- ☐ Use nonverbal cues to remind the student of rule violations.
- ☐ Amend consequences for rule violations (e.g., reward a forgetful student for remembering to bring pencils to class, rather than punishing the failure to remember).

- ☐ Reinforce (often) when a student displays positive behavior.

- ☐ Develop an individualized behavior intervention plan that consistent with the student's ability and skills.

- ☐ Increase the frequency and immediacy of reinforcement.

- ☐ Arrange for a student to leave the classroom for a designated "safe place" when highly stressed.

- ☐ Develop a system or a code word to let a student know when behavior is not appropriate.

- ☐ Ignore behaviors that are not seriously disruptive.

- ☐ Develop interventions for behaviors that are annoying but not deliberate. For example, place a small piece of foam rubber on the desk of a student who continually taps a pencil on the desktop.

- ☐ Be aware of behavior changes that relate to medication or the length of the school day; modify expectations if appropriate.

# Accommodations & Modifications Fact Sheet

Every child with a disability has a right to attend general education classes and to have accommodations and modifications so they can be successful in those classes. These can include changes in the method of instruction, the curriculum, and the environment. Accommodations and modifications are important tools for a child to successfully accomplish Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals and objectives and participate actively with other students in classroom and school activities.

**Accommodations** are changes in **<u>how</u>** a student accesses information and demonstrates learning. Accommodations do not substantially change the instructional level, content, or performance criteria. The changes are made in order to provide a student with equal access to learning and equal opportunity to show what he or she knows and can do. Accommodations can include changes in the following:

- presentation and/or response format and procedures
- instructional strategies
- time/scheduling
- environment
- equipment
- architecture

**Modifications** are changes in **<u>what</u>** a student is expected to learn. The changes are made to provide a student opportunities to participate meaningfully and productively along with other students in classroom and school learning experiences. Modifications might include changes in the following:

- instructional level
- content
- performance criteria

## Examples

The following are some examples of accommodations and modifications that can be provided in the general education classroom. Note: This is not a complete list. The IEP team determines accommodations and modifications that meet the unique and individual needs of the student.

**Accommodations:**

- test taken orally
- large print textbooks
- additional time to take test
- locker with an adapted lock
- weekly home-school communication tool, such as a notebook or daily log book
- peer support for note taking
- lab sheets with highlighted instructions
- graph paper to assist in organizing and lining up math problems
- tape record lectures
- use of a computer for writing

**Modifications:**

- outline in place of essay for major project
- Picture Communication Symbols (PCS) choices on tests
- alternative books or materials on the same theme or topic
- spelling support from a computerized spell check program
- word bank of choices for answers to test questions
- use of a calculator on a math test
- film or video supplements in place of text
- questions re-worded using simpler language
- projects substituted for written reports
- important words and phrases highlighted

Deciding which accommodations and/or modifications to use depends on the assignment and the needs of the individual student. For example, a particular student may need more time to take English tests and also need to use a calculator for all math assignments. When the appropriate adaptations are made to how/or and what the student is learning, he or she has true access to the general education curriculum.

Accommodations and modifications are types of adaptations that are made to the environment, curriculum, instruction, or assessment practices in order for students with disabilities to be successful learners and to participate actively with other students in the general education classroom and in school-wide activities.

# For More Information

The following books published by PEAK Parent Center and available at
http://www.peakparent.org contain practical information and tools for determining and using accommodations and modifications to support student success:

- *Inclusive Elementary Schools:  Recipes for Success*
- *Deciding What To Teach and How To Teach It:  Connecting Students Through Curriculum and Instruction*

Students often need accommodations or modifications to their educational program in order to participate and be successful in school.

While the terms accommodations and modifications are not defined within the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), there is some agreement to what they mean.

An *accommodation* as used in this document allows a student to complete the same assignment or test as other students, but with a change in the timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response and/or presentation. This accommodation does not alter in any significant way what the test or assignment measures. Examples of accommodations include a student who is blind taking a Braille version of a test or a student taking a test alone in a quiet room.

A *modification* as used in this document is an adjustment to an assignment or a test that changes the standard or what the test or assignment is supposed to measure. Examples of possible modifications include a student completing an alternate assignment that is more easily achievable than the standard assignment.

Needed modifications and accommodations should be written into a student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. These changes should be chosen to fit the student's individual needs. It's important to include the student, if appropriate, when discussing needed accommodations and modifications. Asking the student what would be helpful is a good first step.

Here are some ideas for changes in textbooks and curriculum, the classroom environment,

instruction and assignment, and possible behavior expectations that may be helpful when educating students with disabilities.

When reviewing these ideas, keep in mind that any accommodations or modifications an IEP team chooses must be based on the individual needs of the student, and the changes must be provided if included in the child's IEP or 504 Plan.

**Books**
- Provide alternate books with similar concepts, but at an appropriate reading level
- Provide videotapes for textbooks and have the student follow the text while listening.
- Provide summaries of chapters.
- Provide interesting reading material at or slightly above the student's comfortable reading level.
- Use peer readers.
- Use markers to highlight important textbook sections.
- Use word-for-word sentence fill-ins.
- Provide two sets of textbooks, one for home and one for school.
- Use index cards to record major themes.
- Provide the student with a list of discussion questions before reading the material.
- Give page numbers to help the student find answers.
- Provide books and other written materials in alternative formats such as Braille or large print.

**Curriculum**
- Shorten assignments to focus on mastery of key concepts.
- Shorten spelling tests to focus on mastering the most functional words.
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*Curriculum Continued:*

- Substitute alternatives for written assignments (clay models, posters, panoramas, collections, ect.)
- Specify and list exactly what the student will need to learn to pass. Review this frequently.
- Modify expectations based on student needs (e.g., "When you have read this chapter, you should be able to list three reasons for the Civil War.")
- Give alternatives to long written reports (e.g., write several short reports, preview new audiovisual materials and write a short review, give an oral report on an assigned topic).

## Classroom Environment

- Develop individualized rules for the student.
- Evaluate the classroom structure against the student's needs (flexible structure, firm limits, ect.).
- Keep workspaces clear of unrelated materials.
- Keep the classroom quiet during intense learning times.
- Reduce visual distractions in the classroom (mobiles, ect.).
- Provide a computer for written work.
- Seat the student close to the teacher or a positive role model.
- Use a study carrel. (Provide extras so that the student is not singled out.)
- Seat the student away from windows or doorways.
- Provide an unobstructed view of the chalkboard, teacher, movie screen, ect.
- Keep extra supplies of classroom materials (pencils, books) on hand.
- Use alternatives to crossword puzzles or word finds.
- Maintain adequate space between desks.

## Directions

- Use both oral and printed directions.
- Give directions in small steps and in as few words as possible.
- Number and sequence the steps in a task.
- Have a student repeat the directions for a task.
- Provide visual aids.
- Show a model of the end product of directions (e.g., a completed math problem or finished quiz).
- Stand near the student when giving directions or presenting a lesson.

## Time/Transition

- Alert student several minutes before a transition from one activity to another is planned; give several reminders.
- Provide additional time to complete a task.
- Allow extra time to turn in homework without penalty.
- Provide assistance when moving about the building.

## Handwriting

- Use worksheets that require minimal writing.
- Use fill-in questions with space for brief responses rather than a short essay.
- Provide a 'designated note taker' or photocopy of other student or teacher notes. (Do not leave this up to the student to work out.)
- Provide a print outline with videotapes and movies.
- Provide a print copy of any assignment or directions written on the blackboard or overhead.
- Omit assignments that require copying, or let the student use a tape recorder to dictate answers.

## Grading
- Provide a partial grade based on individual progress or effort.
- Use daily or frequent grading averaged into a grade for the quarter.
- Weight daily work higher than tests for a student who performs poorly on tests.
- Mark the correct answers rather than the incorrect ones.
- Permit a student to rework missed problems for a better grade.
- Average grades out when assignments are reworked, or grade on corrected work.
- Use a pass-fail or an alternative grading system when the student is assessed on his or her own growth.
- Avoid using red pens/markers.

## Tests
- Go over directions orally.
- Teach the student how to take tests (e.g. how to review, to plan time for each section).
- Provide a vocabulary list with definitions.
- Permit as much time as needed to finish tests.
- Allow tests to be taken in a room with few distractions (e.g., the library).
- Have test materials read to student, and allow oral responses.
- Divide tests into small sections of similar questions or problems.
- Use recognition tests (true-false, multiple choice, or matching) instead of essays.

## Tests (continued)
- Allow the student to complete an independent project as an alternative to a test.
- Give progress reports instead of grades.
- Grade spelling separately from content.
- Provide typed test materials, not tests written in cursive
- Allow take-home or open-book tests.

- Provide possible answers for fill-in-the-blank sections.
- Provide the first letter of the missing word.

## Math
- Allow the student to use a calculator without penalty.
- Group similar problems together (e.g., all addition in one section).
- Provide fewer problems on a worksheet (e.g., 4 to 6 problems on a page, rather than 20 or 30).
- Require fewer problems to attain passing grades.
- Use enlarged graph paper to write problems to help the student keep numbers in one column.
- Provide a table of math facts for reference.
- Tape a number line to the student's desk.
- Read and explain story problems, or break problems into smaller steps.
- Use pictures or graphics.

## Other
- Use Post-It notes to mark assignments in textbooks.
- Check progress and provide feedback often in the first few minutes of each assignment.
- Place a ruler under sentences being read for better tracking.
- Introduce an overview of long-term assignments so the student knows what is expected and when it is due.
- Break long-term assignments into small, sequential steps, with daily monitoring and frequent grading.
- Have the student practice presenting in a small group before presenting to the class.
- Hand out worksheets one at a time.
- Sequence work, with the easiest part first.
- Use blackline copies, not dittos.
- Provide study guides and study questions that directly relate to tests.

## Other

- Reinforce student for recording assignments and due dates in a notebook.
- Draw arrows on worksheets, chalkboard, or overheads to show how ideas are related, or use other graphic organizers such as flow charts.

## Behavior

- Arrange a "check-in" time to organize the day.
- Pair the student with a student who is a good behavior model for class projects.
- Modify school rules that discriminate against the student.
- Use nonverbal cues to remind the student of rule violations.
- Amend consequences for rule violations (e.g., reward a forgetful student for remembering to bring pencils to class, rather than punishing the failure to remember).
- Minimize the use of punishment; provide positive as well as negative consequences.
- Develop an individualized behavior intervention plan that is positive and consitent with the student's ability and skills.
- Increase frequency and immediacy of reinforcement.
- Arrange for the student to leave the classroom voluntarily and go to a designated 'safe place' when under high stress.
- Develop a system or code word to let the student know when behavior is not appropriate.
- Ignore behaviors that are not seriously disruptive.
- Develop interventions for behaviors that are annoying but not deliberate (e.g., provide a small piece of foam rubber for the desk of a student who continually taps a pencil on the desktop).
- Be aware of behavior changes that relate to medication or the length of the school day; modify expectations if appropriate.

*Information taken from the PACER Center fact sheet FAPE~27*

# Issue Brief

**Examining Current Challenges in Secondary Education and Transition**

# Accommodations for Students with Disabilities in High School

*By Martha Thurlow*

**Issue:** Fewer students with disabilities in middle schools and high schools use accommodations than students with disabilities in elementary schools.

## Defining the Issue

Accommodations are changes in materials or procedures that provide access to instruction and assessments for students with disabilities. They are designed to enable students with disabilities to learn without the impediment of their disabilities, and to show their knowledge and skills rather than the effects of their disabilities. While there is some controversy surrounding terminology (e.g., accommodations vs. modifications) and about the appropriateness of certain assessment accommodations (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1999; Thurlow & Wiener, 2000), in general there is an acceptance of the need for some changes in instruction and assessment for students with disabilities. Examples of common instructional and assessment accommodations are shown in Table 1.

There is nothing about students with disabilities, nor about instruction and assessment that would suggest that the number of students with disabilities using accommodations should change as they progress through school. Are there other things occurring that might affect the number of students receiving accommodations? Are there constraints on the provision of accommodations that can be alleviated to ensure that all middle school and high school students who need accommodations receive them?

## What We Know

### Legal Considerations

When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized in 1997, accommodations (and modifications) in administration were addressed. In Section 300.347 on Individual Education Program (IEP) content, IDEA states that there needs to be —

. . . a statement of the program modifications or supports for school

personnel that will be provided for the child —

- To advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals;
- To be involved and progress in the general curriculum;
- To participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities; and
- To be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and nondisabled children in the activities described in this section.

Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(5): 1414(d)(1)(A)(vii)

Section 300.342 of IDEA also states that the IEP must be in effect at the beginning of each school year so that each teacher and provider is informed of "the specific accommodations, modifications, and supports that must be provided for the child in accordance with the IEP [Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(2)(A) and (B), Pub. L. 105-17, sec. 201(a)(2)(A), (C)].

In addition to addressing accommodations and modifications in instruction, the Final Regulations for IDEA state that for assessments, the IEP for each child with a disability must include a statement of —

Any individual modifications in the administration of state or district-wide assessments of student achievement that are needed in order for the child to participate in the assessment

The term "accommodations" is also used in Section 300.138, which indicates that —

The state must have on file with the Secretary information to demonstrate that — (a) Children with disabilities are included in general state and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations and modifications in administration, if necessary [Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(17)(A)]

None of the language of the law indicates that the number of students with disabilities who need accommodations will change as students get older and

## Table 1. Examples of Instructional and Assessment Accommodations*

| Instructional Accommodations | | Assessment Accommodations | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Materials/Curriculum** | **Methods/Strategies** | **Setting** | **Presentation** |
| • Alternative assignments | • Highlight key points to remember | • Study carrel | • Repeat directions |
| • Substitute materials with lower reading levels | • Eliminate distractions by using a template to block out other items | • Special lighting | • Larger bubbles on multiple-choice questions |
| • Fewer assignments | • Have student use a self monitoring sheet | • Separate room | • Sign language presentation |
| • Decrease length of assignments | • Break task into smaller parts to do at different times | • Individualized or small group | • Magnification device |
| • Copy pages so students can mark on them | • Use study partners whenever reading or writing is required | **Timing** | **Response** |
| • Provide examples of correctly completed work | • Secure papers to work areas with tape or magnets | • Extended time | • Mark answers in test booklet |
| • Early syllabus | • Present information in multiple formats | • Frequent breaks | • Use reference materials (e.g., dictionary) |
| • Advance notice of assignments | • Use listening devices | • Unlimited time | • Word process writing sample |
| • Tape-recorded versions of printed materials | | **Scheduling** | **Other** |
| | | • Specific time of day | • Special test preparation techniques |
| | | • Subtests in different order | • Out of level test |

Reprinted with permission from Boxes 3.2 and 3.3 in Thurlow, M.L. Elliott, J.L., & Ysseldyke, J.E. (1998). *Testing students with disabilities: Practical strategies for complying with district and state requirements.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

move from one level of schooling to the next, although the specific accommodations that students need may change over time (Elliott & Thurlow, 2000).

### Definitional Considerations

"Accommodation" is just one of many terms that have been used to indicate a change in instructional or assessment materials or procedures. Another frequently used term, "modification," is generally (but not always) used to refer to a change in which scores produced are invalid or otherwise not comparable to other scores. IDEA uses both "accommodation" and "modification in administration," but intends that the terms be viewed as comparable and inclusive. As stated in a memorandum from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), "the terms as used in the statute and regulations are not intended to correspond with the evolving usage of these terms in the field of assessment . . . . 'modifications in administration' should be viewed as a general term that would include both accommodations and modifications, as they are commonly used in assessment practice" (Heumann & Warlick, 2000, p. 8).

### Research Considerations

Research on accommodations has increased dramatically in recent years, due in part to an infusion of funding from OSEP, but also due to dramatic increases in state efforts to include students with disabilities in their assessments, along with the need to study the potential effects of certain accommodations on test results (see Thurlow & Bolt, 2001). Most of this research has focused on assessment accommodations and their effects (cf. Tindal & Fuchs, 1999), rather than on the extent to which students are using accommodations in instruction and assessment.

Survey research gives some indication of the extent to which accommodations are used during assessments. In a survey of approximately 400 teachers, Jayanthi, Epstein, Polloway, and Bursuck (1996) found that elementary school teachers identified several test accommodations as more helpful for students than did either middle school or secondary school teachers. In comparison to the ratings of middle school and high school teachers, they also indicated that many of the accommodations were relatively easy to implement. Still, this research did not indicate the extent to which teachers actually used accommodations, just their perceptions of them. Perceptions about accommodations do differ between the elementary and middle/secondary school levels.

Lack of information about how accommodations are used in instruction and assessments is related to some extent to limitations in the availability of accommodations prior to the reauthorization of IDEA (Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & Silverstein, 1995). It is also related to difficulties states have encountered in merging information on accommodations into data collection and management systems that have many limitations (Almond, Tindal, & Stieber, 1997).

Following the reauthorization of IDEA and recommendations that states begin to collect data on the use of testing accommodations (Elliott, Thurlow, & Ysseldyke, 1996), several states implemented data collection mechanisms to do just that. By 1999, the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) found that 12 states had data available on the number or percentage of students using assessment accommodations during their state tests. These data are reproduced in Table 2.

The data in this table reveal that in most states, accommodations are used by greater percentages of students at the elementary school level than at either the middle school or high school levels (see Thurlow, 2001). In all but two states, there is a downward trend in percentages across two or three of the school levels. For the 16 tests reflected in the table, the downward trend is evident in 95% of the possible comparisons.

### What We Don't Know

We do not yet know what is happening in the majority of situations in which accommodations are being used. Most of the data that we do have on use of accommodations is from assessments, usually state-level tests. Even so, we have a relatively limited number of states able to provide data on the use of accommodations by students receiving special education services. However, given these limited data, we do not yet have a real sense of why there are differences. The survey data of Jayanthi et al.

## Table 2. State-Reported Levels of Use of Accommodations

| State | Assessment/ Subject Area | Elementary Grades (K-5) | Middle School Grades (6-8) | High School Grades (9-12) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Florida | FL Writing Assessment | 51% (Gr 4) | 39% (Gr 8) | 34% (Gr 10) |
| | FCAT (Reading) | 47% (Gr 4) | 38% (Gr 8) | 40% (Gr 10) |
| | FCAT (Math) | 50% (Gr 5) | 38% (Gr 8) | 39% (Gr 10) |
| Indiana | Statewide Assessment - Math | 28% (Gr 3) | 34% (Gr 6) 38% (Gr 8) | 80% (Gr 10) |
| | English/Language Arts | 29% (Gr 3) | 34% (Gr 6) 38% (Gr 8) | 82% (Gr 10) |
| Kansas | KS Assessment Program – Math | 21% (Gr 4) | 14% (Gr 7) | 08% (Gr 10) |
| | Reading | 19% (Gr 3) | 13% (Gr 7) | 08% (Gr 10) |
| | Writing | 23% (Gr 5) | 17% (Gr 7) | 09% (Gr 10) |
| Kentucky | Kentucky Core Content Test | 82% (Gr 4) 82% (Gr 5) | 72% (Gr 7) 70% (Gr 8) | 50% (Gr 10) 57% (Gr 11) 55% (Gr 12) |
| Massachusetts | Comprehensive Assessment System | 61% (Gr 4) | 38% (Gr 8) | 25% (Gr 10) |
| Maryland | MSPAP - Reading | 53% (Gr 3) 51% (Gr 5) | 25% (Gr 8) 16% (Gr 8) | |
| | Language Usage | 44% (Gr 3) 41% (Gr 5) | | |
| | Math | 20% (Gr 3) | | |
| Nevada | Terra Nova Complete Battery | 51% (Gr 4) | 42% (Gr 8) | 44% (Gr 10) |
| New York | PEP Test – Reading | 50% (Gr 3) | 50% (Gr 6) | |
| | Math | 31% (Gr 3) | 32% (Gr 6) | |
| | Writing | 33% (Gr 5) | | |
| Pennsylvania | Reading and Math Assessment | 67% (Gr 5) | 52% (Gr 8) | 45% (Gr 11) |
| Rhode Island | Writing Performance Assessment | 49% (Gr 3) | 55% (Gr 7) | 60% (Gr 10) |
| | Health Performance Assessment | 39% (Gr 5) | 61% (Gr 9) | |
| South Dakota | Stanford Achievement Test (Language, Math, Reading, Science, Social Science) | 63% (Gr 2) 67% (Gr 4) | 59% (Gr 8) | 46% (Gr 11) |
| West Virginia | SAT 9 – Language, Math, Reading, Science, Social Studies | 64% (Gr 3-11) | | |

From Thompson, S.J., & Thurlow, M.L. (1999). *Table 7. Percent of Students Receiving Special Education Services Who Used Testing Accommodations, reprinted with permission of the National Center on Educational Outcomes.*

(1996) suggests that teachers at different grade levels do have different perceptions of the helpfulness and ease of administering many accommodations. Do these different perceptions translate into what is selected for students during assessments?

Is there any reason to believe that students with disabilities who are in the upper grade levels have less need for accommodations? Could it be that those students who most need accommodations are the students who have already dropped out of school, and therefore the percentages of students using accommodations drops simply because the ones left need fewer accommodations?

Could it be that teachers' perceptions influence their willingness to provide accommodations to students who may actually need them? We do not know the answers to these questions.

Perhaps most important is the question of how what we know (and do not know) relates to the accommodations that students

receive during instruction. Most assessment guidelines speak of the need for there to be an alignment between assessment accommodations and instructional accommodations (Elliott & Thurlow, 2000; Thurlow, House, Boys, Scott, & Ysseldyke, 2000). If students with disabilities are receiving fewer accommodations during assessments in the upper grades, does this also mean that they are receiving fewer accommodations during instruction? Is this justified? Do teachers at the upper grade levels face logistical barriers that make providing accommodations nearly impossible unless the student simply cannot function without them?

The grades in which students with disabilities are involved in transition planning are the same grades in which we see declining numbers of students using accommodations. Does that mean that students are less likely to be aware of their need for accommodations because they are not being built into transition plans? If they are not built in during transition planning, do students leave school without any idea of their accommodations needs? And if so, what impact does this eventually have on their success in their postsecondary work or education?

## What To Do Now

There clearly are many unanswered questions about the issue of declining percentages of students with disabilities receiving accommodations as they reach middle and high school. An important next step is to begin to answer some of the many related questions.

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

# MODIFICATIONS FOR REGULAR CLASSES

Name: _____     _____School Year

Directions: Check each modification that is needed for this student to be successfully included in this classroom:

**A. Modifying the presentation of the material:**
   1. Break assignments into segments of shorter tasks.
   2. When content mastery is questionable, investigate the use of concrete concepts BEFORE teaching abstract.
   3. Relate the information to the student's experiential base.
   4. Reduce the number of concepts introduced at any one time.
   5. Provide students with an overview of the lesson BEFORE beginning. Tell the student what the student should expect to learn and why.
   6. Monitor the level of language you use to communicate ideas. Avoid using advanced vocabulary and complex sentence structure.
   7. Schedule frequent, short conferences with students to check for comprehension.
   8. Provide a consistent review of any lessons BEFORE introducing new information.
   9. Allow students to obtain report information utilizing:
      □ cassette/tape recorder   □ projects   □ dictation   □ typewriters
      □ computers   □ files   □ interviews/oral reports   □ calculators

   10. Highlight important concepts to be learned in text or material. Color code key points outline and study guides.
   11. Space practice and drill sessions over time.
   12. Monitor the rate at which you present the material (talk too fast, too much information at one time?)
   13. Give additional presentations.
         a. Repeat the original presentation.
         b. Provide more complete/simpler explanations.
         c. Give additional examples.
         d. Model skills in several ways.
   14. Provide additional guided practice.
         a. Require more responses.
         b. Lengthen practice sessions.
         c. Schedule extra practice sessions.
   15. Make consequences more attractive.
         a. Increase feedback.
         b. Provide knowledge of results
         c. Chart performance.
         d. Reward approximations.
         e. Give incentives to begin and to complete.
   16. Recognize and give credit for student's oral participation in class.
   17. Make arrangements for homework assignments to reach home with clear, concise directions.
   18. Assign tasks at the appropriate level 0ower reading/difficulty level).
   19. Give tests orally.
   20. Other:
21. Other:

**B. Modifying the Environment:**
1. Use study carrels.
2. Use proximity seating.
3. Seat students in an area free from distractions.
4. Let the student select the best place for the student to study.
5. Help keep student's space free of unnecessary materials.
6. Use checklists to help students get organized
7. Use a notebook for organized assignments, materials, and homework.
8. Provide opportunities for movement.
9. Other:_____
10. Other:_____

**C. Modifying Time Demands:**
1. Increase the amount of time allowed to complete assignments/tests. Contract with students concerning time allotments.
2. Reduce the amount of work or length of tests (as opposed to allowing more time).
3. Teach time management skills (use of checklists, prioritizing assignments).
4. Space short work periods with breaks or changes of tasks.
5. Set up a specific routine and stick with it.
6. Alternate quiet and active time (short periods each).
7. Give the student a specific task within a particular time limit.
8. Other:_____
9. Other:_____


**D. Modifying the Materials**

**1. Visual Motor Integration**
   a. Avoid large amounts of written work (both in class and homework).
   b. Encourage students to select the method of writing which is most comfortable.
   c. Set realistic and mutually agreed-upon expectations for neatness.
   d. Let the student type, record, or give answers orally instead of in writing.
   e. Avoid pressures of speed and accuracy.
   f. Provide students with a carbon copy of lecture notes produced by the teacher or peer.
   g. Reduce amounts of board work copying and textbook copying; provide student with written information.
   h. Other:_____
   i. Other:_____

**2. Visual Processing**
   a. Highlight information to be learned (color coding, underlining, etc.).
   b. Keep written assignments and work space free from extraneous/irrelevant distractors.
   c. Avoid purple dittos.
   d. Worksheets should be clear and well-defined.
   e. Go over the visual task with the student and make sure the student has a clear understanding of all parts I) of the assignment BEFORE beginning.
   f. Avoid having students copy from the board. (Provide student with a written copy of the material)
   g. Other:_____
   h. Other:_____

3. **Language Processing**
   a. Give written directions to supplement verbal directions.
   b. Slow the rate of presentation.
   c. Paraphrase material using similar language.
   d. Keep statements short and to the point.
   e. Avoid using abstract language (metaphors, idioms, puns, etc.).
   f. Keep sentence structures simple: gradually introduce more complex sentences as students master the ability to comprehend them.
   g. Encourage feedback from students to check for understanding. (Have the student restate what you have said in student's own words),
   h. Familiarize students with any new vocabulary BEFORE the lesson,
   i. Reduce the amount of extraneous noise such as conversations, TV, radio, noises from outside, etc.
   j. Alert students' attention to key points with phrases such as "This is important. Listen carefully."
   k. Ensure that the readability levels of the textbooks used in class are commensurate with the student's language level.
   l. Utilize visual aids to supplement verbal information. (Charts, graphics, pictures, etc., can be used to illustrate written and spoken information.)
   m. Utilize manipulative, hands-on activities whenever possible; establish the concrete experience base BEFORE teaching more abstract concepts.
   n. ALWAYS demonstrate to students how the new material relates to material the student has previously learned.
   o. Other:_____
   p. Other:_____

4. **Organizational**
   a. Establish a daily routine and attempt to maintain it.
   b. Make clear rules and be consistent in enforcing them.
   c. Contract with the student, using a reward for completion of the contract.
   d. Provide a notebook with organized sections such as:
      □ assignments due          □ calendar          □ homework
      □ time management schedules  □ prioritized to-do lists
      □ study guides             □ class notes
   e. Avoid cluttered, crowded worksheets by utilizing techniques such as:
      BLOCKING - block assignments into smaller segments.
      CUTTING - cut worksheets and give segments to students, segment by segment.
      FOLDING - fold worksheets into fourths, sixths, or eightths and place one problem in each square.
      COLOR CODING, HIGHLIGHTING, OR UNDERLINING important information on which student needs to focus.
   f. Hand out written assignments with expected dates of completion typed or written in one corner,
   g. To prevent misplaced assignments, provide students with file folders, notebooks, or trays where they can immediately place their work BEFORE it is lost.
   h. Set aside a specific time to clean desks lockers, organize notebooks, etc.
   l. Teach goal-setting skills, j. Teach decision-making/prioritizing skills,
   k. Teach time management skills.
   l. Other:_____
   m. Other:_____

**E. Use of Groups and Peers**
   1. Utilize cooperative learning strategies when appropriate.
   2. Assign a peer helper to:
      a. Check understanding of directions.
      b. Read important directions and essential material.
      c. Take carbon copies of lecture notes.
      d. Drill work.
      e. Summarize important textbook passages (on tape or in person).
      f. Record material dictated by the student.
      g. Model appropriate responses.
   3. Other:_____
   4. Other:_____

**F. Use of Teacher Aide**
   1. Other:_____
   2. Other:_____
   3. Other:_____
   4. Other:_____
   5. Other:_____

**G. Other (Specify)**
   1. Other:_____
   2. Other:_____
   3. Other:_____
   4. Other:_____
   5. Other:_____
   6. Other:_____
   7. Other:_____
   8. Other:_____
   9. Other:_____
   10. Other:_____

# Accommodations Fidelity Checklist

| | | STUDENT NAMES | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TEACHER:** _____<br>**CLASS/SUBJECT:** _____ | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **LESSON DESIGN AND PRESENTATION** | **VISUAL SUPPORTS** | | | | | | | |
| | Provide visual aids to support key concepts | | | | | | | |
| | Use graphic organizers to organize information presented orally | | | | | | | |
| | Provide example of final product | | | | | | | |
| | Provide copy of notes | | | | | | | |
| | **TEACHING MODALITY** | | | | | | | |
| | Teach through multi-sensory modes | | | | | | | |
| | Pair key terms and concepts with two modes of learning (ex: visual and auditory, visual and kinesthetic) | | | | | | | |
| | Use advanced organizers – introduce what you are going to teach, teach it, review it, ask students to tell you what they have learned | | | | | | | |
| | **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT** | | | | | | | |
| | Increase opportunities for student responses | | | | | | | |
| | Provide wait time for question responses | | | | | | | |
| | Orally check for understanding of key points | | | | | | | |
| | Incorporate turn and talks or think-pair-share activities | | | | | | | |
| | **STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ACCESS FOR ALL** | | | | | | | |
| | Pre-teach pertinent vocabulary | | | | | | | |
| | Provide small group instruction | | | | | | | |
| | Use student interests and strengths to structure lessons and activities | | | | | | | |
| **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT** | **VISUAL SUPPORTS** | | | | | | | |
| | Seat student facing instructional area/speaker | | | | | | | |
| | Seat student near positive role model | | | | | | | |
| | Provide visual boundaries (tape, dividers) for areas of the classroom | | | | | | | |
| | **LEARNING MODALITY** | | | | | | | |
| | Offer smaller versions of classroom visuals and anchor charts | | | | | | | |
| | Provide individual set of manipulatives | | | | | | | |
| | Provide a structured area where students can stand/move during instruction or independent work | | | | | | | |
| | **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT** | | | | | | | |
| | Proximity- Seat student close to teacher | | | | | | | |
| | Create low distraction work areas | | | | | | | |
| | **STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ACCESS FOR ALL** | | | | | | | |
| | Provide options for independent workspace | | | | | | | |
| | Post only visuals that are used and referred to frequently (e.g. once a week) | | | | | | | |

| | | STUDENT NAMES | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TEACHER:** _____ <br> **CLASS/SUBJECT:** _____ | | | | | | | |
| **BEHAVIOR** | **VISUAL SUPPORTS** | | | | | | |
| | Post rules and expectations | | | | | | |
| | Provide a visual schedule of daily activities | | | | | | |
| | Cue student to stay on task with a predetermined, private signal | | | | | | |
| | **LEARNING MODALITY** | | | | | | |
| | Pair verbal prompts with visuals or gestures | | | | | | |
| | Provide opportunity to practice following expectations | | | | | | |
| | **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT** | | | | | | |
| | Allow for movement breaks | | | | | | |
| | Increase frequency and immediacy of positive reinforcement | | | | | | |
| | Provide student with choices and control | | | | | | |
| | **STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ACCESS FOR ALL** | | | | | | |
| | Keep rules clear and simple | | | | | | |
| | Discuss behavior with student in private | | | | | | |
| | Independent Work | | | | | | |
| **INDEPENDENT WORK** | **VISUAL SUPPORTS** | | | | | | |
| | Provide task organizers or activity schedules | | | | | | |
| | Highlight key concepts | | | | | | |
| | Use color-coding to help students identify tasks, meanings, or expectations | | | | | | |
| | Use timers to define independent work time | | | | | | |
| | Give page numbers to help students find answers | | | | | | |
| | Provide completed example | | | | | | |
| | Simplify complex written directions and pair with picture cues | | | | | | |
| | Pair oral directions with visual directions or cues | | | | | | |
| | **LEARNING MODALITY** | | | | | | |
| | Vary response type given (oral, written, multiple choice, computer) | | | | | | |
| | Allow student to use manipulatives, notes, assistive technology, or visual aids to complete assignments | | | | | | |
| | **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT** | | | | | | |
| | Shorten assignments to focus on master of key concepts | | | | | | |
| | Require fewer correct responses to achieve grade | | | | | | |
| | Allow extra time to complete task or provide frequent breaks between sections | | | | | | |
| | **STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ACCESS FOR ALL** | | | | | | |
| | Use prearranged signal to gain students' attention before giving directions | | | | | | |
| | Break long-term assignments into small, sequential steps, with frequent teacher feedback | | | | | | |

| | | STUDENT NAMES | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **TEACHER:** _____<br><br>**CLASS/SUBJECT:** _____ | | | | | | | |
| **A S S E S S M E N T S** | **VISUAL SUPPORTS** | | | | | | |
| | Divide tests into small sections of similar questions | | | | | | |
| | Use visual blockers to cover sections of assessment that student is not currently working on | | | | | | |
| | **LEARNING MODALITY** | | | | | | |
| | Incorporate student interest into assessment | | | | | | |
| | Vary response type given (oral, written, multiple choice, computer, performance assessment) | | | | | | |
| | **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT** | | | | | | |
| | Allow extra time | | | | | | |
| | Allow alternate/flexible setting | | | | | | |
| | Allow small group or one-on-one testing | | | | | | |
| | **STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ACCESS FOR ALL** | | | | | | |
| | Give frequent short quizzes instead of longer assessments | | | | | | |
| | Scribe student answers | | | | | | |
| | Provide fewer options for matching/fill in the blank/multiple choice | | | | | | |
| **O R G A N I Z A T I O N** | **VISUAL SUPPORTS** | | | | | | |
| | Provide students with assignment or subject specific material lists | | | | | | |
| | Teach student to write/keep track of assignments in assignment notebook | | | | | | |
| | **LEARNING MODALITY** | | | | | | |
| | Have student read or rephrase what is written in assignment notebook | | | | | | |
| | Present all assignments and due dates verbally and visually | | | | | | |
| | **STUDENT ENGAGEMENT** | | | | | | |
| | Keep individual student materials in a separate location from learning space (e.g. an empty desk for lecture and a desk to store books and pencils) | | | | | | |
| | Create homework on work completion grid that allows student to track progress | | | | | | |
| | **STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ACCESS FOR ALL** | | | | | | |
| | Post materials needed on board | | | | | | |
| | Keep a clear work area | | | | | | |

# School Accommodation and Modification Ideas for Students who Receive Special Education Services

Some students with disabilities who receive special education services need accommodations or modifications to their educational program in order to participate in the general curriculum and to be successful in school. While the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) does not define accommodations or modifications, there is some agreement as to what it means. An *accommodation* as used in this document allows a student to complete the same assignment or test as other students, but with a change in the timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response and/or presentation. This accommodation does not alter in any significant way what the test or assignment measures. For example, a student who is blind must take a Braille version of a test. Another student might take a test alone in a quiet room.

A *modification* as used in this document is an adjustment to an assignment or a test that changes the standard or what the test or assignment is supposed to measure. Examples of modifications include a student completing work on part of a standard, or a student completing an alternate assignment that is more easily achievable than the original assignment.

Modifications and accommodations should be discussed by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team and team decisions are written into a student's IEP. These changes should be chosen to fit the student's individual needs. It's important to include the student, if appropriate, when discussing accommodations and modifications. Asking the student what would be helpful is a good first step.

Under IDEA, assistive technology can be used as an accommodation for students with disabilities. Assistive technology is defined as, "any item, piece of equipment, or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain or improve functional capabilities of a child with a disability." There are many assistive technology products available to help students with disabilities. The IEP team should consider if assistive technology is needed to make

progress on goals and objectives in the IEP or in the general education curriculum. When reviewing these ideas, keep in mind that any accommodation or modification an IEP team chooses must be based on the individual needs of the student, and these must be provided if written in the student's IEP.

## Textbooks and Curriculum

### Books: Accommodations

- Provide summaries of chapters
- Use peer readers
- Use a marker to highlight important textbook sections
- Provide two sets of classroom curriculum materials, one for home and one for school
- Provide the student with a list of discussion questions before reading the material
- Provide books and other written materials in alternate formats such as Braille, large print, audio formats, and digital text
- Explore use of assistive technology (such as Bookshare or Kurzweil)

### Books: Modifications

- Provide alternative books with similar concepts but at an easier reading level
- Give page numbers to help the student find answers

### Curriculum: Accommodations

- Provide a vocabulary list
- Substitute alternatives for long writing assignments (clay models, posters, panoramas, collections, electronic presentation, or oral presentation)
- Provide alternatives to reading aloud in front of the class
- Provide alternatives to crossword puzzles or word finds

### Curriculum: Modifications

- Shorten assignments to focus on mastery of key concepts

*NOTE: many of the accommodations listed in this handout may also be appropriate for students with disabilities who have a Section 504 accommodation plan. The purpose of Section 504 accommodations is to eliminate barriers to full participation in school activities, including the general education curriculum. Modifications do not apply to 504 students.*

- Shorten spelling tests to focus on mastering the most functional words

## Classroom Environment: Accommodations

- Keep work space clear of unrelated materials
- Keep the classroom quiet during intense learning times
- Reduce visual distractions in the classroom
- Provide a computer for written work
- Seat the student close to the teacher or a positive role model
- Use a study carrel (provide extra carrels so that the student will not feel singled out)
- Seat the student away from windows, doorways, and radiators
- Provide a clear view of the board, teacher, and screen
- Keep extra classroom materials (pencils, paper) on hand
- Provide additional personal space between desks
- Post a visual schedule on student's desk
- Use a pass system for students needing frequent movement breaks
- Provide accessible classroom locations and accessible furniture (such as special desks, tables, chairs)
- Provide headsets to block noise
- Provide FM or sound field amplification system for listening
- Provide organizers for lockers/desk

## Instructions and Assignments

### Directions: Accommodations

- Use both oral and printed directions
- Highlight key words in directions
- Give directions in small steps using as few words as possible
- Number and sequence steps in a task
- Have a student repeat directions to check for comprehension
- Provide visual aids
- Show a model of the end product (such as a completed math problem or finished quiz)
- Stand near the student when giving directions
- Allow use of tape recorder or assistive technology device to record directions

### Time/Transitions: Accommodations

- Alert student several minutes before a transition from one activity to another
- Provide additional time to complete a task

- Allow specified amount of extra time to turn in homework without penalty
- Provide assistance when moving between classrooms or around the building
- Allow student to leave classroom 2-3 minutes early to avoid crowded hallways
- Increase wait time for responses
- Provide a visual timer

### Handwriting: Accommodations

- Use worksheets that require minimal writing
- Use fill-in questions with space for a brief response rather than a short essay
- Provide a "designated note taker" or photocopy of another student's or teacher's notes (do not expect student to arrange with another student for notes)
- Provide outlines for videos
- Provide print copy of any assignments or directions written on the board
- Provide photocopy materials rather than requiring student to copy from the board or text book
- Let the student use a technology to record or dictate answers
- Provide access to word processing applications or software, portable note taker, tablet or similar device
- Provide adaptive writing tools, pencil grips, slanted surface
- Allow use of speech-to-text software for long written assignments
- Allow student to dictate a writing assignment for a teacher or teacher's aide to transcribe
- Provide partially completed outlines of lectures for students to fill in the blanks
- Explore use of alternate keyboard options and writing software

### Grading: Accommodations

- Use daily or frequent grading and average into a grade for the quarter
- Weigh daily work higher than tests for a student who performs poorly on tests due to the disability
- Mark the correct answers rather than incorrect ones

### Grading: Modifications

- Provide partial grade based on individual progress or effort
- Permit a student to rework missed problems for a better grade
- Use a pass-fail or an alternate grading system

- Average grades out when assignments are reworked or grade on corrected work

## Tests: Accommodations

- Go over directions orally
- Permit extended time to complete tests
- Allow test to be taken in a room with few distractions
- Have materials read to the student and allow oral responses (for tests that don't measure reading or writing)
- Divide tests into small sections of similar questions and problems
- Allow the student to complete an independent project as an alternative test
- Provide study guides and study questions that directly relate to tests
- Provide a sample or practice test

## Tests: Modifications

- Use recognition tests (true-false, multiple choice, or matching) instead of essays
- Grade spelling separately from content
- Provide the first letter of the missing word
- Allow take-home or open-book tests
- Provide a vocabulary list with definitions
- Provide possible answers for fill-in-the-blank sections

## Math: Accommodations

- Allow the student to use a calculator without penalty
- Group similar problems together (such as all addition in one section unless testing to see if student can determine which function to use)
- Provide fewer problems on a worksheet (e.g., 4 to 6 problems per page rather than 20 or 30 but the same total number of problems)
- Use enlarged graph paper to help the student keep numbers in columns
- Provide a table of math facts for reference (unless testing math facts)
- Tape a number line to student's desk
- Read and explain story problems or break problems into smaller steps
- Use pictures or graphics
- Circle math computation signs
- Require the student to solve fewer problems to focus on mastery of concepts

## Math: Modification

- Focus on mastery of more functional math concepts

## Behavior: Accommodations

- Pair student with students modeling good behavior for classwork, projects, and mentoring
- Reward positive behaviors
- Create a "back pocket pass" the student can use to leave the classroom without asking permission
- Use non-verbal cues or code word to communicate inappropriate behavior
- Establish plan to manage side effects of medication (such as water bottle for thirst, extra bathroom breaks)

## Other Accommodations

- Check progress and provide feedback often in the first few minutes of each assignment
- Introduce an overview of long-term assignments so the student knows what is expected and when it is due
- Provide structured assignments with lists for the student to cross off when finished
- Break long-term assignments into small, sequential steps with daily monitoring and frequent grading
- Have the student practice presenting in a small group before presenting to the class
- Give student worksheets one at a time
- Sequence work with the easiest parts first
- Allow use of sensory tools
- Establish a form of communication between home and school
- Reward student for recording assignments and due dates in a notebook
- Draw arrows on worksheets or the board to show how ideas are related, or use other graphic organizers such as flow charts
- Provide locker accommodations (such as a key versus a combination lock)
- Explore use of memory organization aides (tablets, cell phone calendars, task lists, and visual schedules)
- Use color coded materials for each class

# Activity Involvement and Modification Planning Form

**Students Name:**_____

| Name of Activity in PE or on the Playground | Can Alexander participate in the activity without modification? | | Can Alexander participate in a modified version of the activity? | If Alexander **cannot participate in the activity,** check here and indicate what else can he do that is related to what the class is doing? | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **YES** | **NO** | **If yes,** define modifications | **NO** | **What he will do instead** |
| Swinging | | | | | |
| Sliding | | | | | |
| Kick Ball | | | | | Example: Keep score for the teams |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

# Student Modifications Summary Sheet

Teacher _____          Class/Subject_____

| ACCOMMODATIONS | Student's Names | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ASSIGNMENTS** | | | | | | | | |
| Abbreviated assignments (fewer items/questions). | | | | | | | | |
| Additional Time | | | | | | | | |
| Allow alternate assignment/strategy when class demands conflict with IEP goals | | | | | | | | |
| Allow student to type or tape assignment. | | | | | | | | |
| Assignment book. | | | | | | | | |
| Audio/Video tape directions for student | | | | | | | | |
| Compacting | | | | | | | | |
| Give directions in alternative format (written/picture/verbal, etc.). | | | | | | | | |
| Give directions in multiple formats (e.g., written & orally). | | | | | | | | |
| Give directions in small, distinct steps. | | | | | | | | |
| Give extra cues/prompts on assignments. | | | | | | | | |
| Increase frequency of assignments formatted for learning style strength areas. | | | | | | | | |
| Modify difficulty level of content. | | | | | | | | |
| Modify grading scale (pass/fail or points). | | | | | | | | |
| Modify worksheet/packet format (essay, short answer, fill in blank, multiple choice, etc.). | | | | | | | | |
| No penalty for spelling/handwriting/sloppy. | | | | | | | | |
| Provide extra grade opportunities (re-do items missed, extra credit, etc.). | | | | | | | | |
| Provide grading rubrics with assignment. | | | | | | | | |
| Provide photocopies of pages/items vs. student copying from text/board. | | | | | | | | |
| Read/audio tape ALL text on assignments. | | | | | | | | |
| Study guide. | | | | | | | | |
| Use of calculator. | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **ENVIRONMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS** | | | | | | | | |
| AAC device. | | | | | | | | |
| Audio tape recorder. | | | | | | | | |
| Behavior/Performance Contracting | | | | | | | | |
| Computer. | | | | | | | | |
| Modify room arrangement. | | | | | | | | |
| Peer Tutoring | | | | | | | | |
| Planned/preferential seating. | | | | | | | | |
| Reduce/minimize distractions (visual, auditory, tactile, movement, and/or social). | | | | | | | | |

# Student Modifications Summary Sheet

Teacher _____     Class/Subject_____

| | STUDENT NAMES | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ENVIRONMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS (continued)** | | | | | | | | |
| Study carrel | | | | | | | | |
| Video recorder. | | | | | | | | |
| Word processor. | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **MATERIALS** | | | | | | | | |
| Audio taped textbooks/materials. | | | | | | | | |
| Carbonless or photo copy of peer's class notes. | | | | | | | | |
| Highlighted textbook (student)/study guides. | | | | | | | | |
| Home set of texts/materials for preview/review. | | | | | | | | |
| Large print/magnified photocopies | | | | | | | | |
| Modify arrangement of material on page | | | | | | | | |
| Provide copies of material to be copied from book to board | | | | | | | | |
| Provide supplementary materials. | | | | | | | | |
| Tapes of teacher lectures/discussions. | | | | | | | | |
| Typed copies of teacher lectures/notes | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **PACING** | | | | | | | | |
| Allow breaks. | | | | | | | | |
| Compacting. | | | | | | | | |
| Flexible time limits. | | | | | | | | |
| Omit tasks requiring copying in timed situations | | | | | | | | |
| Vary assessment/assignment activity frequently | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **PRESENTATION OF SUBJECT MATTER** | | | | | | | | |
| Check often for understanding/review | | | | | | | | |
| Emphasize critical information | | | | | | | | |
| Instruction focuses on IEP goals only | | | | | | | | |
| Manipulatives | | | | | | | | |
| Plan for generalization/teach skills in several settings/situations. | | | | | | | | |
| Pre-teach vocabulary | | | | | | | | |
| Present demonstrations (models) | | | | | | | | |
| Prompting upon request | | | | | | | | |
| Provide copies of notes (from another student) | | | | | | | | |
| Provide cross-age or same-age peer tutoring | | | | | | | | |
| Provide low vocabulary/language materials on topic, theme, and/or concept | | | | | | | | |

# Student Modifications Summary Sheet

Teacher _____  Class/Subject_____

| | STUDENT NAMES | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **PRESENTATION OF SUBJECT MATTER (continued)** | | | | | | | | |
| Request parent reinforcement of instruction | | | | | | | | |
| School text sent home for summer preview | | | | | | | | |
| Use bodily kinesthetic or hands-on strategies | | | | | | | | |
| Use cooperative learning strategies | | | | | | | | |
| Use errorless learning strategies | | | | | | | | |
| Use experiential learning/examples | | | | | | | | |
| Use functional/authentic instruction | | | | | | | | |
| Use multiple/rotating peers for groups/tutoring | | | | | | | | |
| Use musical/rhythmic strategies | | | | | | | | |
| Use self-management strategies | | | | | | | | |
| Use spatial/graphic/visual strategies | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| **TESTING** | | | | | | | | |
| Abbreviated concepts tested | | | | | | | | |
| Additional Time | | | | | | | | |
| Consider learning styles & change assessment mode to Authentic applications of content/concept | | | | | | | | |
| Consider learning styles & change assessment mode to exhibitions | | | | | | | | |
| Consider learning styles & change assessment mode to journals | | | | | | | | |
| Consider learning styles & change assessment mode to performances | | | | | | | | |
| Consider learning styles & change assessment mode to products | | | | | | | | |
| Consider learning styles & change assessment mode to reflections | | | | | | | | |
| Consider learning styles & change assessment mode to visuals | | | | | | | | |
| Extended Time | | | | | | | | |
| Modify content being tested | | | | | | | | |
| Modify grading scale | | | | | | | | |
| Modify test format (word bank, multiple choice, short answer) | | | | | | | | |
| Oral Testing (Read Aloud Test Items) | | | | | | | | |
| Prompting upon request | | | | | | | | |
| Repeating Directions Verbatim | | | | | | | | |
| Shorten test length | | | | | | | | |
| Use of calculator | | | | | | | | |
| Use of manipulatives | | | | | | | | |
| Use of math tables | | | | | | | | |

# Student Modifications Summary Sheet

Teacher _____          Class/Subject_____

| | STUDENT NAMES | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **SOCIAL INTERACTION SUPPORT** | | | | | | | | |
| Review and practice social skills using role play and/or authentic (real) situations | | | | | | | | |
| Assign as cross-age or same age peer tutor. | | | | | | | | |
| Provide a peer advocate | | | | | | | | |
| Provide social skills instruction | | | | | | | | |
| Create a Circle of Friends | | | | | | | | |
| **SELF MANAGEMENT/MONITORING** | | | | | | | | |
| Provide daily assignment book | | | | | | | | |
| Provide written daily schedule | | | | | | | | |
| Provide pictorial daily schedule | | | | | | | | |
| Provide study guides | | | | | | | | |
| Provide T-Charts for classroom rules | | | | | | | | |
| Provide self-monitoring checklists for academic tasks | | | | | | | | |
| Provide self-monitoring checklists for unwritten curriculum (class rules, procedures, social skills, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Provide step by step checklists for academic tasks | | | | | | | | |
| Provide step by step checklists for unwritten curriculum (class rules, procedures, social skills, etc.) | | | | | | | | |
| Use socially appropriate coping/relaxation strategies | | | | | | | | |
| **CONSEQUENCE MANIPULATIONS** | | | | | | | | |
| Provide a range of consequences, including instructional consequences | | | | | | | | |
| Use reinforcement-based decelerating consequences | | | | | | | | |
| Increase ratios of positive to negative interaction | | | | | | | | |
| Provide verbal reinforcers | | | | | | | | |
| Provide non-verbal reinforcers | | | | | | | | |
| Provide concrete reinforcers | | | | | | | | |
| Provide a choice of reinforcers | | | | | | | | |
| Provide activity-based reinforcers | | | | | | | | |
| Provide social reinforcers | | | | | | | | |
| Use reactive strategies | | | | | | | | |
| Follow crisis intervention plan | | | | | | | | |
| **POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN** | | | | | | | | |
| Teach functionally equivalent alternatives to challenging behaviors | | | | | | | | |
| Increase opportunities for choice | | | | | | | | |
| Use instruction/assessment that capitalizes on strengths/interests | | | | | | | | |
| Increase predictability of schedule | | | | | | | | |
| Assign daily classroom job in strength/interest area | | | | | | | | |

**tnstep**

# Curriculum Modification Planning Form

What is the curriculum standard that is being taught?
What is everybody doing?
_____
_____
_____

Can_____participate in the learning
objective or activity just like everyone else?

YES!
Then go have fun!

NO?
What can we do to
include_____?

Can we provide assistance
from friends?
Who? _____
_____
What will they do?
_____
_____
_____
_____
Who will teach and monitor
the peer assistance?
_____

Can an adult help?
Who? _____
_____
What will they do?
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Will different or modified materials be useful to assist in this
learning objective or activity?  If yes, what materials?
_____
_____

What else can_____do that is
related to what the class is doing?
_____
_____

Who is responsible to ensure materials
are modified and ready?
_____
What equipment/supplies do they
need?_____

# Determining Appropriate Accommodations
# for Students with Disabilities

IEP and 504 Plan team members, including parents, must engage in a thoughtful process that determines the necessary accommodations to facilitate the student's access to grade-level instruction and full participation in state and district assessments. The purpose of this document is to guide team members in selecting appropriate accommodations.

## Understanding Accommodations

Accommodations are tools and procedures that provide equal access to instruction and assessment for students with disabilities. Access is the opportunity and ability for an individual to participate in the instruction, discussions, activities, products, and assessment provided to all students within a public school. Accommodations are provided to "level the playing field." Without accommodations, students with disabilities may not be able to access grade level instruction or participate fully on assessments. They are intended to offset the effects of the disability and to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills. Accommodations are intended to reduce, or even eliminate, the effects of a student's disability. They do not, however, reduce learning expectations and should not give a false picture of what a student knows and can do. Reliance on accommodations should never replace appropriate and rigorous instruction in the content area.

Informed decision making regarding accommodations is critical for ensuring successful and meaningful participation of students with disabilities in instruction and assessments. Ideally, accommodations should be the same or similar across classroom instruction, classroom tests, and state and district tests. However, it is important to note that some accommodations are only for use during instruction and cannot be used on state and district assessments. The IEP team should clearly distinguish between classroom and state accommodations when making these decisions. A student who is provided an accommodation during classroom instruction that is not allowed on a state test should be provided opportunities to practice without the use of that accommodation.

In order to make effective accommodations decisions, the IEP and 504 teams should gather and review information about the student's present level of academic achievement, their functional performance in relation to the curriculum, and the supports the student requires during instruction and classroom assessment. Team meetings could include discussions about providing the student equal learning opportunities and identifying practices and approaches intended to help the student overcome learning obstacles during instruction and assessment.

Accommodations are generally grouped into the following categories:
- **Presentation** (e.g., repeat directions, read aloud, use of larger bubbles on answer sheets) allow students to access information in ways that do not require them to visually read standard print. These alternate modes of access are auditory, multi-sensory, tactile and visual.
- **Response** (e.g., mark answers in book, use reference aids, point, use of computer) allow students to complete activities assignments and tests in different ways to solve or organize problems using some type of assistive device or organizer.
- **Timing/Scheduling** (e.g., extended time, frequent breaks) increase the allowable length of time to complete a test or assignment and may also change the way the time is organized.
- **Setting** (e.g., study carrel, special lighting, separate room) change the location in which a test or assignment is given or the conditions of the assessment setting.

## Accommodations vs. Modifications

Accommodations are not the same as modifications. Accommodations are intended to lessen the effects on a student's disability; they are not intended to reduce learning expectations. Changing, lowering, or reducing learning expectations is usually referred to as a modification or alteration. Unlike accommodations, consistent use of modifications can increase the gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and the grade level expectations. This may have a negative impact on the student's educational career as the student may not continue to progress and be able to obtain a regular diploma.

## State and Federal Law Regarding Assessment Accommodations

Current federal and state laws require students who attend public schools to participate in annual testing in specific academic areas and grades outlined in the law, including students with disabilities. Requiring the inclusion of all students with disabilities in state and district wide assessments helps ensure that schools, school districts and states are held accountable for the achievement of these students. These laws also require students with disabilities (those individuals covered under an IEP or Section 504 Plan) to be provided with appropriate accommodations necessary to participate in these tests.

The use of accommodations which invalidate the intended learning outcome does not give an accurate measure of the student's skills and could result in an invalidation of test scores which would count the student as non-proficient. All IEP and 504 Plan team members need to be familiar with state policies and guidelines regarding the use of accommodations on state assessments. Making sound decisions about testing accommodations requires all team members to know:

- The test (content, types of test questions and testing conditions)
- The state's testing guidelines
- The state's accommodation guidelines

## Who Decides

All students with disabilities (those with an active IEP or 504 Plan) are entitled to the appropriate accommodations that allow them to fully participate in state and district testing. The student's IEP and 504 Plan team selects the accommodations for both instruction and assessments. Accommodations should be chosen on the basis of the individual student's needs, not on the basis of disability category, grade level, or instructional setting. Once selected, accommodations should be used consistently for instruction and assessment. Each teacher and others responsible for the implementation of the accommodations must be informed of the accommodations that must be provided.

## Selecting Accommodations

Determining necessary accommodations should be part of the development of each IEP or 504 Plan. The following questions should be considered in the selection process:

- What are the student's learning strengths and needs?
- How do the student's learning needs affect the achievement of the grade level content standards?
- What specialized instruction does the student need to achieve the grade level content standards?

Next, discuss and review the accommodations the student has already been using. Ask these questions:

- What accommodations is the student regularly using in the classroom and on tests?
- What is the student's perception on how well an accommodation has worked?
- Has the student been willing to use the accommodation?
- What are the perceptions of the parents, teachers and others about how the accommodations appear to have worked?
- Have there been difficulties administering the selected accommodations?

The following are questions that IEP and 504 Plan teams should ask about assessment accommodations:

1. ***Is the student using any accommodations during classroom instruction that will not be allowed when taking state or district wide assessment?***
   Because of the nature of certain accommodations, they are only allowed for instruction, not testing. If a student is accustomed to using such accommodations, the IEP team needs to make certain the student understands that a particular accommodation won't be available during testing and work to find an acceptable accommodation that can support the student during testing in a comparable manner.

2. ***Are the assessment accommodations selected allowed for the specific assessment?***
   There is a tremendous variance among acceptable accommodations for specific assessments. Be sure to follow specific assessment guidance documents which will list acceptable accommodations.

3. ***Does the student show a documented need for all selected accommodations?***
   Research has shown that IEP or 504 Plan teams frequently select accommodations in a bundle, such as extended time and a different setting. However, the student might only need one of these accommodations. The IEP team has a responsibility to make sure the student is neither under or over accommodated.

4. ***Are all selected accommodations documented in the IEP or 504 Plan?***
   The student's active IEP or 504 Plan should contain documentation for all accommodations that have been selected, for both instruction and assessment. Once documented in the IEP or 504 Plan, accommodations must be provided. Implementation of accommodations is mandatory, not optional.

5. ***Does the student understand how to use the selected assessment accommodations?***
   Students should have ample time to learn to use the accommodations available to them during assessment. Be sure the student is willing to use the accommodation and has used the accommodation before test day.

6. ***Does the school have an advance planning process to ensure the proper implementation of the testing accommodations chosen and documented in my child's IEP or 504 Plan?***
   Accommodations are only as effective as their proper implementation. Unfortunately, implementation of accommodations can become difficult on testing days, when school employees are stretched. Advance planning for accommodations such as quiet space, readers, or accommodated forms is critical to the ethical administration of assessment accommodations.

## Evaluating Accommodations

Evaluating how effective the accommodations are should be an ongoing process – only by closely reviewing the impact of an accommodation can improvements happen. IEP or 504 Plan teams should not assume that accommodation selection carries over from year to year. Annually, the team should review:

- each accommodation and the results of tests when the accommodation was used;
- student's perspective of how well each accommodation is working;
- effective combinations of accommodations; and
- perceptions of teachers, paraprofessionals and other specialists about how the accommodations appear to be working.

Finally, the team should ensure that accommodations do not lead to inappropriate testing practices such as:

- coaching students during testing;
- editing student work;
- allowing a student to answer fewer questions or reduce the number of responses required;
- giving clues to test answers in any way; and/or
- changing the content by paraphrasing or offering additional information.

# Guide to Choosing Accommodations

## Presentation Accommodations

| May Require for Access | Questions to Ask | Instruction Examples | Assessment Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students with print disabilities, defined as difficulty or inability to visually read standard print because of a physical, sensory or cognitive disability. | • Can the student read and understand directions?<br>• Does the student need text routinely read aloud?<br>• Has the student been identified as having a reading disability? | • Large print<br>• Magnification devices<br>• Human reader<br>• Audio tapes<br>• Digital textbooks<br>• Talking materials (calculators, clocks, timers) | • Screen reader<br>• Text to speech<br>• Braille<br>• Visual Representations for math |

## Response Accommodations

| May Require for Access | Questions to Ask | Instruction Examples | Assessment Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students with physical, sensory or learning disabilities (including difficulties with memory sequencing, directionality, alignment and organization). | • Can the student use a pencil or other writing instrument?<br>• Does the student have a disability that affects his ability to spell?<br>• Does the student have trouble tracking from one page to another and maintaining her place? | • Scribe<br>• Note-takers<br>• Tape recorder<br>• Respond on test booklet<br>• Spelling and grammar devices<br>• Graphic organizers | • Speech to text<br>• Adult transcription<br>• Scratch paper<br>• Word prediction |

## Timing and Scheduling Accommodations

| May Require for Access | Questions to Ask | Instruction Examples | Assessment Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who need more time, cannot concentrate for extended periods, have health-related disabilities, fatigue easily, special diet and/or medication needs. | • Can student work continuously during the entire time allocated for test administration?<br>• Does student tire easily because of health impairments?<br>• Does student need shorter working periods and frequent breaks? | • Extended time<br>• Frequent breaks<br>• Multiple testing sessions | • Extended time<br>• Frequent breaks |

## Setting Accommodations

| May Require for Access | Questions to Ask | Instruction Examples | Assessment Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Students who are easily distracted in large group settings, concentrate best in small groups. | • Do others easily distract the student?<br>• Does student have trouble staying on task?<br>• Does student exhibit behaviors that would disrupt other students? | • Change of room or location in room<br>• Earphones or headphones<br>• Study carrels | |

# Accommodations and modifications: Wait, they're not the same?

Listen
Help with Listen Feature

*by Kori Hamilton and Elizabeth Kessler, professional special educator and NICHCY advisor*

Being able to provide ample opportunities for success to all students requires a clear understanding of the needs of each individual student. Every student has a unique learning style, and some students require more help than others. Students who receive special education services have a plan in place to identify the type of support(s) that's needed.

One type of support is an accommodation, which is a change that helps a student overcome or work around the disability. A modification, which is a change in what is being taught to or expected from the student, is another type of support a student with an IEP may receive. Some adaptations might be very simple, like sitting a student in the front of the classroom to ensure the board is easy to see. Others might be more complex, like changing the criteria for an essay to make it achievable for the student.

Supports, accommodations, modifications, oh my! It is not uncommon for these terms to be misused interchangeably; so here is opportunity for clarification. Supports describe both modifications and accommodations. So, what's the difference between providing a modification and an accommodation?

An easy way to remember the difference between the two is to think of an accommodation as leveling the playing field for students by changing "how" they work through the general education curriculum. Modifications go beyond that, and alter the field (game) entirely. Modifications change "what" is learned and therefore change the content of the grade -specific curriculum.

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## Accommodations

An accommodation is a change that helps a student overcome or work around the disability. These changes are typically physical or environmental changes. Allowing a student who has trouble writing to give his answers orally is an example of an accommodation. This sort of accommodation extends across assignments and content areas.

What are accommodations? Here are a few examples:

- Teacher provides notes/outlines, allows type-written work, allows printed work, provides a peer note-taker, allows the use of wider lined paper for written tasks, provides highlighted text, allows the use of spell-checker,
- Daily agenda checks between home/school, additional progress reports
- Preferential seating, ability to leave room without permission, peer buddy, behavior reward system
- Extended time on assignments, shortened assignments, simplification of directions
- Tests read aloud to student, verbal response acceptable in lieu of written response, fewer multiple choice responses (2 instead of 4), multiple -choice response instead of fill -in -the -blank or short answer/essay, word banks provided for fill in the blank questions

## Modifications

Modifications are generally connected to instruction and assessment;, things that can be tangibly changed or modified. Usually a modification means a change in what is being taught to or expected from the student. Making the assignment easier so the student is not doing the same level of work as other students is an example of a modification. This change is specific to a particular type of assignment. Making a slight modification to an assignment can drastically improve a student's ability to be academically successful. Changing what is being taught could make the difference in whether a student becomes proficient in the general education curriculum, which in turn could result in the attainment of a regular diploma as opposed to achieving an IEP diploma.

What are modifications? Here are a few examples:

- Reduction of homework, reduction of class work
- Omitting story problems, using specialized/alternative curricula written at lower level, simplified vocabulary and concepts, alternative reading books at independent reading level
- Tests are written at lower level of understanding, preview tests provided as study guide, picture supports are provided, use of calculator
- Grading based on pass/fail, grading based on work completion

## Truth about supports

The reality is that oftentimes a student requires both modifications and accommodations to support learning. Modifications and/or accommodations are most often made in scheduling, setting, materials, instruction, and student response. Modifications deliberately lower the intellectual level of the instructional content delivered, while accommodations are generally best practices used for all students, in a differentiated classroom. What is most important to know about modifications and accommodations is that both are meant to help children learn.

Many educators, special and general educators alike, are confused by these two terms. A third grade teacher in Michigan, who shared a student with autism with me, posted a big, colorful sign at the entry to her classroom. It read "Fair isn't always equal!" This was not just intended for our shared student, whose understanding of the world was very black and white, but for all students and parents who entered. Its intent was to inform everyone that this classroom teacher gave students what they needed to be successful. It wasn't always the same, but it was always what each student needed, and it was always fair.

**Additional Resources**
http://nichcy.org/schoolage/accommodations
http://nichcy.org/schoolage/iep/iepcontents/assessment
http://nichcy.org/research/ee/assessment-accommodations

accommodations-classroom, blog, modifications