

PEAK Parent Center

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 **how** 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 **what** 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*

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