

**Basics of Accommodations
and Modifications for
IEPs and 504 Plans**

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Individuals with learning disabilities have:

- Average to above average intelligence
- A significant delay in one or more areas of learning
- A gap between potential and actual achievement
- Gifts and talents in other areas such as mechanics, construction, sports, drama, etc.
- A lifelong disability that cannot be cured or fixed

Accomodations and Modifications

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 actively participate with other students in the general education classroom and in school-wide activities.

Accomodations

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 an equal opportunity to show what he or she knows and can do.

Accomodations

Accommodations do not reduce learning or performance expectations that we might hold for students. More specifically, they change the manner or setting in which information is presented or the manner in which students respond.

They do not change the target skill or the testing construct.

General Categories of Accommodations

- **Timing** For example, giving a student extended time to complete a task or a test item.
- **Flexible scheduling** For example, giving a student two days instead of one day to complete a project.
- **Accommodated presentation of the material** meaning material is presented to the student in a fashion that's different from a more traditional fashion.
- **Setting**, which includes things like completing the task or test in a quiet room or in a small group with others.

Examples of Accommodations

Accommodations can include changes in the following:

- presentation of a lesson
- instructional strategies
- student response format and procedures
- time/scheduling
- environment
- equipment
- assignment structure-paper/pencil work

Modifications

Modifications are changes in **what** a student is expected to learn. The changes are made to provide a student with opportunities to participate meaningfully and productively along with other students in classroom and school learning experiences.

Modifications

Modifications typically reduce learning expectations or affect the content in such a way that what is being taught or tested is fundamentally changed. Modifications are instructional or test adaptations that allow the student to demonstrate what he knows or can do, but they also reduce the target skill in some way.

So if a child is provided with a modification, generally it will lower the performance expectations, and a modification may do that by reducing the number of items required or the complexity of the items or the task required.

Examples of Modifications

Modifications include changes in the following:

- instructional level
- content/curriculum
- performance criteria
- assignment structure-paper/pencil work

Accommodations and Modifications for Reading

A majority of students who receive special education services have difficulty in the area of reading. Since reading encompasses much of the school day, textbook modifications are critical if these students are to receive an appropriate education.

Rather than asking the question, *"How can a student be included in a general education class, if the student is unable to read the textbook?"*

Replace that question with, *"How much material will the student be able to learn and/or understand when the information is presented in another manner?"*

Examples of Accommodations and Modifications for Content Areas

For Taking Notes in class:

- Give the student a copy of the class notes
- Give the student a partial outline to complete when taking notes
- Have another student make a copy of the notes
- Give student a copy of the notes before the lecture and have the student highlight key areas while the lecture is taking place

Examples of Accommodations and Modifications for Content Areas

For Completing Classroom Assignments:

- Provide page numbers to locate answers
- Keep questions in the order of reading material
- Reduce the volume of the assignment
- Highlight or underline answers
- Provide a word bank
- Break material into smaller parts

Examples of Accommodations and Modifications for Content Areas

For Assessment Settings:

- Provide preferential seating in the front of the room or a study carrel, with special lighting, with noise buffers, or minimal distractions.
- Test in small groups or individually.
- Provide adaptive or special furniture.

Examples of Accommodations and Modifications for Content Areas

For Assessment Timing:

- Administer the test over several sessions, at the best time of day for the student, for the length of time the student can concentrate.
- Administer the test over several days.
- Allow long breaks between subtests and during a subtest when needed.
- Extend time on subtests.

Examples of Accommodations and Modifications for Content Areas

For Assessment Presentation:

- Use large print and allow ample space between test items.
- Provide a word bank for fill-in-the-blank items.
- Provide an example for each type of test item.

Behavior Modifications/Accommodations

Why do so many special needs students have behavior issues?

Most classroom behavior issues are the result of years of frustration, failure and the instinctive desire of “wanting to fit in with your peers”.

Instinct helps us hide larger issues of humiliation. It is more acceptable to appear like you’re acting stupid on purpose.

Other students think a “class clown” is funny.

They don’t think an academic failure is.

Behavior Modifications/Accommodations

When are students most likely to be disruptive?

Assume a class is about 50 minutes long. The teacher gives you an assignment written in Chinese. All the students in the class know how to read Chinese, except for you.

*Would you be able to sit there quietly for an hour
or would you get bored and start fidgeting
or bugging your neighbor?*

What is a 504 Plan?

504 plans are formal plans that schools develop to give kids with disabilities the supports they need. These plans prevent discrimination and protect the rights of kids with disabilities in school. They're covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, which is a civil rights law.

These plans aren't part of special education, so they don't provide individualized instruction, like IEPs do. But a central purpose of 504 plans is to give kids with disabilities access to the same education their classmates are getting.



What's the Difference Between an IEP and a 504 Plan?

Understood
for learning & attention issues



Examples of Specific Disabilities covered under 504 Plans:

Allergies

Arthritis

Asthma

ADD/ADHD

Bipolar

Cancer

Cerebral Palsy

AIDS

Cystic Fibrosis

Diabetes

Drugs/alcohol

Epilepsy

Hearing Impairment

Leukemia

Orthopedically Impaired

Students with health needs

Tourette's
Syndrome

Traumatic Brain
Injury

Tuberculosis

Visual
Impairment

Weight (obesity,
anorexia,
bulimia)

IEP	504
A blueprint or plan for a child's special education experience at school.	A blueprint or plan for how a child will have access to learning at school.
Provides individualized special education and related services to meet the unique needs of the child.	Provides services and changes to the learning environment to meet the needs of the child as adequately as other students.

Are there IEPs and 504 Plans in College?

The short answer is there are no IEPs or 504 plans in college. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the law that provides students with IEPs, no longer applies to them once they graduate from high school.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 still protects students from discrimination when they get to college. However, they won't get a 504 plan like they had in high school. In other words, a student's 504 plan doesn't "travel" with her to college. Students can still receive accommodations in college, though.

Colleges have to provide accommodations under Section 504.

Types of Support Colleges put in place

- Extended time on exams (not the same as “untimed” tests, which are not typically available)
- Use of laptops for tests and exams
- Use of calculators for tests and exams
- Permission to make audio recordings of classes (some schools may loan out smart pens for this purpose)

Types of Support Colleges put in place (continued)

- Reduced course load (financial aid may be reduced as a result)
- Priority registration for courses
- Copies of notes from a classmate
- Access to audiobooks
- Access to voice recognition software
- Access to text-to-speech programs

Accommodations That May Be More Difficult to Get in College

- Extended time on papers and projects (typically not given on an ongoing basis but rather as situations arise—such as for students with acute medical or psychological episodes)
- Course waivers and substitutions (colleges may choose to give these but are not required to)
- Alternative exam formats, such as oral rather than written exams (colleges typically do not grant this)

Other Services That May Be Available

- Training in adaptive technology
- Help with study skills and time management
- Learning specialists (may cost extra)
- Mentoring programs
- Student support groups

