

## **ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS**

*Updated March 2021*

### **Overview**

Accommodations and Modifications are types of adaptations that affect instructional arrangement, lesson format, specific learning strategies and curricular goals. These adaptations are used to provide eligible students equal opportunity to obtain the same results, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement in the most integrated setting appropriate to the student's needs. Adaptations should not provide the student with an unfair advantage over others, or invalidate an assessment. The term "Accommodation" typically refers to adaptations which do not fundamentally alter or lower standards or expectations in either the instructional or assessment phases of a course of study, and allows the student to demonstrate mastery of performance standards. "Modifications" refer to adaptations which do alter or lower standards, resulting in a fundamental change in curriculum content or evidence of mastery. Modifications will necessitate an alternate assessment or modified grade, which may affect credit toward graduation.

### **Requirements in the Law for Students with Disabilities**

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA '04) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 require that individuals with disabilities are to receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) which must occur in the least restrictive environment (LRE), with supplemental aids and services, when necessary. Aids, services, and other supports that are provided in regular education classes or other education-related settings to enable children with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the maximum extent appropriate are required by Federal Regulation sections 300.39(b)(3) and 300.42.

### **Adaptations in General Education**

Adaptations are permissible changes in curriculum which allow the student equal opportunity to obtain access, results and benefits. General adaptations for curriculum access and for the demonstration of learning mastery are available to students in the general education program. Teachers may adapt curriculum activities, instruction or access in order to promote the learning of any child; however, for a child with a disability those requirements in the law identified above require that we consider accommodations and/or modifications to assist a student with a disability to access and participate with non-disabled peers.

**Accommodations** are adaptations which do not fundamentally alter or lower standards or expectations. They provide access to participate in the LRE and provide for an opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery of performance standards. Accommodations may be used to describe an alteration of environment, curriculum format, or equipment that allows an individual with a disability to gain access to content and/or provide the ability to complete assigned tasks. Accommodations allow students with disabilities to pursue a regular course of study. Since accommodations do not alter what is being taught, instructors should be able to implement the same grading standards for students with disabilities as they do for students without disabilities. Some examples of accommodations include:

- sign language interpreters for students who are deaf;
- computer text-to-speech computer-based systems for students with visual impairments or Dyslexia;

- extended time for students with fine motor limitations, visual impairments, or learning disabilities;
- specialized seating supports;
- spell-checker for a student with writing difficulties;
- large-print books and worksheets for students with visual impairments;
- alternative keyboards for students who cannot operate standard mice and keyboards.

**Modifications** are adaptations which do alter or lower standards or expectations. Modifications may be used to describe a change in the curriculum. They are made for students, who because of their disability are unable to comprehend all of the content an instructor is teaching. For example, assignments might be modified significantly for an elementary school student with cognitive impairments that limit his/her ability to understand the content in the general education class in which they are included. The use of modifications often necessitates an alternate assessment or modified grade.

### **Types of Classroom Adaptations**

Classroom adaptations are selected individually for each child to reflect his or her learning and participation requirements. Following an assessment, the IEP team will determine whether adaptations are required for a student to access the core curriculum or alternate curriculum. Adaptations selected will afford the student the opportunity to demonstrate competence or participate, but are not designed to be guarantees that the student will achieve the same level of success as his or her non-disabled peers.

Classroom adaptations typically fall into one of nine types or categories, based upon the research of Jeff Sprague, Ph.D. **Some of these fundamentally alter the mastery of course material and may require a change in the basis for grading.**

| <b>Quantity</b>   | <b>Time</b>  | <b>Level of Support</b>   |
|---|--|---|
| Adapt the number of items that the learner is expected to learn or complete.<br><br>Example: Reduce the number of math problems required or the number to state capitols to memorize. | Adapt the time allotted or allowed for learning, task completing or testing.<br><br>Example: Individualize a timeline for completing a project or pace activities differently. | Increase the amount of personal assistance for a student.<br><br>Example: Assign peer buddies, teaching assistants, peer tutors, or cross-age tutors. |

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Input</b></p> <p>Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner.</p> <p>Example: Use different visual aids, enlarge text, provide more concrete examples, provide hands-on activities, place students in cooperative groups.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Difficulty</b></p> <p>Adapt the skill level, problem type, or the rules on how the learner may approach the work.</p> <p>Example: Allow the use of a calculator to figure math problems, simplify task directions, change rules to accommodate learner needs.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Output</b></p> <p>Adapt how the student can respond to instruction.</p> <p>Example: Allow verbal responses instead of written, use a communication book or device, allow student to show knowledge with hands-on materials.</p>      |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Participation</b></p> <p>Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task.</p> <p>Example: In geography, have the student hold the globe, while others are required to point out locations.</p>                     | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Alternate Goals</b></p> <p>Adapt the goals or outcome expectations while using the same materials.</p> <p>Example: In social science, expect the student to locate states on a map, while other students are learning to locate capitals, rivers, etc.</p>        | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Substitute Curriculum</b></p> <p>Provide different instruction and materials to meet the student's individual goals.</p> <p>Example: During a language arts exam, the student is practicing computer skills in the computer lab.</p> |

If the IEP team determines that a student requires adaptations in a general education class, the IEP chairperson must provide the general education teacher(s) a copy of the IEP and any instruction the teacher(s) need(s) in implementing those adaptations. In some districts, the general education teacher may be required to document that he or she understands their specific responsibilities in implementing the student's IEP.

If students require the use of adaptations in the classroom, as reported as Supplemental Aids and Supports in the IEP, some of those adaptations may also be allowed on the required State tests. Please consult the Statewide Testing Chapter of the Contra Costa SELPA Procedures Guide for more information.

For a precise explanation of the types of adaptations allowed on the different tests in the State Testing Programs, go to: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/ai/documents/caaspmatrix1.pdf>

All students with disabilities shall participate in state and district-wide assessment programs. The IEP team determines how a student will access assessments with or without accommodations, or access alternate assessments, consistent with state standards governing such determinations.

For preschool students participating in state-wide assessments, currently the DRDP (2015), there are specific adaptations identified that increases the student's comfort or improves the

availability of sensory input. One of the important features of the DRDP (2015) is the use of adaptations. Adaptations are changes in the environment or differences in observed behavior that allow children with IFSPs and IEPs to be most accurately assessed in their typical settings. All adaptations used are based on each individual child's needs and are not tied to any specific disability.

The seven categories of adaptations for the DRDP (2015) serve an essential function – to make sure that the instrument measures ability rather than disability are:

1. Augmentative or alternative communication system- Methods of communication other than speech that allow a child who is unable to use spoken language to communicate with others.
2. Alternative Mode for Written Language- Methods of reading or writing used by a child who cannot see well enough to read or write or cannot hold and manipulate a writing utensil (e.g., pencil, pen) well enough to produce written symbols.
3. Visual Support Adjustments to the environment that provide additional information to a child who has limited or reduced visual input.
4. Assistive Equipment or Device Tools that make it possible or easier for a child to perform a task.
5. Functional Positioning Strategic positioning and postural support that allow a child to have increased control of his body.
6. Sensory Support Increasing or decreasing sensory input to facilitate a child's attention and interaction in the environment.
7. Alternative Response Mode The form of a child's behavior may differ from typical development (such as avoiding looking at people while speaking to them) but still be rated as demonstrating mastery. This adaptation allows for differences in the child's behavior rather than modifications to the environment.

For more information on preschool adaptations please go to: <https://draccess.org/adaptations>

**Information Currently Identified in the Document Library in SEIS:**

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| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Writing</u></b></p> <p>Access to a word processor<br/>         Content outline<br/>         Provide hard copy of class notes<br/>         Allow oral response<br/>         Note taking assistance<br/>         Additional time to complete assignments<br/>         Use personal dictionary or thesaurus<br/>         Graphic organizers to plan writing<br/>         Allow extra time for written response<br/>         Use visual instructional aids</p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Reading</u></b></p> <p>Books on tape<br/>         Use study sheet/key words highlighted<br/>         Use visual aids to add meaning<br/>         Allow students to highlight key points<br/>         Use small group instruction<br/>         Use pair or choral response<br/>         Present vocabulary visually<br/>         Gave examples of vocabulary in student language/primary language<br/>         Use study aids<br/>         Large print<br/>         Closed Caption</p>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Homework/Assignments</u></b></p> <p>Display examples/models<br/>         Provide written and verbal directions<br/>         Break assignments into smaller tasks<br/>         Give extended time for completion of tasks<br/>         Allow oral responses<br/>         Sequence steps by numbering them<br/>         Give directions in small steps<br/>         Provide more space on sheet<br/>         Remind of due dates for long term projects<br/>         Use of calendar/planner</p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Math</u></b></p> <p>Use manipulatives<br/>         Give vocabulary cards in student language<br/>         Use math charts<br/>         Use computation aids<br/>         Use graph paper to align numbers<br/>         Use mnemonic devices<br/>         Use peer partner<br/>         Provide fact table for reference<br/>         Give more space on paper<br/>         Read word problems out loud<br/>         Break word problems into smaller steps<br/>         Use illustrations</p>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Testing</u></b></p> <p>Provide study questions/sheet<br/>         Read aloud questions<br/>         Allow oral responses<br/>         Vary the test format<br/>         Give extra time for completion<br/>         Give test over more than one day<br/>         Allow small group testing<br/>         Simplify language on tests/quizzes<br/>         Quiet environment</p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Science/Social Studies</u></b></p> <p>Content outlines<br/>         Give content vocabulary in student language<br/>         Give content vocabulary with pictures<br/>         Use video to support text<br/>         Substitute projects for written work<br/>         Substitute worksheets for projects<br/>         Substitute worksheets for written work<br/>         Use a note taker</p>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Behavior</u></b></p> <p>Set clearly defined standards<br/>         Limit number of defined standards<br/>         Use private signals to remind student<br/>         Preferential seating (Need to face the student, free from visual distractions, etc)<br/>         Monitor transitions carefully<br/>         Give student a job to divert student<br/>         Let student take a break/walk<br/>         Supervision during unstructured time<br/>         Cues/prompts/reminders of rules / procedures<br/>         Offer choices</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Instruction</u></b></p> <p>Use peer tutoring<br/>         Pairs or small group work<br/>         Present one task at a time<br/>         Provide copy of class notes<br/>         Use visuals in oral presentation<br/>         Provide copy of projected material<br/>         Teach specific study skills<br/>         Allow varied student responses<br/>         Provide written and verbal instructions<br/>         Highlight key points within written material<br/>         Encourage student to repeat directions orally<br/>         Slow your pace<br/>         Frequent checks for understanding<br/>         Instructions/directions repeated or rephrased<br/>         Preferential seating (explain)</p> |

### **Accommodations in Grading**

The IEP team must determine whether the student's grades in core curriculum areas will be based upon standards that apply to non-disabled students, or upon an alternative standard. In most cases an accommodation would not be considered an alternative standard. If the team determines that an alternative standard will be used, a description of that standard or modification needs to be noted in the IEP document. Some options for grading when accommodations are applicable include:

- Grades based upon performance given stated accommodations
- Grades based upon performance on an alternative standard
- Pass/Fail grades only
- Grades in mainstreamed classes to be assigned by Special Education Teacher
- Grades assigned collaboratively between Core and Special Education Teachers
- Grades based on assignments completed in class
- Grading by individual contract with core subject teacher

Report card grades should provide accurate feedback for the student and the parent on where the student's accomplishments fall on the continuum of the curriculum expectations. When grading a student with special needs using a standards-based report card, a teacher must be very clear that she is rating the student compared with non-disabled peers.

While report cards are indicators of student progress that are distributed to students and parents only, transcripts are permanent records that are shared with other agencies. **Transcripts may not reflect that students were enrolled in Special Education courses.** They may indicate that the curriculum was modified, only if the school offers modified courses to non-disabled students.

### **Special Circumstances Instructional Assistance (SCIA)**

Special Circumstances Instructional Assistance (SCIA) is provided for students with disabilities when additional support is necessary for the student to meet his or her goals and objectives. Whenever necessary, additional assistance may be assigned to a school environment or class. Occasionally, however, a student may require individual support for a designated period of time to address a unique need. By law, services to students with special needs must be delivered in "the least restrictive environment". When the IEP team is considering SCIA, all aspects of the student's program must be considered. A SCIA request is made only after other documented site interventions have proven unsuccessful. A student's educational program must be carefully evaluated to determine when and where the additional support is required. Natural supports and existing staff should be used whenever possible to promote educational benefit in the least restrictive environment. A primary goal for all students with special needs is to encourage, support, and maximize independence. Additional assistance must be targeted to the identified areas of need and carefully monitored for progress, as well as the IEP team periodically reviewing the continued need and effectiveness of this additional support. If not monitored and reviewed this assistance may unintentionally foster dependence, rather than independence.

State Education Code Reference: 56205 (a)

Federal References: 20 USC Section 1412 (a) (16)