

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act require students with disabilities have equal access to an education. This includes accommodations that are needed for students with disabilities to learn and participate in academic, extracurricular, and nonacademic activities. Accommodations are designed to enable children with disabilities to be educated with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. All students with an IEP or 504 plan are entitled to modifications that their team determines are needed.

Modifications change **WHAT** your child learns or is taught. The Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) defines modifications as:

“adjustments to an assignment or a test that changes the standard of what the test or assignment is supposed to measure.”

In Virginia, a modified education is called the Aligned Standards of Learning (ASOL). Children who work on ASOLs, means they are not participating in Virginia’s Standards of Learning (SOL) and the SOL assessments. These students are not expected to learn the same material as their classmates. Students with a modified education **WILL NOT** be able to receive a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma. Sometimes parents want to remove their child from the SOL curriculum/assessment process during elementary school and change course later. But it is difficult to catch up in the later grades, so it is important to carefully think about the decision to modify your student’s curriculum and testing. An Applied Studies Diploma is available to students who receive modifications under an IEP. An Applied Studies Diploma is not the type of diploma needed if student wants to go to college, receive federal financial aid for college, join the military, or participate in certain things that require a high-school diploma or an equivalent after graduation.



Modifications are decided upon by the IEP team. While sometimes they are discussed informally, it is best to have modifications written in the IEP document. There are two basic types of modifications: curriculum (what is taught) and assignment (changes in the work the student completes). A good modification helps your child participate meaningfully and productively in the general education classroom. It focuses on his/her strengths and uses age appropriate materials that are relevant to the content that everyone else is learning.

Examples of possible curriculum, assignment, and behavior modifications follow. Also included are examples of **inappropriate** modifications that do not reflect high expectations, student competence, age appropriateness, or alignment to the general curriculum.

Modifications for Students with Disabilities

A Resource Document



Below are some commonly used modifications for students with IEPs.

Curriculum Modifications	Assignment Modifications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning different material (<i>continue work on addition while classmates are working on multiplication</i>) Learning at a different level (<i>learning to identify words while peers are working on reading comprehension</i>) Using different books that have similar concepts but at an easier reading level Getting graded or assessed on a different standard from classmates (<i>e.g., pass/fail</i>) Being excused from certain projects Rewording material or questions in simpler language Highlighting important words or phrases in assignments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing shorter papers Answering fewer or different test questions (<i>e.g., shortening spelling tests or different list of words</i>) Responding at functional level (<i>material is 8th grade level but expected response would be at the student's actual level</i>). Engaging in different projects or assignments Receiving adult or peer assistance on assignments Allowing take home or open book tests Using computerized spell check or calculator Having modified deadlines or time demands Using word banks or multiple choice for tests Submitting an outline vs. an essay Having the opportunity to redo an assignment or test
Behavior Modifications (Many of these are good strategies for all students!)	EXAMPLES OF MODIFICATIONS TO AVOID
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting and posting class rules Cueing expected behavior Providing frequent feedback Following a Behavior Intervention Plan, including de-escalation strategies Using positive reinforcement Allowing for peer supports and mentoring Modeling expected behavior Charting progress for student to see Providing frequent breaks Having contingency plans in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8th grader with a disability is using Sesame Street materials (<i>not age appropriate</i>) Blind student sent out of a room during a video (<i>this is not a modification; it is exclusion</i>) Classroom has groups of 4 desks to a pod but student with a disability is seated with his aide. (<i>does not allow for meaningful participation</i>) Student who cannot read listens to music while the teacher reads aloud to the class (<i>assignment not related to the curriculum</i>). 5th grader sent to physical education class with 2nd graders to match his skill level (<i>age inappropriate and embarrassing</i>).

Resources:

Pacer Center. <https://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c272.pdf>

Understood.org: <https://u.org/30sohoR>

Smart Kids: <https://www.smartkidswithld.org/getting-help/the-abcs-of-ieps/examples-of-accommodations-modifications/>