

Accommodation vs. Modification

Adapted from the Springfield Parent Advisory Council PAC to Special Education

CASA Education Advocacy

An **accommodation** is generally thought of as a change in the course, standard, test preparation, location, timing, scheduling, expectations, student response and/or other attribute which provides access for a student with a disability to participate in a course, standard or test, **it does not fundamentally alter or lower the standard or expectation of the course/test.**

(it is important to note that we do not currently have national agreement on the terms used to refer to accommodations, it differs from state to state.

Accommodations are basically physical or environmental changes, generally referred to as good teaching strategies and include:

- ⇒ Extended time, frequent breaks, varying of activities
- ⇒ Change in classroom, preferential seating, physical arrangement of the room, reducing/minimizing distractions, cooling off period, sign language interpreter
- ⇒ Emphasizing teaching approach (visual, auditory, multi-sensory), individual/small group, taping, demonstrating/modeling, visual cues, manipulatives, pre-teaching, organizers
- ⇒ Taping texts, highlighting material, note taking assistance, notes provided by teacher, calculator, computer, word processor, Braille, large print
- ⇒ Directions given in small, sequential steps, copying from book/paper, length of assignment shortened, format of assignment
- ⇒ Positive reinforcement, concrete reinforcement, checking for understanding, study guides, before/after school tutoring
- ⇒ Reading test verbatim, shortening length of test, test format changed (multiple choice vs. fill in the blank)

Accommodations:

- Environmental
- Presentation
- Assistive technology
- Assignments
- Reinforcement
- Testing Adaptations

Modifications:

- ◆ Lower curriculum
- ◆ Materials simplified
- ◆ Grading changed
- ◆ Lower expectations
- ◆ Testing measures lowered

(Again, it is important to note that within special education the terms accommodation/modification are often used interchangeably, yet the courts see accommodations as leveling the playing field and modifications as changing the game entirely.)

A **modification** is a change in the course, standard, test preparation, location, timing, scheduling, expectations, student response and/or other attribute which provide access for a student with a disability to participate in a course, standard or test, *which does fundamentally alter or lower the standard or expectation of the course, standard or test.*

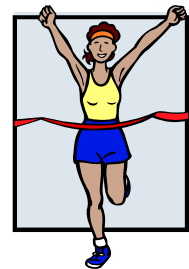
Modifications involve deliberate intellectual lowering in the level of materials presented.

- ⇒ Presentation of curriculum is modified using a specialized curriculum which is written at a lower level of understanding.
- ⇒ Materials are adapted, texts are simplified by modifying the content areas—simplifying vocabulary, concepts and principals.
- ⇒ Grading is subject to different standards than general education, such as basing on IEP goals.
- ⇒ Assignments are changed using lower level reading levels, worksheets and simplified vocabulary.
- ⇒ Testing Adaptations are used, such as lowering the reading level of the test.

Accommodations vs. Modifications

Accommodations level the playing field while

Modifications change the field your playing on.



- ⇒ Decisions regarding the use of accommodations and/or modifications must be made on an individual basis by the IEP TEAM.
- ⇒ Decisions must be based on the child's unique, and individualized need, not on what we do for all kids with a particular disability classification.
- ⇒ The use of accommodations or modifications should enable the child to demonstrate progress.
- ⇒ Individual Education Plans, IEP's should offer equal opportunity for success. IEP's should not modify your ability to obtain a diploma...be careful of what is written in each child's IEP.