

Accommodations vs. Modifications

Accommodations and modifications are often confused in the education world. Although both terms are used to help students be successful in the general education classrooms, they have very different meanings.



The term accommodation means to give aid or help. In education, we say that accommodations may be given to students with special needs to help them have the same opportunities as students without disabilities. Accommodations change **how** the student learns but does not change the curriculum. Accommodations do not substantially change the instructional level, content, or performance criteria.

Some examples of accommodations include: changing a presentation/ response format, instructional strategies, extending time, adjusting deadlines, smaller groups, altering the room arrangement, shortening assignments, giving extra cues or prompts, etc.

The word modification means to change or alter; make less severe or strong; tone down. Modifications change **what** the student learns therefore affecting the grading process. The changes are made to provide a student opportunities to participate meaningfully and productively along with other students in classroom and school learning experiences. Some examples of modifications include: instructional level (adapting a 5th grade curriculum for a student who is at a first grade cognitive level), content (changing what is being taught), changing the materials/ textbooks, parallel learning, etc. Modifications should not be used unless the IEP Team has determined its necessity. Although it is often difficult, age appropriateness should always be a factor when determining modifications. **It is always important that the IEP Team agrees on the use of accommodations and/or modifications for each individual student.**