EmpowerED
Pickerington

Resource Series for Special Education Support

Focus - Accommodations and Modifications

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Speakers



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Welcome to Student Services

Mission

Our mission is to provide a safe and inclusive learning environment where all students have the opportunity to succeed.

Purpose

To provide educators and families with information about the Whole Child by pursuing and completing evaluations to develop plans to help ensure that students are able to receive a free and appropriate education, regardless of their disability.

District Goals: Today we will...

- Cultivate **Academic Excellence** by engaging all students in relevant and rich learning experiences that prepare them for career, college, and life.
- Provide **Modern Facilities** that are physically safe and offer diverse opportunities to all students.
- Ensure **Operating Efficiency** to be financially accountable to our community, maximize resources, and ensure that we are lean and efficient.
- Be **Pillars of our Community** by relentlessly pursuing opportunities to engage with all residents.

Why Supports Matter

Every child learns differently

Some students need support to access learning

IEPs and 504 Plans are legal documents that protect student rights

Supports help students participate meaningfully in school

Goals

- Learn the difference between accommodations and modifications
- Understand classroom vs testing supports
- See where these supports live on the Ohio IEP & 504 forms
- Learn how families and schools work together
- Find trusted resources

IEP Vs 504

IEP

Individualized Education Program (IDEA law)

For students who qualify for special education. There needs to be an educational impact to qualify for an IEP.

Includes:

- Goals
- Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)
- Accommodations
- Modifications (if needed)
- Related services

504

Civil rights plan (Section 504 law)

For students with a disability who do NOT need special education. Their disability substantially limits a life function.

Mostly provides accommodations.

Typically no specialized instruction or goals.

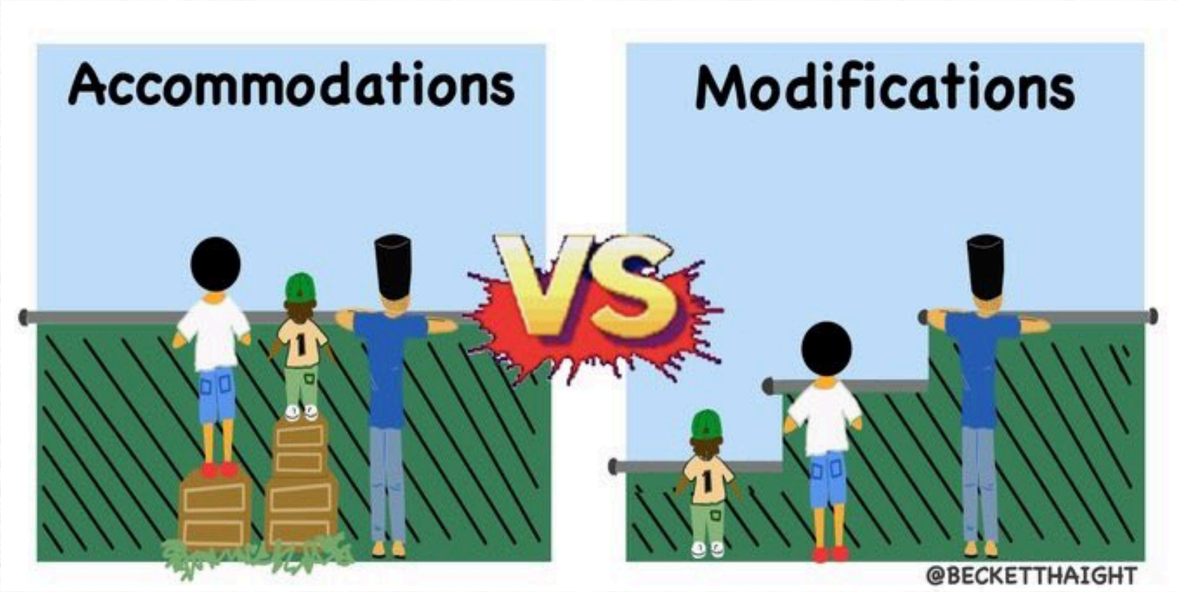
Accommodations vs. Modifications

Change HOW a student learns

Student learns the SAME grade-level content

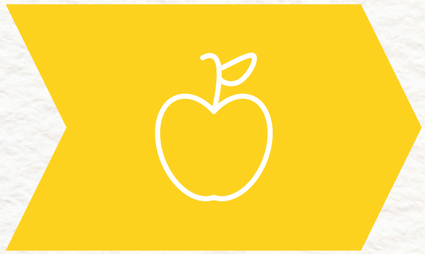
Change WHAT a student learns

Student is working on different learning targets



ACCOMMODATIONS

Presentation



- Audiobooks
- Read Aloud
- Braille
- Graphic Organizers
- Record a Lesson Instead of Notes
- Fewer Items on a Page

Setting



- Preferential Seating
- Small Group
- Study Carrel
- Standing Desk
- Dimmed Lighting
- Exercise Band on Chair

Response



- Scribe
- Calculator
- Speech to Text
- Word Prediction
- Spelling Dictionary
- Give Responses in a Different Form

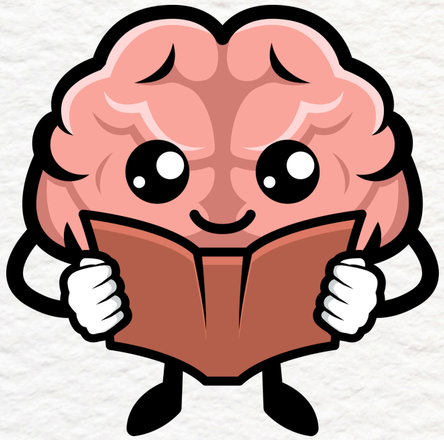
Timing



- Extended Time
- Time of Day
- Breaks
- Transition 5 minutes before a change

Classroom Accommodations
(Common Examples)

- Preferential seating
- Visual schedules
- Chunked directions
- Movement breaks
- Copies of notes
- Assistive technology
- Adult check-ins
- Flexible seating
- Cueing/redirection



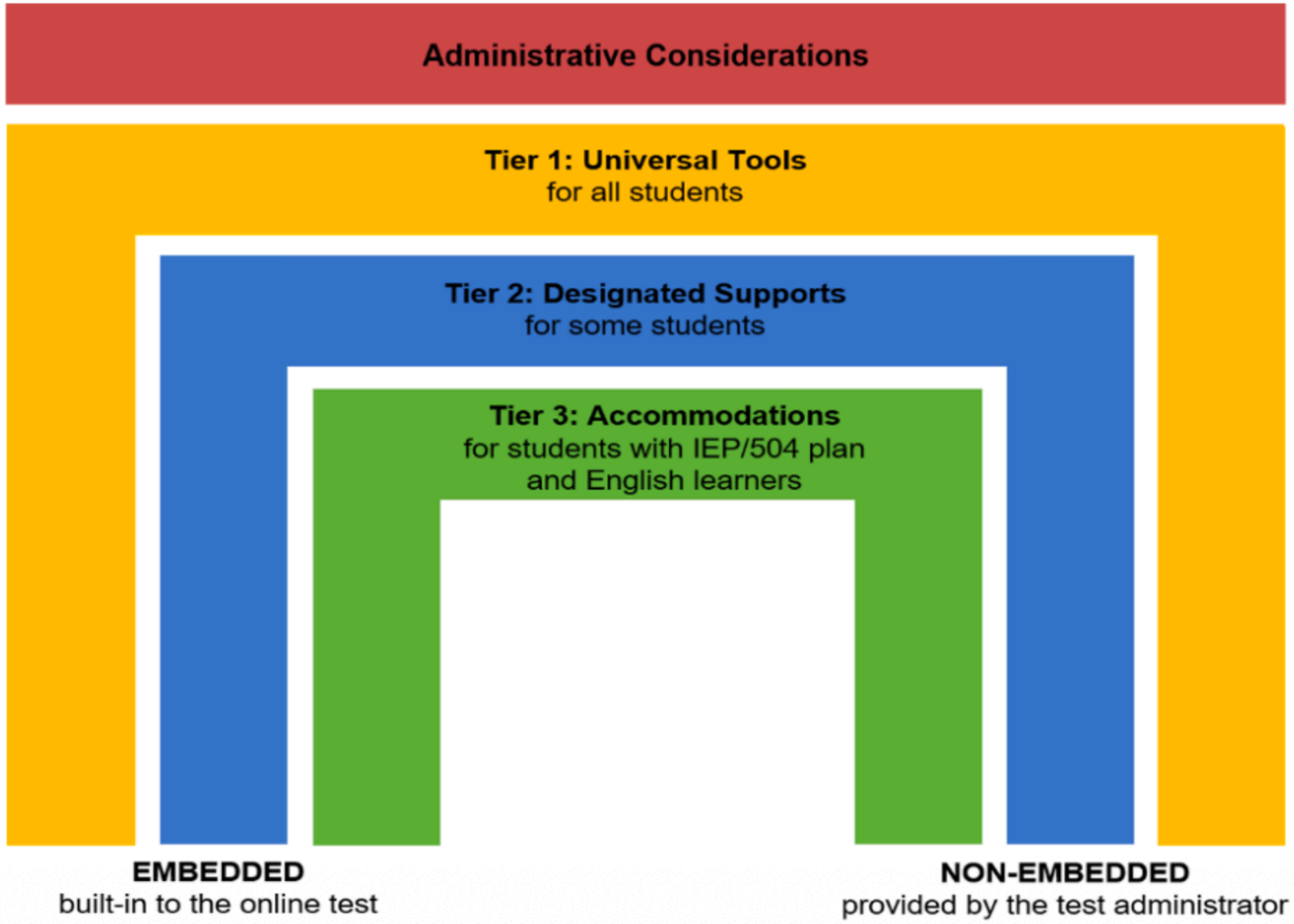
Testing Accommodations
(Common Examples)

- Extended time
- Small group or separate setting
- Breaks
- Read-aloud (when allowed)
- Scribe or speech-to-text
- Reduced distractions

These apply to:

- Classroom tests
- District assessments
- Ohio State Tests (when documented)

Ohio's Accessibility System



What Modifications May Look Like:

- Alternate assignments
- Reduced problem sets
- Modified grading
- Ohio Extended Standards
- Adapted curriculum
    - (ex: Unique Learning System)
- Used for students with significant cognitive needs

Where Does This Appear on the IEP?

Section 7:

- Specially Designed Instruction
- Classroom Accommodations
- Modifications
- Assistive Technology
- Supports for School Personnel

Section 12:

- Testing Accommodations

Notes: Parents can always request clarification on any section

Where This Appears on 504 Plans

<u>504 Plans usually include:</u>

- Student needs
- Classroom accommodations (Section 2)
- Testing accommodations (Section 3)
- Responsible staff
- No goals (typically)
- No modified curriculum.



How Do We Know if the Accommodations are Working?

An accommodation is working if it:

- Increases access to grade-level curriculum
- Improves student independence
- Reduces barriers without lowering expectations
- Supports progress toward IEP goals and general education standards
- Is used consistently and correctly

If it’s only being provided but not changing access or performance, it’s not truly effective.

Accommodation Data

1. Academic Data
2. Observation Data
3. Student Voice
4. Progress Monitoring

Who Decides These Supports?

IEP Team (parents are REQUIRED members)

- Parents/guardians
- Teachers
- Specialists
- Administrators

Decisions are based on:

- Evaluations
- Classroom data
- Parent input
- Student needs

How Families Can Help

- Ask questions
- Share what works at home
- Review plans yearly
- Request meetings anytime
- Partner with teachers
- You are your child’s strongest advocate.

Key Takeaways

- Accommodations change HOW students learn
- Modifications change WHAT students learn
- IEPs = accommodations + instruction + possible modifications
- 504s = accommodations only
- Families are equal partners in decision-making

Helpful Resources

OCALI (Ohio Center for Autism & Low Incidence)

https://ocali.org

Great parent-friendly guides on IEPs, accommodations, and disability supports.

Ohio Department of Education – Special Education

https://education.ohio.gov

Search: IEP parent guide

Wrightslaw (National Special Education Law)

https://www.wrightslaw.com

Clear explanations of IEPs vs 504s.

Understood.org (Family Friendly)

https://www.understood.org

Excellent explanations of accommodations & learning differences.

Thank you!

Thank you for attending! Please take 2 minutes to complete our post-session survey. Your feedback helps us plan future workshops and better support your family.

