Invisible Disabilities and Effective Accommodations

Idaho SESTA
Special Education Support & Technical Assistance

June 2016

Objectives

- Increase understanding of the importance of providing accommodations within the classroom
- Increase your confidence in identifying effective accommodations that are specific to the student's individual needs
- Increase confidence in communicating with colleagues the importance of accommodations in the classroom

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Identifying Effective Accommodations

Identify the thread of information:
- Referral
- Evaluation
- IEP

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PLAAFP

- Student's strengths
- Parental concerns
- Disability impact
- Student's need
- Baseline data

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Mason

Strengths

Mason is a fourth grade student. His classroom teacher reports that he diligently works to complete reading assignments in class.

Mason is able to sound out words within grade-level text. He has a strong understanding of letter-to-sound relationships.

Parental concern

Mason's dad reports that Mason enjoys reading books on sports. He reports that homework takes Mason a very long time tom complete due to his slow reading.

Disability impact

Mason's learning disability fluency adversely impacts his ability to participate in grade-level curriculum in all academic areas.

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Mason

Student need

Mason needs to increase his automaticity in reading words within grade-level passages. He needs to increase his visual awareness without relying on the phonological properties or sounding each word out as he reads.

Baseline

Given a 4th grade level reading passage, Mason currently reads 33 correct words per minute.

Annual Goal

Given a 4th grade level reading passage, Mason will read 70 correct words per minute as measured by weekly reading fluency probes.

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Least Restrictive Environment

An appropriate balance of settings and services to meet the student's individual needs.

These services are based on the student's unique needs that result from his or her disability.

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Least Restrictive Environment

- Appropriate LRE is one that enables the student to make reasonable gains toward goals identified within the IEP while being educated with peers who are nondisabled to the maximum extent appropriate.

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Least Restrictive Environment

- A student must not be removed from the general education setting solely because of needed accommodations and/or adaptations within the general education setting.

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Mason

Mason spends more than 80% of his school day within the general education classroom.

His IEP has determined that it is appropriate for Mason to participate in all general education content area as well as receive specialized reading instruction within the resource room 30 minutes daily.

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Accommodations

- Accommodations and/or adaptations needed to ensure the student's academic progress must be included within the IEP.

- This include accommodations and/or adaptations required in physical education, vocational education, and statewide or district wide assessments.

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Categories

- Presentation
- Timing/Schedule
- Setting
- Response

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Accommodation Examples

- Pencil grips
- Note takers
- Computers with spell check
- Text read aloud
- Shortened assignments
- Braille
- Large print

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Adaptations

Adaptations are changes in educational expectations for the student with a disability compared to peers without disabilities.

Adaptations fundamentally alter requirements and provide non-comparable results.

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Adaptation Examples

- Reading a reading portion of a test
- Using spell/grammar check for Language Arts assessment
- Substituting out-of-level testing
- Taking away the time requirement on a timed assessment

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Identifying Effective Accommodations

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Questions to Consider

What are the student's strengths within the area(s) of concern?

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Questions to Consider

Mason's IEP team has noted that he is able sound out words, showing a strong understanding of letter-sound relationships.

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Questions to Consider

What is the objective or requirement that the student is expected to meet?

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Questions to Consider

Within the 4th grade curriculum, Mason is expected to independently read within each content area (Language Arts, Math, Science, and Social Studies).

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Questions to Consider

Identify the barrier(s) for the student in meeting that specific requirement.

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Questions to Consider

Mason's slow reading speed creates a barrier for him in meeting this requirement. His IEP team has noted that it take Mason 3 times longer than his peers to complete an activity required reading.

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Questions to Consider

What supports implemented or change made would allow the student to access their education?

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Questions to Consider

Providing text in all academic areas in the form of an audiobook when possible. If not possible, reading the text or content aloud to Mason.

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Questions to Consider

Do this changes follow the thread of information found within the most recent evaluation results and/or PLAAFP in the area(s) of concern?

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Questions to Consider

Mason's current eligibility document indicates that he has low processing speed, impacting his ability to fluently and automatically perform cognitive tasks. This impacts his automaticity in reading.

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Cognitive Functioning and Psychological Processing

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Sierra

- Diagnosed with ADHD, qualifies under Other Health Impairment
- Struggles to complete comprehension activities and multi-step writing tasks
- BRIEF results indicate difficulty with organizing and self-monitoring

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Sierra

Strengths
- Hardworking, wants to improve her writing skills

Disability Impact
- Difficulty in planning and organizing writing tasks impacts her ability to demonstrate understanding

Needs
- Increase ability to organize, plan and complete written tasks

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Resource Document

- Cognitive Functioning and Psychological Processing
  - Located at www.sde.idaho.gov/sped/sped-manual/

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Collaboration Between Special Education and General Education

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Advocacy

We must become good sales people of accommodations, advocating for our student needs within the school environment.

We also need to encourage our students to become advocates for their own needs.

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Communication

- Establish a need for the accommodation, then communicate that need with staff

- Provide a description of the accommodation within that specific setting

- Give examples of how to implement the accommodation and/or support

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Assist

- Check-in with the general education teacher to verify the accommodation(s) are available regularly to the student

- Make sure the general education teacher is implementing the accommodation as intended by the IEP team

- Be available to answer questions or trouble-shoot as needed

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Next Steps

If you are taking this course for credit:

- Complete the quiz with a passing grade of 70% or better on or before April 28.

- Complete the final exam (to be posted) with a passing grade of 70% or better on or before May 3.

If you have course-related questions, please email Cathy Thornton at catherinethornton@boisestate.edu

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