# Understanding the Applied Studies Diploma

## Limitations of Applied Studies Diploma

* Not equivalent to a standard diploma
* Difficult to change to other diploma options once pursued
* May not qualify a child for higher education, federal financial aid and some employment opportunities
* Eligible for FAPE through the age of 22

## Available only for children with disabilities

* Complete the requirements of their IEP
* Do not meet requirements for Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma

## When Should I Begin Thinking About Diploma Options?

* Start thinking about diploma options as soon as child enters school
* Chose diploma option that best meets goals for life after high school
* Plan to achieve highest diploma option necessary to meet goals

## Testing Decision Options

* Determined by IEP Team
* Documented in IEP

## Assessment Participation Options:

* Standards of Learning (SOL) test with no accommodations
* SOL test with accommodations
* Virginia Alternate Assessment Program (VAAP)

## Key Curriculum Point Modifications vs Accommodations

**MODIFICATIONS**

* Expectations are *different* from other children
* Content or task may be reduced in depth and complexity
* Participates in VAAP assessment
* Diploma Options: *Applied Studies Diploma*

### ACCOMMODATIONS

* Expectations are *same* as other children
* Adaptations are made that support access to the general curriculum
* Participates in SOL tests
* Diploma Options: *All diplomas*

## Career Planning

***Important People: School Counselor & IEP Team***

***Elementary & Middle School Activities:***

* Explore [Career Clusters and Pathways](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/career_clusters/index.shtml) (CTE Career Clusters) and
* Create an [Academic and Career Plan](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/career_clusters/plans_of_study/index.shtml) (Road map to goals) and
* Receive instruction in [Career Investigations](https://www.cteresource.org/search/?term=Career+Investigations)

## Questions to Ask IEP Team

* How do the decisions that we are making in elementary school about a child’s participation in state assessments relate to the diploma options that will be available?
* What are the key factors to consider in making decisions about diploma options?
* When is the latest point at which I will be able to change my mind about my child’s diploma option?

## More information about assessments and diploma options (video resources)

* [What You Need to Know About Assessments](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/testing/index.shtml)
* [What You Need to Know About Diploma Options](https://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/graduation/index.shtml)