

# Understanding Modification of Curriculum Versus Accommodations

The terms “accommodations” and “modifications” are two that many people tend to use interchangeably. In special education, however, it is critical to understand that these terms have completely different definitions. Mistaking a “modification” for an “accommodation” in your child’s IEP can mean the difference between your child being able to earn a Standard or an Advanced Studies Diploma and being unable to do so.

## MODIFICATIONS

Requires that children with disabilities perform objectives that are different from those of the rest of the class. The content or task may be reduced in depth, breadth, and complexity. Modifications refer to practices that change, lower, or reduce learning expectations. Because modifications change expectations, they should be used with caution during instruction, as this could result in students missing out on essential knowledge or skills. Examples of instructional modifications could include:

- Allowing a student to have fewer learning objectives than peers
- Requiring fewer assignments
- Giving students easier homework than peers
- Providing below-grade-level curriculum or assignments

## ACCOMMODATIONS

Provides adaptations for a child with a disability without setting different expectations. Accommodations help support access to the general education curriculum. They do not change what is taught, change the strategies used, or change how instruction is delivered to children. Children can receive accommodations and be fully prepared for and able to earn a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma. In other words, an accommodation is a tool that allows a child to access what is being taught. Examples of accommodations could include:

- Providing a child with hard copies of notes
- Providing a child with a graphic organizer
- Allowing additional time to take tests

Note that none of these tools changes what is taught. They simply provide access to the general curriculum.

## Important to Note

Remember, it is unlikely that a child who is on a modified curriculum will graduate with a Standard or Advanced Studies Diploma. This could limit postsecondary and employment options.