

Section 504/ADA Resources

1. ADA Compliance with the American With disabilities Act: A Self-Evaluation Guide for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: Office for Civil Rights, United States Department of Education, Washington, D.C.

This guide is intended to serve as a resource to assist school districts in conducting their self-evaluations under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The guide was developed by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Right in cooperation with Adaptive Environments, Inc. The guide reflects the interpretations of the Office for Civil Rights to which the U.S. Department of Justice has delegated responsibility for compliance activities. It does a good job of explaining the requirements of and the relationship between IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act), Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Iowa Department of Education has mailed a copy of this guide to all school districts in Iowa as well as to all area education agencies. Additional copies of the guide can be purchased from the U.S. Government Printing Office, (202) 512-1800.

For further technical assistance in understanding the responsibilities of school districts under Title II of the ADA school officials may contact the U.S. Department of Education's ADA Information Line at (800) 514-0301 (voice), (800) 514-0383 (TDD). School personnel can also contact the ADA national Access for Public Schools project at Adaptive Environments, Inc. (800) 893-1225 (Voice/TDD).

2. Office for Civil Rights Region VII, U.S. Department of Education, The OCR office for Iowa is located at: Chicago Office, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, Citigroup Center, 500 W. Madison Street, Suite 1475, Chicago, IL 60661, Telephone: 312-730-1560, FAX: 312-730-1576; TDD: 877-521-2172, Email: OCR.Chicago@ed.gov.

Technical assistance related to Section 504 and ADA are available through OCR at the above phone numbers.

3. The Division of Persons With Disabilities, Iowa Department of Human Rights, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319, Phone (515) 281-5969.

Possible Teaching Strategies

Noncompliance with the written Section 504 plan may result in court involvement. Teachers and designated support staff are responsible for implementing the Section 504 plan for identified individuals. It is important that teachers and support staff are aware of the student's disability and the accommodation and/or related services needed for the student to benefit from any program activity offered by the school district. It is recommended that the student's teacher be a member of the Section 504 team determining eligibility and/or creating the plan for an eligible individual. The following are examples of accommodations/interventions that could be implemented in a Section 504 plan.

Area of Difficulty: Work Production & Accuracy

These strategies can promote increased student work accuracy and production. Work accuracy is simply the percent correct or quality of assignments that are completed, while production is completing and turning in work. Poor work accuracy and completion can be related to poor academic skills, low motivation, and/or poor organization skills.

Simple Teaching Strategies/Techniques

- (1) Give extra credit for looking over a paper more than once.
- (2) Have an assigned place where all completed assignments are placed.
- (3) Allow use of manipulatives or a calculator for checking accuracy on daily work.
- (4) Shorten assignments or work periods to coincide with attention span.
- (5) Use a timer or clock to show quitting time and to help children pace themselves.
- (6) Break assignments into smaller parts which allows for more frequent feedback.
- (7) Establish criteria for work and require students to correct until criteria are met.
- (8) Involve students in setting time limits.
- (9) Ask students to repeat directions before beginning a task.
- (10) Utilize the Premack principle of "work before play." Provide the student with rewards or preferred activities only after they have completed assignments with acceptable accuracy.
- (11) Give instructions in clear and simple sentences.
- (12) Provide an example of what a successfully completed assignment would look like.
- (13) Reduce the difficulty level of assignments.
- (14) Evaluate appropriateness of a task to determine if material is too easy or hard, or if the length of assignments is appropriate.
- (15) Have assignments clearly posted and/or utilize an individual assignment sheet.
- (16) Communicate regularly with the parent regarding work completion.
- (17) Highlight key words in directions for clarification.
- (18) Require the student to begin a task within a specified period of time.

- (19) Reduce the number of directions and steps; e.g., give the student each additional step after completion of the previous step.
- (20) Establish assignment rules; e.g., listen to instructions, start after directions are given, ask questions if you do not understand, begin the task when you know what to do, make certain you have all necessary materials, know where to turn in the assignment when completed.
- (21) Allow student the option of performing assignments at another time or place.
- (22) Schedule more difficult subjects in the morning or when the student learns best.
- (23) Have rules for work periods. Rules should clarify expectations and facilitate work production. Typical work period rules might address what to do when you are finished, when to ask for teacher help, and when you may visit with peers.
- (24) Have child orally state rules for work periods before beginning a task.
- (25) Allow alternative response modes; e.g., fill in answers instead of essays.
- (26) Provide high-interest, high-motivation tasks.
- (27) Use a mixture of high-interest and low-interest tasks; e.g., follow lecture with a hands-on activity.
- (28) Simplify and heighten visual presentations by using clearly printed, uncluttered worksheets.
- (29) Allow tape recording of assignments.
- (30) Assist student individually in setting goals and breaking them down into manageable units.
- (31) Ask questions such as, "What do you need to be able to do this?"
- (32) Provide examples and specific steps to accomplish the task.
- (33) Make positive statements defining the requirements of a completed activity; e.g., "Your math is finished when all ten problems are completed and corrected. You may work with Mary on your science project when you are finished."
- (34) Praise specific behavior as, "Great! You finished your math." Or, "Good work, you got three-fourths of them right."
- (35) Utilize a syllabus with older students. An effective syllabus will specify both assignments and due dates. A comprehensive syllabus will provide students with a consistent reference for assignments.
- (36) Have some tasks the student can accomplish easily.
- (37) Rewrite directions at a lower reading level if student reads below grade level.
- (38) Indicate a definite starting and stopping point, visually and auditory.

Test Taking

Students perform poorly on tests for a variety of reasons. Students may be poorly motivated, they may lack prerequisite skills (such as reading or writing skills), they may have difficulty following directions or sustaining attention to the task. The most important aspect of intervening to improve student test performance is to target those student weaknesses that adversely affect test-taking performance. These strategies focus on test preparation and test-taking skills.

Simple Strategies

(1) Before the test

- (a) Confer with student individually and privately if you plan to modify the test for that student.
- (b) Take the test yourself to make sure there is ample time for students to complete it.
- (c) Provide both written and oral reminders of upcoming tests.
- (d) Provide a structured study guide which matches the design of the test.
- (e) Allow students the opportunity to study with a peer.
- (f) Develop clear, readable, and uncluttered test forms. Allow ample space for student responses. Use lined answer spaces for essay or short answer tests.
- (g) Review the test to ensure that it assesses what was taught and how it was taught. If lessons focused on recalling facts, avoid essay question.
- (h) Adjust the readability of the test to the student's reading level.
- (i) Use of more frequent, shorter tests rather than long tests.
- (j) Give a practice test.
- (k) Limit each page to a single type of question (Multiple choice on one page, fill in the blank on one page, etc.)
- (l) Don't use trick questions.
- (m) If essay questions are given, provide an outline to help structure the response.
- (n) Underline or bold key words and phrases.

(2) During the test

- (a) Seat the student near the teacher so that he/she can be easily monitored and so that the teacher can assist the student with packing.
- (b) Allow the student extra time to complete the test.
- (c) Allow the student to take tests orally.
- (d) Avoid placing the student under the pressure of time constraints or completion.
- (e) Allow the student to take tests in an alternative site if he/she is distracted easily.
- (f) Provide short breaks during lengthy tests.
- (g) Avoid statements such as "Hurry and get finished," or "Do your best. This counts for one half of your grade."
- (h) Don't threaten dire consequences for failure.
- (i) Allow student to use his/her notes with the test. Teach the student how the notes go along with the test.

(3) After the test

- (a) Reward the student for improved performance.

(b) Communicate positive information about a student's progress with his or her parents.

(c) Allow students to retake tests after they have been given feedback and been re-taught.

(d) Emphasize strengths rather than weaknesses in feedback after tests.

Area of Difficulty: Attention to Instruction

These are teaching strategies for students who are not attentive during classroom instruction. The student may be easily distracted, stare off into space, sit and doodle, not follow along with materials, and/or be unable answer simple questions from a lesson as it is presented.

Simple Teaching Strategies:

- (1) Move into close proximity to help the student sustain attention.
- (2) Use prearranged nonverbal cues and signals to redirect the student to the lesson.
- (3) Maintain eye contact with the student while giving directions or other important information.
- (4) Ask the student to repeat directions.
- (5) Use very specific concrete language when giving directions. If possible use visual information and cues along with verbal information.
- (6) Seat the student in a position that will be the least distracting and that is close to the source of directions, explanations, or instructions.
- (7) When you redirect the student, use a calm and firm tone.
- (8) Inform the student of expectations in a one-on-one situation.
- (9) Avoid punishment such as lecturing, scolding, criticizing etc., as a way of providing consequences for unacceptable behavior.
- (10) Seat the student near role models who are not easily distracted themselves.
- (11) Use fast paced lessons in which you frequently ask students questions. Consider not having students raise their hands and rotating whom you call on.
- (12) Intersperse activities that include physical activity with more sedentary lessons.
- (13) Intersperse high interest activities with typical seat lessons.

Organizational Skills

The following strategies address student organizational difficulties. Organizational skills are primarily related to following directions, managing materials, completing assignments, and making transitions.

Simple Teaching Strategies:

- (1) Establish, post, and follow a consistent daily routine.
- (2) Perform periodic desk checks for all students and praise adequate desk organization.

- (3) Help the student put together a homework organizer such as a Trapper or folders.
- (4) Provide the student with reminders of assignment due date/time and standards for acceptable completion.
- (5) Use study guides to help organize test preparation.
- (6) Provide the student with note-taking guides or techniques.
- (7) Provide the student with checklists for proofing assignments that address graded elements.
- (8) Provide students time to organize and clean out their desks at the end of each day.
- (9) Teach test-taking and study skills.
- (10) Use an assignment sheet or homework organizer for older students.
- (11) Talk with the student's parents to create a plan for school/home transitions.
- (12) Assign a volunteer or work buddy to help the student with organizing materials and assignments.
- (13) Highlight direction words for students or help them learn to identify direction words and highlight or underline them.
- (14) Give a warning when transitions are about to occur. Provide specific directions for how transitions are to be carried out.
- (15) Allow the student to have an extra set of books at home.
- (16) Break directions down into small units.
- (17) Provide student with a list of needed materials.
- (18) Provide incentives for meeting organizational goals.

Area of Difficulty: Impulse Control

These teaching strategies are for improving impulsive control. Typical examples of this behavior include talking out, out-of-seat, touching others, and other violations of classroom rules.

Simple Teaching Strategies:

- (1) Talk with the student prior to activities where difficulties typically occur and set goals for that activity together.
- (2) Briefly redirect the student when misbehavior occurs.
- (3) Provide comments on positive behavior as it occurs.
- (4) Ignore misbehavior when feasible.
- (5) Seat student away from persons or activities that appear to trigger impulsive behavior.
- (6) Set up a reward system for meeting mutually agreed upon behavioral goals.
- (7) Place a copy of the student's behavioral goals on their desk.
- (8) Help students develop problem solving skills. Helping students with these skills may involve additional resources such as the school counselor or AEA personnel.
- (9) Intervene before the student's behavior escalates.

- (10) Help the student identify acceptable means of achieving their desired ends or goals. For example, they may ask to get up and walk rather than leaving their seats without permission.
- (11) Use instructional techniques that call for a high rate of student responses.
- (12) Include breaks for physical activity in the daily schedule.
- (13) Provide students interesting activities to engage in when assignments have been completed.
- (14) Change instructional activities frequently and keep them fast paced.

Area of Difficulty: Handwriting Quality

Poor handwriting is a concern frequently raised by teachers. While judgments of acceptable handwriting vary from teacher to teacher, you undoubtedly have in mind some student with handwriting concerns. Some children with poor handwriting may not have the skills necessary for success. You may need to consult an occupational therapist to determine the extent to which fine-motor deficiencies are compounding handwriting concerns.

Simple Teaching Strategies:

- (1) Provide the student with sturdy white paper with black lines to write on rather than newspaper print.
- (2) Allow the student to write on every other line when writing rough drafts.
- (3) Allow the student to select form (i.e., cursive or manuscript).
- (4) Permit liberal use of accommodations such as word processors, tape recorders, spell checkers, etc.
- (5) Avoid assigning writing assignments as punishment.
- (6) Do not grade handwriting. Do not penalize for misspellings or reversals.
- (7) Give the student a written copy of the board work if copying from the board is difficult.
- (8) Consider alternatives to paper-pencil tasks; i.e. making a filmstrip; keeping a diary; dramatizations; making a poster, mural, or display; performing a demonstration; panel discussion; radio broadcasts; illustration, etc.
- (9) Grade for content, not handwriting.
- (10) Allow the student to have a writing helper or secretary when completing the assignment is more important than working on handwriting.
- (11) Teach specific methods of self-monitoring for written work; e.g., “Did I write my best? Did I have spaces between words? Did I write on the lines?”
- (12) Have student proofread finished work.
- (13) Make sure the material being presented to the student is at a level that the student comprehends and that he/she is able to complete assignments. Check to see that the student uses his/her time wisely.
- (14) Frequently remind student of expectations for completing work neatly.

- (15) Praise the student for neatly completed assignments. At times, praise the student in front of other students.
- (16) Remind the student that work will be redone until it meets acceptable criteria.
- (17) Use advanced organizers or study guides to reduce the amount of written work necessary to complete assignments.

Teaching strategies excerpted from:

Behrens, Gene; Ikada, Martin, Noel, George; Reschly-Murdoch, Jane,
Interventions to Enhance Student Functioning: A Guide for Educators, Heartland AEA
11, Johnston, IA 50131-1603. 1-800-362-2720.

Other resources to consult when developing effective accommodation plans:

Red Flags for Considering Accommodations and/or Services under Section 504:

- (1) When a PARENT frequently expresses a concern about their child's performance.
- (2) When SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION is being considered for any student. When RETENTION is being considered.
- (3) When a student shows a pattern of NOT BENEFITTING FROM TEACHER INSTRUCTION.
- (4) When a student returns to school after a SERIOUS ILLNESS OR INJURY.
- (5) When a student is REFERRED FOR EVALUATION, but it is determined that no evaluation is needed under IDEA.
- (6) When a student is evaluated and is found NOT TO QUALIFY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION services under IDEA.
- (7) When a student EXHIBITS A CHRONIC HEALTH CONDITION.
- (8) When a student has been identified as having an ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER (ADD) OR ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVE DISORDER (ADHD).
- (9) When a student is identified as "AT RISK" or exhibits the potential for dropping out of school.
- (10) When SUBSTANCE ABUSE is an issue.
- (11) When a DISABILITY of any kind is known or suspected.
- (12) When a NEW BUILDING OR REMODELING is being considered.
- (13) When a student is HOMELESS.
- (14) When a student has a PARENT with a disability.

Possible Accommodations

(1) Environmental Strategies

- (a) Provide a structured learning environment.
- (b) Adjust class schedules.
- (c) Utilize classroom aides and note takers.
- (d) Possible modification of non-academic times such as lunchroom, recess, and physical education.
- (e) Change student seating.
- (f) Utilize a study carrel.
- (g) Alter location of personal or classroom supplies for easier access or to minimize distraction.

(2) Organizational Strategies

- (a) Modify test delivery.
- (b) Use tape recorders, ipods, computer-aided instruction, and other audiovisual equipment.
- (c) Select modified textbooks or workbooks.
- (d) Tailor homework assignments.
- (e) Use one-to-one tutorials.
- (f) Provide peer tutoring.
- (g) Set time expectations for assignments.
- (h) Provide cues such as clock faces indicating beginning and ending times.
- (i) Provide tests in segments so that student hands in one segment before receiving the next part.
- (j) Highlight main ideas and supporting details in the book.

(3) Behavioral Strategies

- (a) Use behavioral management techniques.
- (b) Implement behavioral/academic contracts.
- (c) Utilize positive reinforcements (rewards).
- (d) Conference with the student's parents (and students as appropriate).
- (e) Conference with the student's other teachers.
- (f) Establish a home/school communication system for behavior monitoring.
- (g) Post rules and consequences for classroom behavior.
- (h) Write a contract for student behavior.
- (i) Offer social reinforcers (i.e., praise, hugs, winks) for appropriate behavior.
- (j) Put student on daily/weekly progress report.
- (k) Implement self-recording of behaviors.

(4) Presentation Strategies

- (a) Tape lessons so the student can listen to them again.
- (b) Provide copied material for extra practice (i.e., outlines, study guides).
- (c) Require fewer drill and practice activities.

- (d) Give both oral and visual instructions for assignments.
- (e) Vary the method of lesson presentation:
 - (i) lecture
 - (ii) small groups
 - (iii) large groups
- (f) Use audio visuals (i.e., filmstrips, study prints).
- (g) Provide peer tutors or cross-age tutors (i.e., take notes, monitor assignments, read aloud, listen).
- (h) Make demonstrations.
- (i) Conduct experiments.
- (j) Arrange simulations.
- (k) Conduct games.
- (l) Provide one-to-one instruction with other adult.
- (m) Provide for oral testing.
- (n) Ask student to repeat directions/assignments to insure understanding.
- (o) Arrange for a mentor to work with student in his or her interest area or area of greatest strength.

(5) Methodology Strategies

- (a) Repeat and simplify instructions about in-class and homework assignments.
- (b) Supplement verbal instructions with visual instructions.
- (c) Change instructional pace.
- (d) Change instructional methods.
- (e) Use explicit instructional techniques.

(6) Curriculum Strategies

- (a) Change instructional materials.
- (b) Utilize supplementary materials.
- (c) Assess whether student has the necessary prerequisite skills. Determine whether materials are appropriate to the student's current interest and functioning levels.
- (d) Implement study skill strategies (survey, read, recite, review). Introduce definition of new terms/vocabulary and review to check for understanding.
- (e) Use the principles of universal design for learning.
- (f) Limit amount of material presented on a single page.
- (g) Provide a sample or practice test.
- (h) Be aware of student's preferred learning style and provide appropriate instruction/materials.