

One of the important features of the DRDP (2015) is the use of adaptations. Adaptations are changes in the environment or differences in observed behavior that allow children with IFSPs and IEPs to be most accurately assessed in their typical settings. All adaptations used are based on each individual child's needs and are not tied to any specific disability. The seven categories of adaptations for the DRDP (2015) serve an essential function – to make sure that the instrument measures ability rather than disability.

The Seven Categories of Adaptations



1. Augmentative or alternative communication system

Methods of communication other than speech that allow a child who is unable to use spoken language to communicate with others.



2. Alternative Mode for Written Language

Methods of reading or writing used by a child who cannot see well enough to read or write or cannot hold and manipulate a writing utensil (e.g., pencil, pen) well enough to produce written symbols.



3. Visual Support

Adjustments to the environment that provide additional information to a child who has limited or reduced visual input.



4. Assistive Equipment or Device

Tools that make it possible or easier for a child to perform a task.



5. Functional Positioning

Strategic positioning and postural support that allow a child to have increased control of his body.



6. Sensory Support

Increasing or decreasing sensory input to facilitate a child's attention and interaction in the environment.



7. Alternative Response Mode

The form of a child's behavior may differ from typical development (such as avoiding looking at people while speaking to them) but still be rated as demonstrating mastery. This adaptation allows for differences in the child's behavior rather than modifications to the environment.

Key Points to Keep in Mind:

- Adaptations should be used throughout the day to increase the child's participation and engagement during all routines and activities.
- Special educators, along with members of the child's IEP team with disability-specific expertise such as motor development or deaf education can assist in determining which adaptations are needed and provide guidance for their appropriate use.
- Some children use equipment such as glasses and hearing aids every day. The special educator should make sure that adaptations such as these are in place and working prior to any member of the team conducting observations for the DRDP (2015).
- Instructional prompts are not the same as adaptations. Strategies such as providing a verbal or gestural prompt, providing a model of the desired behavior, or using a partial or full physical prompt are not adaptations. These are instructional strategies that should be faded out as the child gains the skill. A rating of mastery should not be provided if a child requires an instructional prompt to demonstrate a skill or behavior.
- Some adaptations require time for the child to learn to use. Special educators, in collaboration with families and general education staff, should plan how to teach the child to use specialized equipment as well as plan how to assess if the equipment is working to support the child's engagement and progress.
- The special educator, with input from the IEP team, should determine if a child's adaptations continue to be of benefit over time or need to be modified or changed.
- The adaptations that are used throughout the child's' day and during observations for the DRDP must be documented on the IFSP or IEP and on the DRDP (2015) Information Page.

For more information: draccess.org/adaptations

