

PARENT ADVOCACY SERIES

Top 10 Accommodations for Children with Learning Disabilities

Powerful, practical supports to level the playing field — without changing what your child is expected to learn.

Accommodations are tools and strategies that give your child equal access to learning without changing the curriculum itself. As you prepare for your next IEP or 504 meeting, consider this list of powerful accommodations. **Remember, you are your child's best advocate**, and your insights are invaluable.

1 Extended Time on Tests and Assignments

Allows students more time to process information and complete work without feeling rushed.

How it helps: Reduces anxiety and gives students with slower processing speeds, reading challenges, or writing difficulties a fair chance to demonstrate their knowledge.

EXAMPLE

A student receives "time and a half" (1.5x standard time) on all classroom tests and standardized exams.

2 Preferential Seating

Placing your child in a specific location in the classroom to help them learn best.

How it helps: Sitting near the teacher can minimize distractions and make it easier to ask for help; other students may benefit from a quiet area or a positive role model nearby.

EXAMPLE

A student with attention challenges is seated at the front of the classroom, away from doors or windows.

3 Reduced Workload or Shortened Assignments

Focuses on the quality of work, not the quantity — the learning goal stays the same, but the amount of work is reduced.

How it helps: Prevents students from feeling overwhelmed, especially with writing or processing-speed challenges, so they can focus energy on mastering the concept.

EXAMPLE

The teacher assigns only the odd-numbered math problems, covering the same skills as the full set.

4 Use of Assistive Technology (AT)

Any device or software that helps a student learn — from low-tech tools to high-tech software.

How it helps: Bridges the gap between a student's abilities and the task at hand.

- Audiobooks or text-to-speech software for students with dyslexia
- Calculators for students with dyscalculia
- Laptops or tablets with spell-check for students with dysgraphia

5 Receiving Instructions in Multiple Formats

Ensures your child understands what's expected by presenting information in different ways.

How it helps: Supports students who struggle with auditory processing or memory — seeing instructions, in addition to hearing them, reinforces understanding.

EXAMPLE

The teacher gives directions orally and also writes them on the board or provides a printed copy.

6 Breaks During Class or Testing

Allows a student to take short, scheduled breaks to move around, stretch, or mentally reset.

How it helps: Improves focus and reduces frustration for students with attention challenges, anxiety, or sensory needs.

EXAMPLE

A student is allowed a five-minute sensory break after every 30 minutes of independent work.

7 Access to Teacher's Notes or Outlines

Providing lesson notes before or after class helps students focus on listening and understanding rather than struggling to write everything down.

How it helps: Especially useful for students with slow processing speed, writing difficulties, or attention challenges.

EXAMPLE

The teacher provides a fill-in-the-blank outline of the lecture notes to complete during class.

8 Word Banks and Formula Sheets

Provides a list of key terms, vocabulary, or math formulas for students to use during tests or assignments.

How it helps: Reduces memory load, letting students focus on applying concepts rather than recalling specific words or formulas.

EXAMPLE

During a science test, a student is given a list of key vocabulary words used in the questions.

9 Alternative Ways to Show Knowledge

Allows a student to complete an assignment in a different format than a traditional written report or test.

How it helps: Lets students with writing difficulties shine by using their strengths — learning can be demonstrated in many ways.

EXAMPLE

Instead of writing an essay, a student gives an oral presentation, makes a video, or designs a poster.

10

Positive Reinforcement and Behavior Support

Creates a structured plan to encourage positive behavior and teach new skills.

How it helps: Provides a proactive, supportive way to build positive habits and reduce classroom challenges for students whose learning is impacted by behavior.

EXAMPLE

A student earns points for staying on task, exchangeable for a preferred activity — creating a positive feedback loop.

This is a starting point — **you know your child best**. Use it to spark conversation at your next IEP or 504 meeting.