

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.



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 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

Recognition that a child might demonstrate mastery of a skill in a unique way.

Key Points to Keep in Mind:

- 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. Adaptations should not be tied to any specific disability. Rather, each individual child's needs should be considered and the appropriate adaptations put in place.
- The adaptations for the DRDP (2015) serve an essential function – to make sure that the instruments measure ability rather than disability. Sometimes the presence of a disability prevents children from demonstrating skills that they really do have. Adaptations that are used throughout the day enable children to have more control in their environment and demonstrate their latest level of mastery. Adaptations enable assessors to assess the child's true level of ability, which increases the validity of the assessment.
- Adaptations should be present throughout the child's day and available for all routines and activities – they should not be introduced solely for the purpose of the assessment.
- Some children use equipment such as glasses and hearing aids every day. The assessor should make sure that these are in place and working well prior to observing for the purpose of assessment.
- Instructional prompts are not the same as adaptations. In other words, instructional strategies such as providing verbal or gestural prompts, 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.
- Adaptations for the DRDP (2015) are grouped into seven categories. These categories can be used for documenting adaptations for both the IFSP or IEP and the DRDP (2015) Information Page.

For more information: draccess.org/adaptations

