Access
EDUCATIONAL ADVOCACY

QUICK REFERENCE

# Accommodations vs modifications

What's the difference and why does it matter?

Both accommodations and modifications are supports that can be written into an IEP or 504 plan. They are not the same thing, and the difference matters more than most parents and caregivers realize.

THE SHORT VERSION

**An accommodation changes how your child learns. A modification changes what your child is expected to learn.** One moves the obstacle and keeps the bar where it is. The other moves the bar.

| | Accommodations | Modifications |
|---|---|---|
| **What is it?** | A change in **HOW** your child accesses or demonstrates learning | A change in **WHAT** your child is expected to learn or produce |
| **Does it change the standard?** | No, the expectation stays the same | Yes, the expectation is reduced or changed |
| **What are examples?** | Extended time, preferential seating, read-aloud, larger print, frequent breaks | Fewer test questions, alternate assignment, reduced reading level, graded differently |
| **Who can have one?** | Students with an IEP or 504 plan | Typically students with an IEP only |
| **How does it impact grades?** | Generally does not affect grading | May affect how work is graded |
| **What impact does it have on a diploma/credits?** | Generally none | May affect eligibility for a standard diploma in some states |

**Not sure whether your child has accommodations, modifications, or both?** Check the services and supports section of their IEP or 504 plan, or bring that question to your next meeting.

**Want help reading what's in your child's plan?** I help families understand what's offered and what to ask for. Start with a free 15-minute call: (804) 420-2273 | myaccessadvocacy.com

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