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Impact of IDEA on Assessment Procedures

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I have chosen option # 2 - the impact of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) has on assessment procedures. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act has had a profound impact on the way schools assess students with disabilities. IDEA was originally enacted in by Congress in 1975 to ensure that children with disabilities have the opportunity to receive free public education, just like other children. The most recent amendments were passed by Congress in December 2004

(<http://nichcy.org/laws/idea>). IDEA requires that students with disabilities take part in state or district-wide assessments, and now states that students with disabilities should have as much involvement in the general curriculum as possible. This means that, if a child is receiving instruction in the general curriculum, he or she could take the same standardized test that the school district or state gives to non-disabled children.

Accordingly, a child's IEP must include all modifications or accommodations that the child needs so that he or she can participate in state or district-wide assessments

(<http://nichcy.org/schoolage/accommodations#testing>).

As part of implementing this requirement, state education agencies have been working to establish policies to guide IEP teams and schools in making accommodation decisions for students with disabilities, especially with respect to their participation in large-scale testing programs and the type of accommodations that are allowed

(<http://nichcy.org/research/ee/assessment-accommodations>).

Specially designed instruction ensures the access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction

the public agency that apply to all children. Adaptations, accommodations, and modifications are used in assessments and need to be individualized for the students, based upon their needs and their personal learning styles and interests. Modifications or accommodations are most often made in the following areas:

- \*scheduling – giving the student extra time to complete assignments or tests
- \*setting – working one-n-one with the teacher
- \*materials – providing audio taped lectures or books
- \*instruction – reducing the reading level or difficulty of assignments
- \*student response – allowing answers to be given orally or dictated

(<http://nichcy.org/schoolage/accommodations#testing>). Teachers can do several things to make it easier for their pupils to learn facts and concepts, skills, or behavior. They can model parts and teach each of the steps and their integration. They can teach the objective in a variety of contexts with a variety of materials to facilitate generalization. They can provide time for practice, and they can choose the schedule on which practice is done. Teachers may organize the material that a pupil is to learn, provide rehearsal strategies, or employ overlearning or distributed practice (Salvia, Ysseldyke, & Bolt, 2010).

Accommodation policies vary from state to state, however, IDEA 2004 mandates that all students with disabilities participate in state-wide and district-wide testing “with appropriate accommodations and alternative assessments where necessary as indicated in their respective individualized education programs” (IDEA, 2004b). As part of

implementing this requirement, state education agencies have been working to establish policies to guide IEP teams and schools in making accommodation decisions for students with disabilities, especially with respect to their participation in large-scale testing programs and the types of accommodations that are allowed. IDEA allows for alternate assessments to be used as well. Alternate assessments are designed to evaluate the progress of students who are unable to participate in regular assessments, even with accommodations. For many students with disabilities, alternate assessments are the only appropriate way to evaluate how much they know, have learned, or can do. The IDEA requires that this alternative be available to students who need it, as decided by their IEP teams (<http://nichcy.org/research/ee/assessment-accommodations>).

IDEA 1997 included a provision that by the year 2000 states would have in place alternate assessments intended for use with those students who evidenced severe cognitive impairments. In August 2002, the U.S. Secretary of Education proposed a regulation to allow states to develop and use alternate achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities for the purpose of determining the AYP states, local education agencies, and schools (Salvia, et al., 2010).

In conclusion, assessments are one way for teachers to determine whether students are learning the material that is taught. For students with disabilities, being able to show what they have learned is enhanced when a teacher provides individualized instruction and when assessments are given with the appropriate accommodations.

## References

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