

100 Play-Based Ways to Adapt **ANYTHING** in Early Childhood

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ADAPTATION, ACCOMMODATION AND MODIFICATION

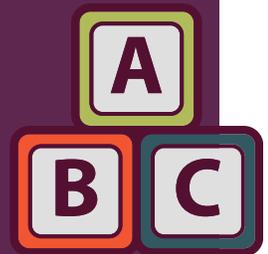
ADAPTATION— any changes to the environment, curriculum, instruction, or assessment designed to help students participate meaningfully in general education settings/daily activities. Adaptations include accommodations and modifications.

ACCOMMODATION— changes to how a student accesses information and demonstrates learning. These do not substantially change the level, content, or performance criteria.

MODIFICATION— changes in what a student is expected to learn in order to give student the opportunity to participate meaningfully and productively. These do include changes in level, content, and performance criteria.

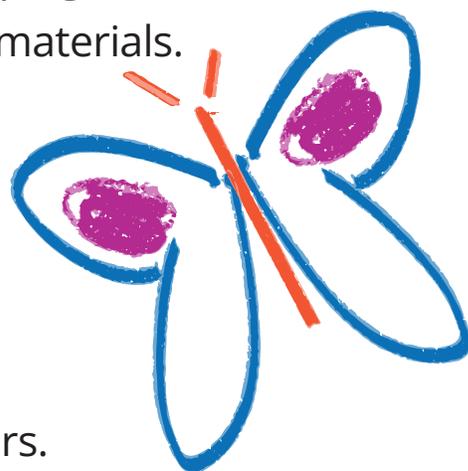
FOUNDATIONAL QUESTIONS

- How can this adaptation, accommodation, and/or modification work to support the student?
- How can we support this student to be (even) more successful?
- In what ways can we increase participation?
- In what ways can we provide support that is just right?
- What are the students strengths, skills, gifts and abilities?
- How can we use the student's strengths to create an access point?



ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORTS

1. Define play spaces with rugs, shelves, or mats for clarity.
2. Offer cozy corners with cushions or tents.
3. Reduce clutter and overstimulation in centers.
4. Provide multiple seating options: floor, beanbag, cube chair.
5. Use visual schedules with photos of routines.
6. Add sensory tools (noise-cancelling headphones, fidgets, weighted lap pads).
7. Use soft lighting or natural light.
8. Build in movement pathways (tunnels, stepping stones).
9. Create child-height shelves with accessible materials.
10. Invite children to help arrange the space.



PEER SUPPORTS

1. Pair children as “play buddies” during centers.
2. Rotate helpers (line leader, snack helper, clean-up buddy).
3. Encourage peer modeling (zipping coats, pouring water).
4. Use turn-taking games with peers.
5. Invite older children to be reading partners.
6. Provide cooperative roles in dramatic play (chef, customer, cashier).
7. Encourage peer cheering during group activities.
8. Teach peers to offer hand-over-hand support with consent.
9. Build “buddy benches” for joining play.
10. Let every child be both helper and helped.

PACING SUPPORTS

1. Shorten circle time with frequent songs and movement.
2. Offer children extra time to finish transitions.
3. Break activities into smaller steps with visuals.
4. Use timers (sand, visual, musical cues).
5. Allow flexibility: some children observe first, then join.
6. Provide calm-down breaks (yoga mats, sensory bins).
7. Integrate quick, playful breaks (freeze dance, wiggle songs).
8. Let children rejoin activities at their own pace.
9. Rotate activities quickly to maintain engagement.
10. Follow the child's lead when interest shifts.



EQUIPMENT SUPPORTS

1. Child-sized tools (scissors, brooms, pitchers).
2. Adaptive crayons, paintbrushes, or grips.
3. AAC devices or picture cards.
4. Stenders or alternative seating at tables.
5. Easels and vertical writing boards.
6. Large blocks and manipulatives.
7. Adaptive swings, trikes, or push toys.
8. Weighted blankets or lap pads.
9. Mirrors for imitation and self-regulation.
10. Ask families about preferred adaptive tools.

PRESENTATION OF MATERIAL/CONTENT SUPPORTS

1. Use songs, fingerplays, and chants to teach concepts.
2. Embed learning in dramatic play (restaurant = math, reading menus).
3. Teach through sensory bins (letters in rice, counting shells).
4. Use puppets to tell stories or ask questions.
5. Offer choice boards with real photos.
6. Provide hands-on props (shapes, animals, dolls).
7. Teach concepts through movement (jump to the number, clap syllables).
8. Model skills during play (building, drawing).
9. Incorporate home languages and cultural objects.
10. Allow multiple forms of participation (watching, trying, leading).

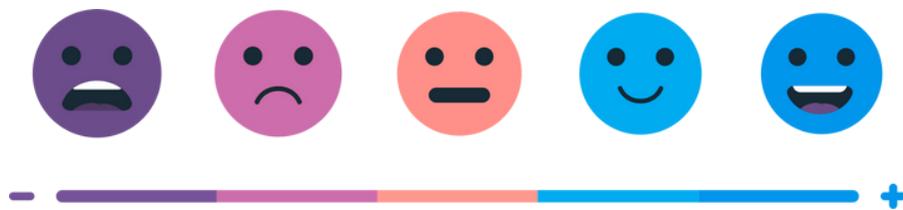
MATERIAL SUPPORTS

1. Use real objects over worksheets.
2. Provide open-ended art materials.
3. Offer choices of writing tools (markers, chalk, paint).
4. Use photos of children's families in activities.
5. Create story baskets with related props.
6. Provide picture-based directions.
7. Use large, simple visuals.
8. Add textures (sandpaper letters, fabric shapes).
9. Supply individualized name cards for recognition.
10. Highlight key routines with color coding.



SELF MANAGEMENT SUPPORTS

1. Use picture choice boards for self-regulation.
2. Provide calm-down kits (stuffed animals, sensory bottles).
3. Teach breathing and stretching games.
4. Offer visual timers for transitions.
5. Build predictable routines with song cues.
6. Role-play calming strategies with puppets.
7. Create “feelings corners” with mirrors and visuals.
8. Send home simple communication notebooks.
9. Use daily check-ins with smiley face charts.
10. Celebrate self-regulation successes with encouragement.



HUMAN SUPPORTS

1. Teacher sits in centers to model play.
2. Floating assistant supports choice-making.
3. Therapists embed supports in routines (OT in block play).
4. Family members join classroom activities.
5. Peer helpers support routines (passing snack).
6. Invite guest readers or community helpers.
7. Provide 1:1 support during transitions.
8. Use small group facilitation in centers.
9. Offer adult scaffolding in dramatic play.
10. Ensure staff collaborate and share strategies.

SOCIAL SUPPORTS

1. Play games that promote turn-taking.
2. Use partner songs or dances.
3. Scaffold group play with roles (builder, decorator, storyteller).
4. Encourage greetings and farewells.
5. Create friendship books with photos.
6. Support inclusive group projects (murals, block towns).
7. Highlight similarities (favorite foods, toys).
8. Practice conversational turn-taking in snack time.
9. Encourage children to invite peers into play.
10. Model and practice problem-solving with peers.



ASSESSMENT SUPPORTS

1. Document progress through photos and portfolios.
2. Use observation checklists during routines.
3. Gather work samples from play (drawings, block creations).
4. Let children show knowledge through play (sorting, storytelling).
5. Assess in natural settings (outdoor play, centers).
6. Provide choices (draw, tell, act out).
7. Highlight progress over time.
8. Use family input on skills at home.
9. Celebrate strengths before challenges.
10. Make assessments fun—turn into a game or story.

AFTER DECIDING THE SUPPORT

- Does the student prefer/ enjoy or choose the support?
- How long should we support in this way?
- When and how should we fade those supports?