

SPECIALLY DESIGNED INSTRUCTION

SPECIAL EDUCATION - GUIDANCE BRIEF



Specially Designed Instruction in IDEA 2004

Under [34 CFR 300.39](#) “special education” means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.

If a child has a disability but no need for unique specially designed instruction, then he/she is not eligible for special education services under IDEA.

ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION

CONSIDERATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	The team considered the following effect: environmental; cultural; or economic factors, as well as visual, hearing, intellectual, motor or emotional disability, or limited English proficiency, and has determined they are not the primary reason for the suspected disability. (Must be considered and ruled out only for SLD)
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Evaluation conducted in primary language or the student’s other mode of communication. If “No” explain:
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	The student meets the criteria for one or more disabilities under the IDEA.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	The disability adversely impacts the student’s education.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Because of the disability and its adverse impact on the student’s education, the student requires special education services.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	The student’s education, performance is not based primarily on a lack of appropriate instruction in (A) reading (including the essential components: phonemic awareness; phonics; vocabulary development; reading fluency, including oral reading skills; and reading comprehension strategies, (B) math, or (C) limited English proficiency.

What is Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)?

SDI in its simplest form is “**what the teacher does**” to instruct, assess, and re-teach the student. The SDI describes what the teacher, not just the special education teacher, does to adapt the content, the methodology or the delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of a student with a disability.

- SDI (specially designed instruction) is the instruction provided to a student with a disability who has an IEP so that he/she can make progress toward IEP goals and objectives and move forward in the general education curriculum. It is not part of the Response to Intervention (RtI), Section 504, or ADA Title II processes, but is specific to a student who qualifies for special education services.
- SDI directly focuses on the IEP goals that address the child’s educational needs that result from the disability.

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- > SDI goes beyond differentiated instruction and addresses the unique needs that exist because of a student’s disability. SDI should be implemented in addition to, not in place of, differentiated instruction.
- > The design and delivery of SDI is the core of special education. SDI is the vehicle to ensure students with disabilities receive high-quality instruction and services that will result in progress toward academic and functional standards, graduation, and meaningful postsecondary outcomes.

Implementing Specially Designed Instruction

- > Specially designed instruction is determined after a student’s present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) and goals are developed. The specially designed instruction is what will be implemented in addition to all educational and support services that every student is eligible for in order to help the student achieve his/her annual IEP goals.
- > In short, the IEP must specify what specially designed instruction the student will receive, including the frequency, duration, and location of the service(s).

Special Education Services							
Specially Designed Instruction	Service Type	Number Sessions/ Sessions Length	Start Date/ End Date	Provider Title	Location	ESY	Contingency
Math Calculation	Direct instruction	4 per week 45 minute(s)	09/16/2021 09/16/2022	SPED Teacher	Special Education Setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- > Additionally, the LEA must document that the specially designed instruction is delivered to the student, including the frequency, duration, and location of the delivery. This is true regardless of whether the specially designed instruction is a direct, indirect, or a support service and regardless of the location in which the specially designed instruction is delivered (general education or special education setting).

Special Education Services							
Specially Designed Instruction	Service Type	Number Sessions/ Sessions Length	Start Date/ End Date	Provider Title	Location	ESY	Contingency
Reading Fluency	Collaboration	5 per week 15 minute(s)	09/20/2021 11/05/2021	SPED Teacher	General/ Regular Education Setting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Who Provides Specially Designed Instruction?

Under IDEA “Specially Designed Instruction” (SDI) is a shared responsibility.

- A special education teacher has expertise in the area of specially designed instruction.
- A general education teacher has expertise in curriculum and knowledge of the student.
- A special education teacher and a general education teacher work collaboratively to plan, design and implement specially designed instruction for students whom they share responsibility.

Can Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) be Provided by a Paraprofessional?

Paraprofessionals serve an important “supportive” role in providing SDI.

A paraprofessional acts under the direct guidance and supervision of a special education teacher or credentialed related service personnel. The following conditions must be in place:

- The general and/or special education teacher design and deliver core instruction and SDI for the student
- Adequate training is provided to the paraprofessional to support SDI (e.g., reinforcement/review of skills or concepts, data collection)
- On-going communication occurs between the paraprofessional and special education teacher or related service personnel

For example, paraprofessionals may provide the following

- Facilitate the use of assistive technology
- Lead a review of concepts
- Monitor student academic progress and/or behavior

A paraprofessional may not:

- Replace the special education teacher
- Plan, deliver, or lead initial instruction
- Interpret test results and make instructional decisions

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What is SDI vs. What SDI is not

Specially Designed Instruction:

Adapting the content, methods and/or instructional delivery to address the unique needs of a student. SDI ensures access to grade level academic standards or content connectors.

IS

In addition to core instruction (supplemental)

A service or support

What an educator/staff/school personnel does

Teaching specific skills identified as learning barriers

Important features of a program and/or unique instruction

Specific to the student (individualized)

Maintaining high expectations and supporting students in the general education setting

Promoting independence

Presumed competence

IS NOT

In place of core instruction (supplant)

LRE Placement

What a student does

A restatement of the academic content standards being taught

Naming a specific program that replaces a special education service

Driven by programs or schedules

Lowering expectations and/or removing students from the general education setting

Promoting dependence

Presumed incompetence

Find [specific examples of SDI](#) from the IRIS Center.

“The contents of this handout were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, the content does not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.”

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