

Specially Designed Instruction

Considerations for Specially Designed Instruction

The purpose of this document is to help define and increase the capacity of understanding about specially designed instruction as it relates to students with disabilities in Indiana. This document serves as guidance for IEP teams, administrators, educators and practitioners as they determine the need for, plan, and implement Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) for students with disabilities who require an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

This document is not a policy brief or a compliance tool. The information that follows focuses on the practical aspects of designing and delivering SDI, to the end that high quality services and programs for children with disabilities are continuously offered and improved.

In general, SDI is adapting content, methods, and/or instructional delivery to address the unique needs of a student (511 IAC 7-32-88). Students who receive special education services must receive SDI in order to be in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Indiana Article 7, but more importantly, because the design and delivery of instruction is what will enable students to achieve the highest outcomes.

SDI describes the individualized instruction provided to a student receiving special education services. In other words, “What does a student need that special education can provide?”

SDI is the instruction applied to address academic and functional deficits.

SDI is what makes special education “special.”

SDI is instruction intended to close the academic gap between a student with a disability and peers.

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.

Aligned with SDI, Supplementary Aids and Services (SAS), and other supports that are provided in (1) general education classes; (2) other education-related settings; and (3) extracurricular and nonacademic settings enable students with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with 511 IAC 7-42-10.



Contents of this guide are adapted from the Kansas State Department of Education (2017, August), Kentucky Department of Education (2017, February), North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Considerations for Specially Designed Instruction (2016, April) and the Utah State Board of Education Specially Designed Instruction (2016, Draft)

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

Many Supplementary Aids and Services are supported through Specially Designed Instruction. For example, in order for a student to access and use a supplementary aid independently, the student will need explicit instruction (SDI) in the use of the specific strategy or device. The intent is to provide levels of support until the student can access a supplementary aid independently (KDoE, 2017).

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

Instructional practices the teacher uses

- Guided practice of listening strategies
- Scaffolded instruction, visual, written, verbal, physical, picture prompts and cues
- Modeling
- Instruction of calming strategies
- Grapho-phonetic strategies (visual/auditory) including letter/sound knowledge, phonemic awareness, decoding
- Explicit instruction on how to use a graphic organizer
- Direct instruction and support for specialized software and equipment
- Explicit instruction in the writing process including prewriting activities, writing, revising, editing, and publishing
- Multi-sensory teaching strategies
- Direct instruction in computation and reasoning strategies

Supplementary Aids and Services (SAS)

Aids or services the student uses

- Visual prompts
- Visual, written, verbal, physical, picture prompts and cues
- Self-monitoring checklists
- Calming strategies
- Graphic organizers
- Prompting and cueing
- Recorded materials
- Extended time
- Study guides
- Magnifier
- Copy of notes written on the board
- Editing checklists
- Cue cards with problem solving strategies, definitions, examples, models, flow chart, process steps
- Modified tests/assignments
- Graph paper
- Calculator
- Assistive technology
- Peer tutoring

Strategies

The following strategies should be tailored to the individual needs of the student. The Specially Designed Instructional strategies provided are not an exhaustive or limiting list.

Academic

- Phonemic awareness strategies, multi-sensory teaching strategies, modeling, instruction in the use of organizers, small group instruction, direct instruction, guided practice, word problem strategies

Communication

- Auditory discrimination training, environmental prompts, social scripts, mirror training, guided responding, video self-modeling, system of least prompts, direct instruction, verbal/guided repetition, computer assisted instruction

Physical (OT/PT)

- Hand over hand guidance, modeling, one-on-one instruction, instruction in the use of equipment or assistive technology, direct instruction and support for specialized software and equipment

Behavior

- Explicit social instructional skill instruction, relaxation strategies, de-escalation strategies, direct teaching of replacement behaviors

Vocational

- Task analysis, differential reinforcement, direct instruction, verbal prompts/cues, graduated guidance, self-monitoring, corrective feedback/re-teaching

Question and Answer

Must “specially designed instruction” (SDI) be provided for the special education student solely by the special education teacher or can it be provided by the general education teacher? Under what conditions?

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.
- 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

Question and Answer

What does SDI look like for a student receiving consultation services?

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. Consultation services may include collaboration on:

- Academic or behavioral needs of a student
- Specific instructional strategies or supports
- Modes of learning/communication
- Accommodations and assistive technology

Where and when is Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) delivered?

- Any setting or time school-related activities occur
- To the maximum extent appropriate, with peers in the general education setting

How is Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) delivered?

- Intentionally, directly, and highly structured
- Through customized changes to the content, methods and/or instructional delivery based on the student's needs

Resources

CAST – Center for Applied Special Technology. <http://www.cast.org/>

Council for Exceptional Children. (2014, November/ December). Evidence-Based Special Education in the Context of Scarce Evidence-Based Practices: The Council for Exceptional Children’s Interdivisional Research Group. Teaching Exceptional Children, 47, pp. 81-84.

Indiana Department of Education - <https://www.doe.in.gov/specialed>

Indiana IEP Resource Center - The IEPRC offers support for educators throughout Indiana to improve the IEP process in schools.

<https://www.indianaieprc.org/index.php>

Kentucky Department of Education. (2014, February) IEP Lesson Plan and Development Handbook. Retrieved October 2017.

National Implementation Resource Network (NIRN) - <http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/>

NCAC (n.d.). Differentiated Instruction and Implications for UDL Implementation: Effective classroom practices report. Retrieved October 2017, from

www.cast.org/udlcourse/DifferInstruct.doc

PACER Center (2015). School Accommodation and Modification Ideas for Students who Receive Special Education Services. Retrieved October, from

<http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c49a.pdf>.

PATINS Project- Promoting Achievement through Technology and Instruction for all Students. <http://www.patinsproject.com/>

Project Success – Resource center that promotes higher academic achievement for individuals with disabilities. <http://www.projectsucceedindiana.com/>

SWIFT Center - SWIFT is a national K-8 technical assistance center that builds school capacity to provide academic and behavioral support to improve outcomes for all students through equity-based inclusion.

<http://www.swiftschools.org/>

References

- **Article 7** - Title 511, Article 7. Indiana State Board of Education; 511 IAC 7
- **ESSA** (2015). Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-85.
- **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act** - Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 *et seq.*, (2004).
<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/>
- **Kansas MTSS** (2017, July). Kansas State Department of Education Kansas Multi-Tier System of Supports Integrated Framework Fact Sheet 2017. Retrieved October, 2017, from https://ksdetasn.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/resource/upload/1127/_2nd_MTSS_fact_sheet_with_resource_info.pdf.
- **Kentucky Department of Education**. (2014, February) IEP Lesson Plan and Development Handbook. Retrieved October 2017.
- **North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Exceptional Children Division**. (2016, April) Considerations for Specially Designed Instruction. Retrieved May 25, 2017, from <http://nceln.fpg.unc.edu/sites/nceln.fpg.unc.edu/files/events/SDI%20Considerations%20April%202016.pdf>