

MAKING ADAPTATIONS



Definitions

For many children/adolescents with disabilities, the key to success in any activity is having appropriate adaptations, accommodations, or modifications. Educational legislation, such as No Child Left Behind and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, require ALL students with disabilities to participate in the general education curriculum. Approximately, 86.5% of all students with disabilities are able to achieve grade level content standards with adaptations, including accommodations and modifications. Thus, it is essential that anyone involved in working with children and adolescents be familiar with adaptations, accommodations, and modifications.

- Adaptations
 - Adaptations are changes, which allow an individual to gain access, achieve results, and reap the benefits of the activity.
- Accommodations
 - Accommodations enable an individual to benefit from the activity.
 - Accommodations do not alter the standards or expectations associated with the activity.
 - Accommodations are meant to reduce or eliminate the effects of a disability
- Modifications
 - Modifications change, lower, or reduce the expectations of the activity.

General Adaptations for 4-H Leaders

The following are some easy accommodations that leaders can make for children and youth with disabilities. Many of these accommodations will benefit all 4-Hers.

- Believe that adaptations and modifications are acceptable, and that EVERY child/youth can be involved, regardless of the project, task, or activity.
- Make sure the space and location are accessible.
- Have clear and consistent expectations. Every child and adolescent wants consistency and expect there to be rules. Children and youth will live up to the expectations we hold for them. This is known as the self-fulfilling prophecy.
- Use your resources (i.e., parents, special education teachers, community members).
- **Plan adaptations prior to when they are needed.**
- Use creativity when trying to determine appropriate accommodations. Don't be afraid to think outside of the box.
- Provide volunteers (i.e., parents, community members) to help participants who have difficulty reading and writing.
- Identify the strengths and weaknesses of each 4-H member. Use his/her strengths when possible.
- Explain any disciplinary procedures to the child/youth's parent(s).

4-H
GROWING TOGETHER



General Adaptations for 4-H Leaders

General adaptations for 4-H leaders - continued

- Consider the child's/youth's level of functioning and age when determining appropriate accommodations.
- Provide encouragement and feedback frequently.
- Break long tasks into smaller steps.
- Use visual prompts for multistep activities.
- Be patient with social interactions as children/youth with disabilities frequently struggle in this area.
- Set realistic goals. Don't be afraid to ask the child or youth and/or his/her parents what a reasonable goal might be in a particular area.
- Praise both effort and accomplishment. Provide feedback (both positive and constructive) during the activity. The process is just as important as the final product.
- Encourage the child/youth to underline and/or highlight the most important words or phrases in any written material.
- Tape record project manuals for child and youth with reading disabilities.
- Do not overemphasize competition.
- Accentuate the positive in everything the child/youth does.
- Encourage independence, self-monitoring, problem-solving, and risk-taking.
- Avoid using complex words or sentences.
- Minimize distractions.
- Try to anticipate areas of difficulty.

"I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can do."

Helen Keller

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