

FAQ Sheet

IEP Ideas

What are some ideas for Specially Designed Instruction that I can include in an Individualized Education Program?

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) is anything specific and unique to your child, determined by their areas of need, to help them access their education. It is based on the evaluations done on your child. SDIs are used to help your child achieve the goals listed in the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Most SDIs should be applied across all environments, not in just one class or classroom. They are adaptations or modifications to the regular curriculum. SDIs are in place to help your child reach his or her IEP goals and objectives. The lists below will give you a starting point for brainstorming about your child's IEP.

Visual/Audio Assistance

- Visual charts
- Visual schedules
- Visual cues in locker, lunch box, or on desk
- Written schedules on locker, lunch box
- Visual cues in hallways to guide child to next classroom or cafeteria
- Use of FM headsets to either have blocking out music, or FM transmission of teacher speaking,
- Special sign or signal between teacher and student to notify student of something
- Graphic organizers
- Choice cards
- Emotion Cards
- Ear plugs or headphones
- Adaptive equipment such as pens, pencils, calculators, fidgety toys, large print books, audio, etc.
- Watch videos of social stories/interactions and ask them to explain
- Visual schedule on blackboard
- Alarms as reminders on phone, wristwatch, etc.
- Picture calendar or schedule
- Provide audio recordings
- Provide video/audio recordings
- Voice recognition software
- Remind student to wear glasses/hearing aids



- Token board
- Pencil grips and slant boards
- High contrast materials, limited visual clutter
- Reward charts
- To-do lists
- Show example of completed projects

Test/Homework Assistance

- Extra time to complete the work or reading given
- A quiet area to complete the work or take a test
- Having someone read the material to them
- Having someone read a test to them
- Minimal use of open ended statements or questions
- Allow 5-10 second (whatever the child needs) processing time when a request is made
- Chunk down verbal instructions
- Use only 1 question or instruction task at a time if the child cannot do 2-3 part questions
- Homework assignments chunked down by teacher to define each task
- Breaking down tests into segments
- Alternatives for completing assignments (typed instead of written, or verbal)
- Clear, concise instructions that are at the child's ability
- Provide notes, outlines or organizers with key concepts or terms highlighted
- Mnemonics
- Explain metaphors and double meanings
- Limit oral questions to the number that the child can manage
- Frequent test breaks with opportunities to move
- Testing in a study carrel
- Testing in the morning only
- Masking test items so only single questions are visible
- Allow use of preferred writing implement
- Test format to tap "recognition memory" such as matching or multiple choice rather than fill in the blank without a word bank
- Use of a scribe or oral testing to open ended or essay formats
- Provide a study guide
- Extra set of text books (1 for home, 1 for school)
- Permission to hand in all assignments late, as pre-determined
- Modify assignments to only include essential content
- Access to resource room or learning support room
- Spelling dictionary, or spell checker
- Longer assignments broken down and scheduled out in pictures or words

Structuring the Student's Environment at School

- A quiet area to complete the work or take a test
- "Preferential Seating", means sitting near the front, or away from distraction or in their area of preference.
- Preferential seating for hearing/audio
- Preferential seating away from distractions, windows, doors, speakers
- Early dismissal from class to get to locker and to next class
- "Hot pass" or "cool off card", which is a card the student gets and they can leave class, flash the hot pass to the teacher, and go to the office, guidance counselor, nurse (designated ahead of time) to cool off, if they feel a negative behavior coming on (usually happens after peer to peer interactions such as bullying)
- Personal time outs to regroup and prepare for transition
- Time warnings and increased transition time
- Do not use sarcasm or inferences when communicating with student
- Adapted lunch setting to reduce sensory stressors
- Adapted recess with adult lead activities to increase peer interactions
- Recess and group activities to be designed with IEP goals in mind
- Monthly, weekly or bi-weekly phone or in person conferences with parents (progress monitoring)
- Have child write down verbal questions to aide in processing
- Advance notice of transitions
- Speak slower
- Use literal language
- Give sensory breaks- have the child carry down attendance sheets or just a few envelopes to the office to allow for movement
- Timed bathroom breaks
- Encourage but do not force eye contact; forcing eye contact may break train of thought
- Awareness of sensory issues- smells, sounds, lighting; adjust as appropriate
- Set up opportunities for child to self advocate
- Keep days and activities structured
- Buddy system for unstructured times
- Peer to peer tutoring as appropriate
- Structured social skills groups
- Role play
- Social stories
- Yoga, meditation, relaxation techniques
- Education sessions for peers to help them understand disability
- Pre-teaching information, then post-teaching afterwards
- Structured seating arrangements

- Activity based learning
- Provide direct feedback in appropriate settings
- Cooperative games rather than win/lose
- Facilitated socialization at recess, lunch, breaks
- Role playing-both with successful and undesired outcomes (i.e- troubleshooting)
- Small group instruction
- Provide facilitated experiences
- AM/PM check in with preferred staff person
- Use of prompt hierarchy
- Incorporate child's personal interests into activities whenever possible
- Journal
- Frequent reinforcement for desired/positive behaviors
- When appropriate and will not cause a distraction- guide student through real life situations
- Provide with calming strategies
- Use of first _____, then _____.
- Peer modeling-appropriate play, interaction
- Scheduled sensory breaks
- Task strip with preferred activity at the end
- Intersperse preferred and non-preferred tasks
- Develop a sensory diet
- Agenda check list for check-ins with preferred staff member
- Intersperse easy and difficult demands on a 80/20 basis (and work to increase)
- Pair with student prior to learning a new task
- Give the opportunity for practice
- Identify and limit distractions

Information courtesy of A Day in Your Shoes:

<http://adayinourshoes.com/printable-list-of-strategies-sdis-for-your-iep-meeting/>

This Frequently Asked Questions Sheet from the Autism Services, Education, Resources, and Training Collaborative (ASERT) was created to address one of the questions our Resource Specialists at the ASERT Statewide Resource Center receive most often. If you have additional questions, please contact ASERT at 877-231-4244 or info@PAautism.org.