

Common Modifications, Adaptations, and Supports

Each child is an individual, and modifications, adaptations, accommodations, and supports should be designed with a single child in mind. However, researchers from the Early Childhood Research Institute on Inclusion (ECRII) have found that many changes can be grouped into categories of modifications. Several of these categories are used in various child care programs that include children with disabilities or special needs.¹¹ The most common categories and brief descriptions are included below. More detailed illustrations and stories are in chapter 5, “Examples of Inclusive Child Care Strategies.”

1 STRATEGY Environmental Support

Alter the physical, social, or temporal environment to promote participation, engagement, and learning.

Examples:

- Use a photo, picture, or object to signal the next activity.
- Make boundaries for activities (e.g., mark sections of the floor with tape, provide a tray or box lid for art activities).
- Free surfaces of bumps or smooth them with “lips” and ramps.

(See detailed story on page 34)

2 STRATEGY Materials Adaptation

Modify materials to promote independence.

Examples:

- Add knobs to wooden puzzles.
- Use fabric self-adhesive closures on dress-up clothes.
- Place “no-slip” placemats under dishes when children eat or serve themselves.

(See detailed story on page 38)



Alter the physical, social, or temporal environment to promote participation, engagement, and learning.

Replace materials that may be difficult to use with ones that are simpler and can serve the same function

3 STRATEGY **Activity Simplification**

Simplify a complicated task by breaking it into smaller parts or reducing the number of steps.

Examples:

- Give a child materials for a task one piece at a time.
- Prepare materials for easier use (e.g., peel the background off stickers and bend them so they lift off easily).
- Replace materials that may be difficult to use with ones that are simpler and can serve the same function (e.g., use a squeeze bottle instead of a pump dispenser).

(See detailed story on page 40)

4 STRATEGY **Child Preferences**

Capitalize on a child's favorite activities.



Examples:

- Observe a child's interests and then provide additional materials or toys that match them.
- Use the child's preferred activities, such as music, to support efforts to learn other skills.
- Find ways to build on a child's preferred activities when introducing new ideas.

(See detailed story on page 42)

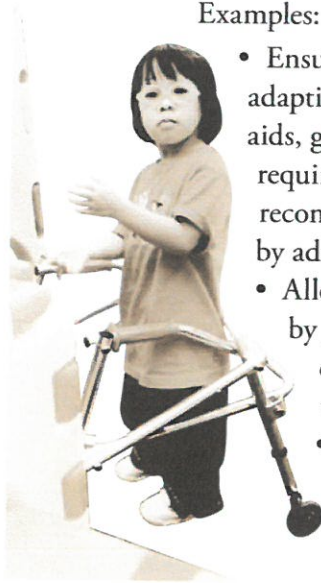


STRATEGY

Special Equipment

Use adaptive devices to facilitate participation.

Examples:



- Ensure that providers know the proper use of adaptive or medical equipment, such as hearing aids, glasses, or nebulizers (following licensing requirements and pediatrician or specialist recommendations) and the need for vigilance by adults when this equipment is present.
- Allow all children to participate in activities by providing appropriate seating or other equipment, such as a plastic chair near the water table for a child who uses a wheelchair.
- Use picture cards or electronic switch-activated speaking devices for children who cannot speak, allowing them to communicate their choices.

(See detailed story on page 44)



STRATEGY

Adult Support

Employ direct adult intervention to support a child's efforts.

Examples:

- Assign a primary caregiver to a child so that the assigned adult is able to know the unique needs of the child and ways to support him/her.
- Provide direct instruction or guidance to a child while he/she is learning or practicing tasks.
- Learn specific ways of interacting or communicating with a child, such as sign language.



(See detailed stories on pages 46 and 49)

Provide direct instruction or guidance to a child while he/she is learning or practicing tasks.

Pair a child with a certain disability with a child who does not have that disability during certain activities, ensuring that the child with special needs is sometimes the helper and not always the one being helped.

7 STRATEGY Peer Support

Use classmates as models to help children learn.



Examples:

- Pair a child with a certain disability with a child who does not have that disability during certain activities, such as eating, class chores, and so on, ensuring that the child with special needs is sometimes the helper and not always the one being helped.
- Facilitate children's interactions and observations of one another in small groups.
- Teach children specific ways to engage and interact with a child with special needs.

(See detailed story on page 52)

8 STRATEGY Invisible Support

Arrange naturally occurring events to assist inclusion.

Examples:

- Stock the dress-up center or kitchen corner with sufficient items so more children can participate in a popular activity without competition.
- Assign roles during children's play, such as having a child with limited mobility be in charge of "pumping gas" as the children riding bikes go by.
- Comment on children's play in ways that encourage further interaction.

(See detailed story on page 54)