



The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 solidified the mandate for specially designed instruction (SDI) as part of a student’s right to a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). According to IDEA Sec. 300.39 (2004), special education, “(s)pecial education means specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including – (i) Instruction conducted in the classroom...; and (ii) Instruction in physical education.” Within this section of the law, specially designed instruction is defined as “...adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child under this part, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction – (i) To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability; and (ii) To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children” (IDEA, 2004).

Reference-
[Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 \(2004\)](#)

Ready

Get ready to provide students with disabilities the most effective, appropriate, and legally required educational supports through specially designed instruction in all educational settings. While SDI can be most easily applied to a resource or self-contained classroom, co-taught classrooms or push-in programs can also readily employ SDI to meet the needs of students. Special education teachers are uniquely qualified to supplement general education curriculum with strategies, interventions, modifications, and adaptations. Working in tandem, general education and special education teachers can ensure students with disabilities are receiving their legally protected right to an accessible education.

SET

Set SDI into motion by anticipating and planning for its use. Since SDI directly addresses goals in the student's IEP, it should not be an afterthought or a reaction to a situation. Since teachers know the student, it can instead be something that is well thought out, planned for, and delivered in the least restrictive environment. The flexibility of how, when, and where the instruction is provided allows for teacher creativity and individualization that will benefit the student in a way that the general instruction cannot. Communication across all professionals who are working with a specific student is vital for ensuring that, in totality, the student is receiving the appropriate type and amount of instruction necessary for success.

GO

When teaching students with disabilities, it is imperative to have a clear understanding of how to meet their needs. With a stronger knowledge base in specially designed instruction you will be better equipped to address the unique learning challenges of your students. The following links will help define and clarify SDI, as well as give examples and strategies for you to use.

Links and Sources for More Information

- [What is “Special” About Special Education?](#) This document was developed to clarify the relationship between Specially Designed Instruction, Core Instruction, and Interventions within a multi-tiered system of supports for educators developing, improving, and maintaining systems of support for all students.
- This article identifies features, supports, and examples of [Specially Designed Instruction](#)
- This information sheet from ASERT provides information on common specially designed instruction and accommodations that can be included in a student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). [List of IEP Accommodations and Specially Designed Instructions](#)
- [Fact sheet on SDI](#)
- [Technical Assistance Document](#) about SDI from the Florida Dept. of Education
- [Considerations for SDI](#) from the Kansas State Dept. of Education

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