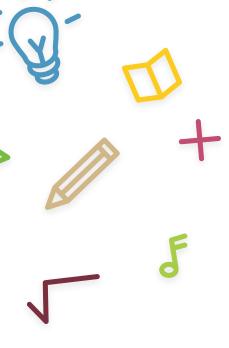# Specially Designed Instruction

What is Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines SDI as "adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child, the content, methodology or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of the child that result from the child's disability; and 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." (Section 300.39 of Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations)

SDI is the unique set of supports determined for a student with a disability by the Individual Education Plan (IEP) team, and is provided to make progress in the general curriculum. Supports are infused throughout the student's school day as described in the IEP. Teachers certified in exceptional student education (ESE) and certified or licensed related service providers have the primary responsibility, in collaboration with general education teachers, to plan, implement and monitor SDI.

SDI may be provided across multiple settings. The location of services is an IEP team decision for each student with a disability. Students with disabilities are always considered general education students first, who receive additional supports via specially designed instruction based on a continuum of services within a multi-tiered system of student supports.

Specially Designed Instruction is:

An addition to Tier 1 instruction (supplemental)	**NOT**	A replacement for Tier 1 instruction (supplanted)
A service	**NOT**	A place
What a teacher provides	**NOT**	What a child does
Based on specific skills a student needs in order to progress in the general curriculum	**NOT**	A restatement of the standards being taught to all students
Unique instruction written into the IEP that is provided to allow progress toward annual goals	**NOT**	A commercial remediation program used for all students
Specific to the child's needs	**NOT**	A model or schedule
Provided to close the performance gap compared to peers without disabilities	**NOT**	An excuse for setting low expectations or teaching below grade level
Teaching specific skills	**NOT**	Providing accommodations or modifications only

SDI Categories and Examples

The design and delivery of SDI is the core of exceptional student education for students with disabilities, addressing their unique academic, behavioral and functional needs by adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction. SDI can be grouped into three categories, as defined below, and some examples of SDI are provided.

1. Learning Strategies

A learning strategy is a way of organizing and using skills in order to learn content more effectively.

3. Instructional Programs

Instructional programs combine a curriculum component and a teaching procedure. Research-based instructional programs are selected by districts and schools according to data and present level statements in students' IEPs.

2. Increased Instructional Intensity

Instructional Strategies
(task analysis, modeling, more practice, multi-sensory teaching, smaller groups)

Specialized Techniques
(chaining, social stories, behavioral contracts)

Integrated Practices
(choral responding, turn-n-talk, cooperative learning, technology-based applications)

Learning Strategy for Math Word Problems:
Search, Translate, Answer and Review (STAR)

- Student **Searches** (reads) the problem carefully.
- Student applies techniques to **Translate** the word problem to a number sentence (e.g. manipulatives, visual representation).
- Student **Answers** (solves) the problem.
- Student **Reviews** the answer to the problem.

https://www.interventioncentral.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/pdfs_blog/MATH_STAR_mnemonic.pdf

Learning Strategy for Writing:
Capitalize, Overview, Punctuate, Spell (COPS)

- Have I **Capitalized** the first word of sentences and proper names?
- How is the **Overall** appearance?
- Have I put in commas and end **Punctuation**?
- Have I **Spelled** all words correctly?

https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/508_WWCPG_SecondaryWriting_122719.pdf

Learning Strategy for Reading Comprehension:
Predict, Organize, Search, Summarize, Evaluate (POSSE)

- **Predict** ideas before reading.
- **Organize** predictions during reading - student led, in groups.
- **Search** for the structure.
- **Summarize** the main ideas.
- **Evaluate** your understanding.

Englert, C. S. & Mariage, T. V. (1991)
https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/docs/practiceguide/adlit_pg_082608.pdf

Specialized Technique for Sequencing:
Chaining

- The teacher teaches the child the first or last step in the chain.
- When this step is learned, the teacher adds the second (forward chaining) or second-to-last step (backward chaining).
- The child practices this step in the routine, attaching it to the prior step.
- The third step is taught in conjunction with the previous steps once the child is able to demonstrate them.
- Additional steps are taught and connected, as needed.

https://asatonline.org/for-parents/learn-more-about-specific-treatments/applied-behavior-analysis-aba/aba-techniques/behavior-chaining/