

*The DCDD Board members prepare briefs about topics of interest for our members. As a DCDD member, you are receiving this brief on the topic of resources for professionals who work with students who have communication disorders and/or who are deaf or hard of hearing. We appreciate your continued membership with DCDD! Please feel free to discuss this article on DCDD [Linkedin](#) or [Twitter](#).*

## **PREPARING FOR THE NEXT ACADEMIC YEAR – RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)**

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) is the outcome of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and is the very document that ensures an equal education to students with exceptional learning needs. For most parents and practitioners, spring and fall are the academic seasons when the IEP team gathers to fulfill the letter of the law by stating the current learning levels of their student and the impact of their disability, the goals and objectives for the next annual plan and the appropriate placement and accommodations to assure student success.

For students who are deaf or hard of hearing (d/hh), the discussion about appropriate placement and accommodations lead directly the question, “how can we (the team) provide equal access to opportunities for academic and social growth?”

Here are some reminders for the IEP team:

If you need a guide that directly informs the team about preparing an IEP specific to the needs of a student who is D/HH – see the information [in “Language & Communication Focused IEPs for Learners who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing”](#)

If the parent on the team is interested in a parent developed webinar series that explains the guidance of the document above – see the [Parent Friendly Webinar Series](#) on the “Language & Communication Focused IEP for Learners who are D/HH. The accommodation of Closed Captioning and American Sign Language Interpreter services are secured under three laws Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). [Resources for justification](#) for adding CC and ASL to the IEP can be found through the National Association of the Deaf.

Testing Accommodations for High Stakes testing include a review of the five major conditions.

- (1) **Effectiveness**: an accommodation must be effective in making an assessment more accessible to the recipients;
- (2) **Validity**: an accommodation should not alter the focal construct, i.e., the outcomes of accommodated and non-accommodated assessments should be comparable. Does not change the construct that is being assessed\*
- (3) **Differential Impact**: an accommodation should be sensitive to student’s background characteristics, and their academic standing, i.e., one size may not fit all.
- (4) **Relevance**: an accommodation should be appropriate for the recipients, common to the instruction provided.
- (5) **Feasibility**: an accommodation must be logistically feasible to implement in the assessment setting. [Abedi, J. (2012). Validity issues in designing accommodations. In:

Fulcher, G. and Davidson, F. *The Routledge Handbook of Language Testing in a Nutshell*.  
Florence, KY: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.]

Consider the annual summative assessments and the other testing mandates for your student. Assure that their testing accommodation needs are listed in the IEP. (Ex. An ASL provider can provide access during testing only if the IEP documents that need.)

Extended School Year (ESY) opportunities must be listed on the IEP by the team in order to submit for services during the annual cycle of the plan. Consider the needs of the student now. Might the student need summer academic or social opportunities? (Ex. ASL Camp, Transition-Skills summer programming, additional academic support during the summer school sessions)

These are but a few reminders of the resources available to the IEP team members as they prepare for the year ahead. It is the team members' responsibility to document the needs and to implement the plan in order to support successful academic and social growth for the students.

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