

Disability Accommodations

A Guide for Students in
Minnesota Adult Education



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Welcome

This guide talks about:

- What is a disability?
- What are accommodations?
- How do I get accommodations?
- Where can I go for help?

There are different rules about accommodations for high school equivalency tests (GED and HiSET). To learn about accommodations for these tests, visit the [GED website](#), [HiSET website](#), or [PANDA](#).

What Is a Disability?

“A disability:

- Changes how you do some things, like: seeing, eating, sleeping, learning, reading, working, or breathing.
- Makes it harder to do one or more of these things.
- Or: makes it impossible to do one or more of these things.”

The Americans with Disabilities Act is a law protecting people with disabilities. We call this law the **ADA**. The ADA protects us at work, in public places, and in adult education.

Quotation: ASAN's [*A Self-Advocate's Guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act*](#)

Some examples of people the ADA can protect are:

- People who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- People who are blind or have low vision.
- People who use wheelchairs or canes.
- People who have cancer, diabetes, or HIV.
- People who have dyslexia, dyscalculia, or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- People who have depression, anxiety, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

You can learn more about the ADA in [*A Self-Advocate's Guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act*](#) by the Autistic Self-Advocacy Network.

What Are Accommodations?

“**Accommodations** are changes that make things easier for people with disabilities.” Accommodations help people with disabilities get the same education as everyone else.

Some examples of accommodations are:

- Extra time on assignments or tests.
- Large print.
- Amplifiers: a tool that makes speech louder.
- Text-to-speech: a tool that reads text out loud.

You can find more examples on these websites:

- [Common Classroom Accommodations.](#)
- [A to Z of Disabilities and Accommodations.](#)

Quotation: ASAN's [*A Self-Advocate's Guide to the Americans with Disabilities Act*](#)

What Are Reasonable Accommodations?

There are many kinds of accommodations. You can't get every accommodation in every situation.

Accommodations must be **reasonable**.

Reasonable means that your school:

1. Has the time and money to do it, and
2. Can do it without changing what class is like for the teacher and all the other students too much.

For example, one-on-one lessons with a teacher are not a reasonable accommodation in adult education classes. One-on-one lessons are too much change. They are too different from what classes are usually like.

Right to Accommodations

The ADA gives people with disabilities a legal right to reasonable accommodations in many places, like:

- At work.
- At adult education programs.
- At other schools, like technical college and university.

To have a legal right to accommodations in adult education, you need documentation. You can learn about documentation on page 9.

What Is Documentation?

Documentation is proof that you have a disability and need accommodations. You usually need documentation to get accommodations.

One kind of documentation is a letter from your doctor, psychiatrist, or therapist. It says:


1. What disability you have.
2. How your disability affects you.
3. What kind of accommodations you need.



To get documentation:

- Tell your doctor about problems at school.
- Talk to your doctor about what accommodations can help.
- Ask your doctor to write a letter to your school.

Another kind of documentation is an IEP or 504 Plan. IEPs and 504 Plans are from American K-12 schools. You might have one if you got accommodations in an American K-12 school.

	Resident District: _____	IEP Meeting Date: ____/____/____	INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP)
	Date of last Comprehensive Evaluation: _____		
12/10			
IDENTIFYING INFORMATION			
Child's Name: _____	Parent/Guardian Name(s): _____		
MARSS ID #: _____	_____		
Gender: <input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> F	Relationship to child: _____		
Date of Birth: ____/____/____	Address: _____		
School: _____	_____		
Grade: _____	Phone (day/evening): ____/____		
Providing District (Name/Number): _____	Phone (cell): _____		
School Address (provide mailing address and street address if different): _____	Fax: _____		
_____	Email: _____		
Child's Primary Disability Category:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Autism Spectrum Disorders <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf-Blind <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf and Hard of Hearing <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental Cognitive Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental Delay <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional or Behavioral Disorders		<input type="checkbox"/> Other Health Disabilities <input type="checkbox"/> Physically Impaired <input type="checkbox"/> Severely Multiply Impaired <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Learning Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Speech or Language Impairments <input type="checkbox"/> Visually Impaired <input type="checkbox"/> Traumatic Brain Injury	
Home Primary Language: _____	Interpreter required for Service Delivery? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
Child's Primary Language: _____	Interpreter required for Due Process? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		

Your school can look at your old IEP and 504 Plan to see what accommodations you got before. This might be enough to get accommodations again.

If you can't get documentation, don't worry. There is more information about what to do on page 16.

How Do I Ask for Accommodations?

Tell someone at school that you want to ask for accommodations. You can tell your teacher or someone else. Bring your documentation with you.

You might have to give some **details** about your disability. If you don't say what your disability is and how it affects you, your school doesn't have to give accommodations.

Your school has to keep your disability confidential. **Confidential** means that your school can't tell other people who don't need to know.

After you get accommodations, **use** them. If you don't use them, your school doesn't have to keep giving them.

To ask for accommodations, you can say:



- **My disability is...**
- **My disability makes it hard for me to...**
- **I need accommodations to help me...**
- **The accommodations I'm requesting are...**

For example:

- My disability is ADHD.
- My disability makes it hard for me to remember instructions.
- I need accommodations to help me follow instructions.
- The accommodations I'm requesting are written instructions for classroom activities.

If your school thinks an accommodation isn't reasonable, it might offer a different one instead.

If you think the accommodation your school offers won't work, you can say:



- **That won't work because...**
- **My documentation says that my disability...**
- **It's important that my accommodations help...**

For example:

- That won't work because I would still have to remember verbal instructions for a long time.
- My documentation says that my disability makes it hard for me to remember what I hear.
- It's important that my accommodations help me remember instructions.

What If I Can't Get Documentation?

If you can't get documentation, there are still many things your school can do to help. You don't need documentation for small changes if your teacher agrees.

If you can't get documentation:

- Think about what the problem is. What isn't working for you?
- Think about what changes can help with the problem. What do you need so you can learn?
- Talk to your teacher. Your teacher will have ideas about how to help.

For example:

- If it is too hard to see the board or the textbook...
 - Sit at the front of the room.
 - Wear reading glasses.
 - Use a magnifier.
- If it is too noisy to focus...
 - Take a break and go somewhere quiet.
 - Wear earplugs or headphones.



For more ideas about how to help, you and your teacher can contact Minnesota Adult Education Physical and Nonapparent Disability Assistance at 763-504-4095 or panda@rdale.org.

Helpful Contact Information

For help finding a school:

Adult Literacy Hotline

Call: 800-222-1990

Website: hotline.mnabe.org



If an adult education program has questions about disabilities and accommodations:

PANDA

Call: 763-504-4095

Website: pandamn.org



For other help for people with disabilities:

DisabilityHUB

Call: 866-333-2466

Website: disabilityhubmn.org



For questions about your legal rights:

Minnesota Disability Law Center

Call: 800-292-4150

Website: mylegalaid.org

