The purpose of this document is to help define and increase the capacity for understanding specially-designed instruction as it relates to students with disabilities in Indiana. This document serves as guidance for Individualized Education Plan (IEP) teams, administrators, educators, and practitioners as they determine the need for, plan, and implement this approach to instruction for students with disabilities who require IEP services.

What is Specially-Designed Instruction (SDI)?

SDI can be generally described as adapting content, methods, and/or instructional delivery to address the unique needs of a student (511 IAC 7-32-88). Students who receive special education services must receive SDI in order to be in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Indiana Article 7, but more importantly, because the design and delivery of instruction is what will enable students achieve the highest outcomes.

SDI describes the individualized instruction provided to a student receiving special education services. In other words, “What does a student need that special education can provide?”

What are Supplementary Aids and Services (SAS)?

Aligned with SDI, SAS and other supports that are provided in (1) general education classes; (2) other education-related settings; and (3) extracurricular and nonacademic settings enable students with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate in accordance with 511 Indiana Administrative Code (IAC) 7-42-10.
## Specially-Designed Instruction

**SDI IS**

- In addition to core instruction (supplemental)
- A service or support
- What an educator/staff/school personnel does
- Teaching specific skills identified as learning barriers
- Important features of a program and/or unique instruction
- Specific to the student (individualized)
- Maintaining high expectations and supporting students in the general education setting
- Promoting independence
- Presumed competence

**SDI IS NOT**

- In place of core instruction (supplant)
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) placement
- What a student does
- A restatement of the academic content standards being taught
- Naming a specific program that replaces a special education service
- Driven by programs or schedules
- Lowering expectations and/or removing students from the general education setting
- Promoting dependence
- Presumed incompetence

---

[www.in.gov/doe/students/special-education](http://www.in.gov/doe/students/special-education)
Many SAS are supported through SDI. For example, in order for a student to access and use a supplementary aid independently, the student will need explicit instruction (SDI) in the use of the specific strategy or device. The intent is to provide levels of support until the student can access a supplementary aid independently (KDOE, 2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SDI Instructional Practices the Teacher Uses</th>
<th>SAS Aids or Services the Student Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Guided practice of listening strategies</td>
<td>● Visual Prompts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Scaffold instruction, visual, written, verbal, physical, picture prompts, and cues</td>
<td>● Visual, written, verbal, physical, picture prompts, and cues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Modeling</td>
<td>● Self-monitoring checklists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Instruction of calming strategies</td>
<td>● Calming strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Grapho-phonics strategies (visual/auditory) including letter and sound knowledge, phonemic awareness, and decoding</td>
<td>● Graphic organizers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Explicit instruction on how to use a graphic organizer</td>
<td>● Prompting and cueing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Direct instruction and support for specialized software and equipment</td>
<td>● Recorded materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Explicit instruction of the writing process, including pre-reading activities, writing, revising, editing, and publishing</td>
<td>● Extended time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Multi-sensory teaching strategies</td>
<td>● Study guides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Direct instruction in computation and reasoning strategies</td>
<td>● Magnifier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Copy of notes written on the board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Editing checklists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Cue cards with problem-solving strategies, definitions, examples, models, process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Modified tests/assignments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Graph paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Calculator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Assistive technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following strategies should be tailored to the individual needs of the student. SDI strategies provided are not an exhaustive or limited list.

### Academic
- Phonemic awareness strategies, multi-sensory teaching strategies, modeling, instruction in the use of organizers, small group instruction, direct instruction, guided practice, word problem strategies

### Communication
- Auditory discrimination training, environmental prompts, social scripts, mirror training, guided responding, video self-modeling, system of least prompts, direct instruction, verbal/guided repetition, computer assisted instruction

### Physical (OT/PT)
- Hand over hand guidance, modeling, one-on-one instruction, instruction in the use of equipment or assistive technology, direct instruction, and support

### Behavior
- Explicit social instructional skill instruction, relaxation strategies, de-escalation strategies, direct teaching of replacement behaviors

### Vocational
- Task analysis, differential reinforcement, direct instruction, verbal prompts/cues, graduated guidance, self-monitoring, corrective feedback/reteaching
Is it necessary for the special education teacher to provide SDI for the special education student, or can it be provided by the general education teacher?

**SDI is a shared responsibility under IDEA.**

- A special education teacher has expertise in the area of SDI.
- A general education teacher has expertise in the curriculum.
- A special education teacher and a general education teacher work collaboratively to plan, design, and implement SDI for students.

Can SDI be provided by a paraprofessional? What are paraprofessionals able to do involving SDI?

Paraprofessionals serve an important “supportive” role in providing SDI. A paraprofessional acts under the direct guidance and supervision of a special education teacher or credentialed related service personnel.

**The following conditions must be in place:**

- The general and/or special education teacher designs and delivers core instruction and SDI for the student.
- Adequate training is provided to the paraprofessional to support SDI (e.g., reinforcement/review of skills or concepts, data collection).
- On-going communication occurs between the paraprofessional and the special education teacher or related service personnel.

**For example, paraprofessionals may provide the following:**

- Facilitate the use of assistive technology.
- Lead a review of the concepts
- Monitor student academic progress and/or behavior.

A paraprofessional may not:

- Replace the special education teacher.
- Plan, deliver, or lead initial instruction.
What does SDI look like for a student receiving consultation services?

A special education teacher and a general education teacher work collaboratively to plan, design, and implement specially designed instruction for students whom they share responsibility. Consultation services may include collaboration on:

- The academic or behavioral needs of a student;
- Specific instructional strategies or supports;
- Modes of learning/communication; and
- Accommodations and assistive technology.

Where and when is SDI delivered?

- In any setting or time, school-related activities occur
- To the maximum extent appropriate, with peers in the general education setting

How is SDI delivered?

- Intentionally, directly, and highly structured
- Through customized changes to the content, methods and/or instructional delivery based on the student’s needs


• Indiana Department of Education - https://www.in.gov/doe/students/special-education/

• Indiana IEP Resource Center - The IEPRC offers support for educators throughout Indiana to improve the IEP process in schools. https://www.indianaieprc.org/index.php


• National Implementation Resource Network (NIRN) - http://nirn.fpg.unc.edu/


• PATINS Project- Promoting Achievement through Technology and Instruction for all Students. http://www.patinsproject.com/

• SWIFT Center - SWIFT is a national K-8 technical assistance center that builds school capacity to provide academic and behavioral support to improve outcomes for all students through equity-based inclusion. http://www.swiftschools.org/

• Article 7 - Title 511, Article 7. Indiana State Board of Education; 511 IAC 7


