



What is the Statement of Special Education or SDI?

This tip sheet introduces and briefly defines what is needed for the statement of special education defined as specially designed instruction, or SDI and provides tips for implementation. To learn more, review the additional resources and check with state law for supplemental requirements. This is one of four tip sheets in a collection of the statement of services and aids in the individualized education program (IEP; [Sec. 300.320\(a\)\(4\)](#)). The [overview tip sheet](#) provides a summary of the complete statement.

What Does IDEA Say?

According to [IDEA Sec. 300.39\(b\)](#),

“(3) Specially designed instruction means 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.”

Let's Break It Down

Who delivers?

SDI is typically delivered by the special educator or related service provider but may be delivered by another educator or provider based on the needs of the child.


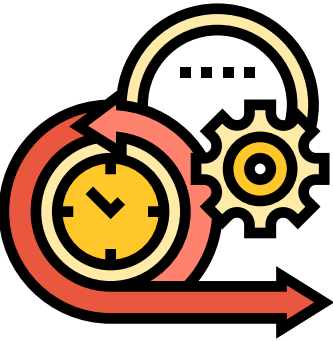

Why?

Ensure child’s access to the general curriculum so that the child can meet the educational standards.

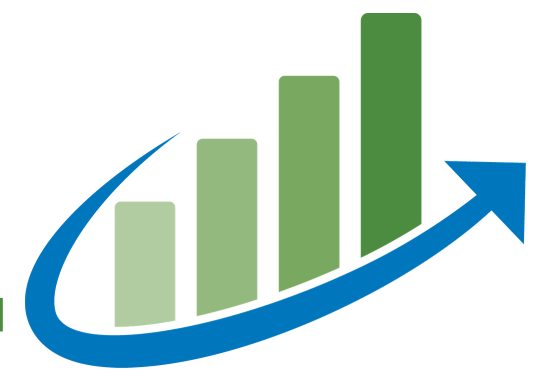
Where?

SDI is a service, not a place. SDI can be provided in any location, as long as the location is consistent with the student’s IEP and the student’s least restrictive environment.

Elements of SDI

SDI Element	What it Means	Questions to Consider
 <p>Content</p>	<p>What is taught to allow the student to access general education programming</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are adaptations needed for the content as a result of the disability? • Is the content aligned to the student’s academic and functional needs and grade-level standards? • Does the content address engagement and behavioral supports? • How can we leverage the student’s strengths and current knowledge as we identify the content that will be provided? • What is the evidence base for the proposed practices?
 <p>Methodology</p>	<p>How the instruction is delivered or the practices and approach the teacher uses to teach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a method that has proven to be more effective for this student when acquiring knowledge and skills? • Are there methods that have been ineffective for this student when acquiring knowledge and skills? • What is the evidence base for the proposed instructional strategies?
 <p>Delivery of Instruction</p>	<p>Who, where, and when the instruction is delivered</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the plan for instructional delivery, including the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Who will provide the instruction? ◦ How frequently? ◦ Where? • Does the delivery (including the group size) provide sufficient opportunities for the student to practice and receive explicit feedback? • Does the provider have the knowledge and skills to individualize and intensify instruction as needed?





Tips for Design and Implementation

- ✓ Determine SDI on an individual basis and justify based on the student's needs identified in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance statement.
- ✓ Clearly outline the SDI in the student's IEP.
- ✓ Engage students, families, and educators in discussion about instructional approaches that have and have not been successful.
- ✓ Use data throughout the development and implementation of SDI to ensure that it addresses the evolving needs of students.
- ✓ Ensure that team members understand the difference between SDI, accommodations, modifications, intervention programs, and instruction provided to all students. For example,
 - SDI is not an accommodation, but teaching the student how to use the accommodation is a form of SDI.
 - SDI is not a specific intervention program, but an intervention program may be used as part of the design of SDI.
 - SDI is not differentiated instruction or universal design for learning (UDL) that is accessible to all students, but SDI may draw on UDL practices within the instructional design to address the unique needs of the child that results from their disability.

Where Can You Learn More?



Breaking Down the DBI Process: Questions & Considerations (National Center on Intensive Intervention). SDI can be supported and implemented through data-based individualization (DBI). DBI is a research-based process for individualizing and intensifying interventions through the systematic use of assessment data, validated interventions, and research-based adaptation strategies.



High-Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities (CEEDAR Center and Council for Exceptional Children). The 22 high-leverage practices (HLPs) define activities that all special educators should be able to use in their classroom. The HLPs include strategies that can be used in the development and implementation of SDI, such as “provide scaffolded supports,” “use explicit instruction,” and “use flexible grouping.”



PROGRESS Center Website. The PROGRESS Center website includes additional information about developing high-quality IEPs and additional tip sheets in this series



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