



## GUIDELINES FOR THE INCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

The Children's Trust affirms that children and youth of all abilities should have the opportunity to participate fully in Trust-funded programming. The Children's Trust Board of Directors defines children with disabilities as:

Children who currently have a physical, emotional, developmental, behavioral, or chronic medical condition or delay. These children experience impairment in their sensory, cognitive, motor, emotional, or behavioral functioning, which requires support, ongoing intervention, or accommodation provided by others in order to participate in an age-appropriate fashion in education, social activity, or physical activity in an appropriate environment.

The Trust recognizes additional supports are often needed to serve children with disabilities. To address the needs of children and youth with disabilities, The Trust recommends these best practices for recruitment and activity delivery and also provides options for modifying outcome measures: accommodations, modifications, alternate assessments, and alternate outcomes.

### Recruitment

A high-quality program communicates to the community that it is inclusive. It promotes inclusion through its marketing materials, website, and advocacy efforts.

- On your website, brochures, and other marketing materials, use images of children both with and without disabilities. Do the same with pictures you display at your program site.
- Use “We Include All Children” on a sign by your registration desk, on your website, and on other marketing materials. When making presentations about your program, be sure to let your audience know that all children are welcome.
- Meet with teachers, counselors, and principals at the schools in the vicinity of your program site.
- When addressing families, let them know that not only are their children welcome, but that you will work with them to address any particular needs or concerns.
- Make sure those who make referrals (for example, 2-1-1, the Advocacy Network on Disabilities, Parent to Parent of Miami, and others) know that all children are welcome at your program.

### Activity Delivery

A high-quality program facilitates the participation of all children in the same activities, even if some participate in a different way. Accommodations must be individualized and based on an assessment – whether formal or informal.

- Use collateral information (review the Individual Education or 504 Accessibility Plan) to determine what accommodations may be needed and how you can best provide them.
- Ask the child's parents, and with their permission, ask teachers, therapists, and others who know the child best.
- At registration, have all parents complete the “Getting to Know Me Form,” which provides valuable information about each child's likes, dislikes, strengths, and challenges. To access the form, please go to <https://www.thechildrenstrust.org/content/Programmatic> and select “Participant Forms and Incident Reporting”, then “Optional Getting to Know Me Form”.



- Contact your All Children Together (ACT) Inclusion Specialist for assistance at <https://www.advocacynetwork.org/contact-us/>

## Participant Outcomes

All children and youth should have the opportunity to participate fully in Trust-funded programs, including the demonstration of their progress. While certain outcome measures are required by contract, The Trust recognizes that the standard formats of some measures may not meet the needs of all participants. To address the needs of children and youth with disabilities, there are three options for modifying outcome measures: **accommodation**, **modification**, or **alternate assessment**. In some cases, **alternate outcomes** may be requested.

### Accommodation & Modification<sup>1</sup>

An accommodation is a **change to how** a child learns the material and demonstrates competence, but it **does not change** the level of difficulty or what is learned and measured. For example, a child with a writing disability may be allowed to verbally respond to a written assessment. This is an **accommodation** because the response to the measure is altered but the **level of difficulty is not changed**. Accommodations do not reduce learning expectations and should be individualized to the child's needs.

Other examples:

- Testing setting adjustment, or allowing a child to take an assessment in a separate room or location
- Format alteration, such as a fewer number of items per page or larger text on the page
- Braille assessment
- Assistive devices for test administration, such as audio recording of the directions, pencil grips, securing papers to desks
- Assistive devices for child response, such as a computer or calculator

If a child is not able to respond to an accommodation, a **modification** may be used. Modifications **change** what is learned and measured allowing for the level of difficulty to be adapted to meet the needs of the child. Modifications must be reviewed and approved in advance by The Children's Trust.

Examples:

- Allowing a child to match words with a definition rather than writing definitions
- Less questions on an assessment
- Simplified text passages

NOTE: A child's disability category alone does not determine whether an accommodation or modification is needed or what type should be used. Both are based on the child's individual needs and abilities.

### Entering Outcome Data for Modifications

Outcome measure modifications must be entered in SAMIS within the Performance Measure admin point. Modifications not available for selection in SAMIS must be requested in advance for approval.



To request a modification, submit a request through The Children's Trust helpdesk at [helpdesk@thechildrenstrust.org](mailto:helpdesk@thechildrenstrust.org). The proposed modification will be reviewed by Trust staff. Upon approval, enter the modification used into the SAMIS data reporting system.

<sup>1</sup>According to the U.S. and Florida Departments of Education

## Alternate Assessment & Alternative Outcome

An **alternate assessment** is an outcome measure that is administered in place of the original outcome measure for children who are unable to respond to the original or adapted measure. An alternative assessment measures competency in the same outcome domain as contracted for other participants. For example, an alternative assessment for literacy includes using a literacy-related measure other than the Oral Reading Fluency or Maze. The Children's Trust maintains a list of pre-approved alternate assessments.

*For K-5 youth development providers serving children with disabilities who are unable to complete the required social-emotional learning (SEL) outcome measure, only the Child Trends K-5 tool completed by teachers will be administered.*

An **alternate outcome** is used when the goal, outcome, and associated activity for a child is altered or changed. Alternate outcomes are requested when a participant cannot be measured appropriately with any accommodation, modification, or alternative assessment for a contracted outcome area. In this case, a request is made to **waive** The Trust's contractual outcome requirement for an individual child, and to replace it with an outcome domain and measure that are more appropriate for the child's particular needs and abilities. For example, if serving a student with a significant intellectual disability and there is no feasible measure of literacy, then a request to waive the literacy outcome requirement for one more appropriate for the child, such as increasing skills of daily living, would be appropriate. In this case, there is an alternative requirement with associated curriculum, activities, and corresponding assessment expected.

### Requesting an Alternate Assessment or Alternate Outcome

To request an alternate assessment not currently on the pre-approved list, submit the Alternate Assessment Request Form online in Trust Central. The request should include the measurement tool being recommended and should clearly state the specific contracted outcome for which the alternate assessment will be used. This outcome must be aligned with the alternate assessment and the activity being delivered. The proposed alternate assessment will be reviewed by Trust staff, the Advocacy Network on Disabilities, and/or Project RISE, as needed. Please allow at least 10 days for the review process. To request an alternate outcome, please use the Alternate Assessment Request Form.

NOTE: Alternative assessments and alternative outcomes are only for children with significant cognitive or intellectual disabilities, according to the Every Student Succeeds Act. Almost all children and youth attending Trust youth development programs should be able to have their needs met using accommodations and modifications.

## Additional Resources

To access **pre-approved alternate assessments**, go to <https://www.thechildrenstrust.org/content/youth-development> and select "Pre-Approved Alternate Assessments".



To access the **alternate assessment request form**, go to [https://www.trustcentral.org/go/survey/form.cfm?xm\\_form\\_id=41](https://www.trustcentral.org/go/survey/form.cfm?xm_form_id=41)

To access the Advocacy Network on Disabilities live and online trainings, log into Trust Central and select “Learning Management System (LMS)”.

To find additional resources and for more information on reporting on services for children with disabilities in SAMIS, go to <https://www.thechildrenstrust.org/content/Programmatic> and click on “Children with Disabilities and other Priority Populations”.