**Classroom Compensations for Students with Writing Difficulty**

Some example classroom compensations include the following:

**Staging**

Dividing the task into smaller units and performing each subtask independently.

Some students become overwhelmed because tasks appear to be too large or have too many steps. Staging helps them focus on each subtask with greater concentration and an emphasis on quality.

**Decreasing quantity**

Allowing the student to perform fewer math problems, write fewer sentences, or write a shorter story.

Some students work so hard for each problem that they find it very difficult to perform an entire assignment or even to concentrate on the concept. Students with writing difficulties sometimes learn more from fewer problems because their concentration is more efficient. Allowing for shorter assignments encourages the student to focus on quality rather than quantity, thus often decreasing the urge to rush through.

**Increasing time**

Providing the student with more time to finish his work.

Many times a student may be capable of completing the work, but unable to do so in the same amount of time as his peers. The extra time decreases the tendency for rushing through and can increase the focus on quality.

**Copying**

Reducing or eliminating copying demands, such as copying from the chalkboard, or even copying from another paper.

Sometimes students with writing difficulties make multiple mistakes when copying information and it is important to insure that they have access to the correct information. For example, rather than having them copy the target information from the board, provide these students with a printed copy.

**Providing structure for math**

Using large graph paper or looseleaf paper turned sideways helps the student align numbers properly in multi-step math problems.

Some students benefit from having their math problems machine copied in enlarged format with additional white space, as this also prevents errors in copying the problem.

**Adjusting writing format**

Allowing each student to choose the format that is most comfortable.

Some students perform better in manuscript whereas other students perform better using cursive. Allowing work to be completed by computer word processing helps the student use staging more efficiently while also bypassing the mechanical difficulties of letter form and space.

**Spelling**

Allowing for misspelling on in-class assignments.

Hold students responsible for correct spelling on final drafts.

**CAUTION:** It is unfair and counterproductive to make a student with writing problems stay in for recess to finish work. These children need more movement time, not less.

## Hand fatigue

A common complaint of students who struggle to write is that their hand gets tired when writing. This can be due to a variety of factors. Some of the most common factors are inappropriate grip, a very tight pencil grip, or inefficient writing posture. There are many efficient grippers that can be used with the pencil or pen to enhance the efficiency of the students grasp on the pencil. One example, the large Pencil Grip, is ergonomically developed to work with the natural physiology of the hand to gently place fingers in the proper position for gripping.

Students can be helped to decrease hand fatigue by performing warm-up activities before writing in the middle of the task. Such activities help the student manipulate and relax muscles in the writing hand. Some examples include:

* Rubbing palms of hands together
* Shaking hands slightly though firmly
* Clasping hands together and stretching upwards

For older students who need to take a large number of notes during a class, dividing their paper in half and writing on only one half the time helps reduce the drag of the writing instrument across the paper. This too will reduce writing fatigue.

**Feel free to email me with any questions at any time: sbuhnerkempe@therakids.org**