

Accessible Educational Materials for Parents and Families

Schools use a considerable amount of print-based instructional materials to deliver content. Many students, however, cannot access content that requires them to interact with print-based materials. Students who struggle to read may have physical, sensory, cognitive, or learning differences and may need accessible educational materials (AEM) to access the general education curriculum.

What are accessible educational materials?

Accessible educational materials are print and technology-based educational materials, including printed and electronic textbooks and related core materials, that are designed or converted in a way that makes them accessible across the widest range of student variability regardless of format (print, digital, graphical, audio, and video).

How would I know if my child needs AEM?

Children may need AEM if they:

- struggle to read and comprehend materials in school;
- take too long to read and comprehend homework; and
- are not able to read grade-level material across different environments.



Is my child eligible for AEM?

Children may be eligible for AEM if they:

- struggle with reading and participating in educational activities involving text-based materials; and
- have (a) blindness or visual impairments, (b) physical impairments, and/or (c) specific learning disabilities in reading or dyslexia or other disabilities that affect the ability to read standard print or use standard materials.

How can my child receive AEM?

Parents who believe their children will benefit from AEM can talk to their child's teachers or case manager, and/or discuss it at a planning and placement team (PPT) meeting. You can also learn about AEM from the school's leadership team or in the reference material below.

Where can my child get AEM?

Once the PPT concludes that your child needs AEM, the school will provide it. The school may also provide some assistive technology matched to your child's abilities if it is needed to access the materials. For example, if the PPT decides that your child needs audio or digital text, the school may need to provide the technology to access the content, such as through an MP3 player, tablet, or computer.

How can AEM help my child?

AEM can assist children and improve access to text-based academic and non-academic activities, such as (a) allowing them to participate in grade-level activities, (b) increasing opportunities for meaningful interaction with texts, and (c) increasing independence in a variety of environments (home, school, and community) and tasks (for example, classwork, homework, cooking by following a recipe, grocery shopping, and reading a novel or newspaper).

What can be done to support my child?

As a parent, you can (a) learn more about AEM and how it can support your child's participation and progress, (b) encourage your child to use the materials that have been provided by the school at home, and (c) learn about using the materials and the technology to support your child at home.

Where can I find resources?

Connecticut State Department of Education website:

- [Determining the Need for AEM and Acquiring Appropriate Resources](#)
- [Topic Brief: Accessible Educational Materials and the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard/National Instructional Materials Access Center](#)
- [Connecticut Assistive Technology Guidelines](#)
- [National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standards \(NIMAS\)/National Instructional Materials Access Center \(NIMAC\)](#)

[State Education Resource Center's \(SERC\) AEM page](#)

[Accessible Instructional Materials: Simply Said](#) (video)

[National Center on Accessible Educational Materials](#)

Contact:

E-mail ctaim@ctserc.org for more information on accessible educational materials.



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