

AIM: The Key to Learning for Jacob

Jacob has dyslexia and didn't think he was "college material." After he and his family contacted PACER's Simon Technology Center and learned about accessible instructional materials, that thought changed dramatically.

Jacob wasn't able to use printed textbooks and school materials to learn, but digital text that reads aloud and provides the same information was his key to education.

Knowing that he could access the same material in a different format gave Jacob a new outlook on life. After training on a scan-and-read program, he now feels hopeful about pursuing college.



About the Simon Technology Center

The Simon Technology Center, a project of PACER, is dedicated to making the benefits of technology more accessible to children and adults with disabilities, through a collaborative effort involving parents, professionals, and consumers.

About PACER Center

PACER Center is a national nonprofit organization that serves families of children and young adults with any disability.



PACER Center

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*Does your child
struggle with reading?*

**Learn how accessible
instructional materials
(AIM) may help**



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What are Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM)?

Many materials used by students in the classroom are print-based, such as textbooks and handouts. Some students with disabilities have difficulty reading these materials. To bridge this gap, accessible instructional materials provide the same information found in textbooks or handouts in a format that students with disabilities can use more easily.

AIM Formats:

- Braille is a tactile system used by people with vision impairments and can be a hard copy braille or a digital file.
- Large print is a printed format with enlarged text.
- Audio formats provide content as speech that a student can listen to and understand.
- Digital text allows a student to visually read the material, listen to it, or both on a computer or other electronic device.



Schools Must Provide AIM

According to the federal special education law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, schools must provide AIM to elementary and secondary students with disabilities who need them.

Does My Child Need AIM?

Students with disabilities may need accessible instructional materials for a variety of reasons. AIM may be helpful if a student understands the information that is presented in a book or other material, but cannot read or use the material on his or her own.

When exploring AIM, consider your child's vision, hearing, physical abilities, reading abilities, evaluation results, and grades. Ask:

- Can my child see the material well enough to read the information?
- Can my child hold a book and turn the pages independently?
- Does my child have enough stamina to read a class assignment?



If you answered “no” to any of these questions, you and the rest of your child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team should consider if your child needs exactly the same content in a specialized format or modified curricular materials. Modified or alternative materials are not AIM since the content is changed or simplified in some way so the student can understand it.

To Learn More:

- Order PACER's booklets, “Accessible Instructional Materials: Basics for Families” (STC-23) and “Accessible Instructional Materials: A Technical Guide for Families and Advocates” (STC-22), by calling PACER at 952-838-9000, or download them at PACER.org/publications/stc. One copy is free to Minnesota parents.
- View PACER's webinars, “Accessible Instructional Materials in School Settings” and “All About Digital Media,” online at PACER.org/webinars/archive-listing.asp
- Call PACER's Simon Technology Center (952-838-9000) to request a free consultation.
- Visit:
 - › **National Center on Accessible Instructional Materials:** aim.cast.org
 - › **National Instructional Materials Access Center:** nimac.us
 - › **Minnesota Department of Education:** education.state.mn.us/MDE/EdExc/SpecEdClass/index.html