



Frequently Asked Questions

Why does my child have to take an assessment anyway?

IDEA, ESEA and Colorado state laws require that all students enrolled in public schools participate in state assessments. Your child's IEP determines how your student will participate in state assessments. Remember, the CoAlt is designed specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

How does participation in CoAlt help my child?

The CoAlt provides important information regarding your child's progress in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics and science. This information is helpful in developing your child's educational program.

Will my child not be able to participate in general education classes if they take the CoAlt rather than the TCAP?

Students who take the CoAlt are not penalized in any way. The CoAlt provides important information regarding your child's academic progress.

Will I receive my child's assessment results?

Yes, you will receive a student report that shows your child's performance in each content area. This report has information about your child's level of independence and content knowledge combined by content area. Your student's teacher or school principal will be able to help you interpret the student report.

Links

Expanded Benchmarks:

<http://cde.state.co.us/cdesped/checklists.asp>

Colorado Accommodations Manual:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/download/pdf/Accommodations_Manual.pdf

The Colorado Alternate Assessment:

http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/index_CoAlt.html



Colorado Department of Education

CoAlt Administration
Unit of Student Assessment
201 E. Colfax Room 502
Denver, CO 80203
Phone: 303-866-6929
Fax: 303-866-6680

CoAlt Eligibility
Exceptional Student Leadership Unit
1560 Broadway, Suite 1175
Denver, CO 80202
Phone: 303-866-6694
Fax: 303-866-6811

Colorado Alternate Assessment (CoAlt)

Grades 3 -10
Reading, Writing, and
Mathematics

Grades 5, 8 and 10
Science

Parent Brochure



Overview of the CoAlt

The CoAlt is a standards based assessment designed specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities and is meant to provide a picture of student performance relative to the Expanded Benchmarks. Students are assessed in reading, writing and mathematics in grades 3 -10 and science in grades 5, 8 and 10.

The Primary purpose of the CoAlt assessment is to determine the level at which Colorado students are meeting the Expanded Benchmarks.

CoAlt is administered to students individually. The assessment should be administered to the student by the teacher who knows the student best. This practice is to help the student perform his or her best and to ensure that the appropriate expanded accommodations are in place.

The test examiner on the CoAlt rates each student's response on two data points. The first data point collected is how the student responded to an item (correct, incorrect, other, or no response). The second data point gathered is the student's level of independence. Both data points provide information that can help guide instruction and IEP decisions.

Eligibility for the CoAlt

CoAlt eligibility is determined by the IEP team. Students must meet all of the following criteria in order to qualify:

1. The student must have an IEP.

AND

2. The student must have a significant cognitive disability as determined through empirical evidence.

AND

3. The student must have commensurate abilities in the content areas and adaptive behavior impairments.

AND

4. The student is working toward alternate standards that are aligned with the Colorado Model Content Standards.

AND

5. The IEP team must review annually the student's eligibility for each content area.

Expanded Benchmarks

The Expanded Benchmarks are alternate standards linked the Colorado Model Content Standards at the most foundational level. These standards provide a framework for students with significant cognitive disabilities to access the general curriculum, and are used in developing CoAlt test items.

Teachers use the Expanded Benchmarks to guide them in addressing the instructional needs of each student and in developing IEP goals and objectives.

Expanded Accommodations

Expanded Accommodations are used to provide greater access to instruction and assessment to facilitate student responses. For CoAlt many accommodations are built into the assessment; for example the assessment is administered individually and can be done over several days. However, in order for some students to access the assessment, teachers may need to make changes to the student materials. For example, a teacher may need to provide a student with real objects or enlarge the picture symbols.