



## **Sandi Lerman**

Parent Educator and Transforming Trauma Coach  
[www.AdoptionRootsAndWings.com](http://www.AdoptionRootsAndWings.com)

# **IEP Accommodations for Students with Trauma and ACES**

**Read Sandi's article "What Kids with Trauma Need in School" at this link:**  
<http://www.adoptionrootsandwings.com/?p=278>

### **Classroom: Environment and Tools for Regulation**

Create a calm and soothing classroom environment to promote feelings of safety  
Reduce distracting or potentially irritating visual and auditory stimuli  
Allow access to sensory toy/ fidget/ activity/ art materials when needed to reduce stress and regulate  
Allow water bottle  
Allow to chew gum  
Allow to eat snacks throughout the day - ideally, protein  
Allow access to headphones - noise-reducing and/or allow to listen to calming music via headphones during seat work  
Allow student to stand at desk and move around as needed - adjusted height desk.  
Technology support (voice recorder, reading technology, closed captions to visually support auditory input)  
Allow to sit on a fitness ball or wiggle seat/ cushion  
Allow to use a weighted lap blanket

### **Classroom: Instruction, Assessment, and Routines**

Teach with visual supports and brain-based learning techniques  
Check frequently for understanding, without shaming or making student embarrassed  
Give tasks, directions, or assignments one at a time to prevent overwhelm and confusion  
Give positive encouragement and support - avoid negative comments and shaming/blaming child  
Small group and paired activities  
Reduce length of assignments; allow to do only odd or even-numbered questions/problems  
Reduce number of answer choices (choose between A and C instead of A, B, C, D).  
Advance notice and preparation time for transitions  
Adult to assist with transitions  
Advance notice and preparation time for changes in the daily routine, field trips, fire drills  
Exempt from participation in potentially traumatizing activities: active shooter drills, movies and documentaries about traumatic and frightening events (contact parent for permission to view)  
Provide a schedule for student to carry  
Post daily schedule and activities in classroom - and refer to the posted schedule often  
Extended response time (whether oral or written)  
Extended time and no timed tests  
Alternate format (oral, multiple choice)  
Scribe (another student or adult writes for the student)  
Small group testing situation instead of whole-class  
Paper to cover all problems but the problem being completed

### **Classroom: Movement**

Sensory-motor breaks/ movement breaks - go to a sensory room, work with OT/PT if needed.  
Provide movement breaks for the whole class (so the student will not feel singled out).  
Preferential seating (by door for breaks, away from distracting students and/or students causing conflict, near teacher to reduce distractions, in the back of the room to decrease feelings of threat from people behind, away from distractions like air conditioners/projectors)

Give frequent breaks or alternate activities  
Safe, calm places to go in the classroom as needed for regulation  
Safe people - assign an adult as a mentor (in addition to teacher)- principal, counselor, etc.  
Provide a permanent pass for student to go to the nurse when feeling physically ill/ dysregulated

### **Classroom: Relationships, Behavior, and Discipline**

Develop trust and rapport with the student - greet the student warmly each day and build on strengths instead of focusing on deficits  
Teach social-emotional skills - whole class and individual - to promote positive peer relationships and communication  
No rewards and consequences - eliminate sticker charts, all-class reward systems in favor of more trauma-informed approaches  
Do not isolate the student in any way  
Time with the teacher or trusted adult instead of time-outs/removals  
Do not restrain or physically harm the student in any way  
Watch for signs of dysregulation and help to redirect or calm the child rather than giving a “warning” which will further escalate the behavior  
View behavior as a message communicating an unmet need, lagging skill, or unsolved problem and look for a way to meet the need, teach the skill, or solve the problem (Greene)  
Use Dr. Greene’s ALSUP in team meetings to address lagging skills and unsolved problems  
Communicate frequently with parent via phone or email to avoid misunderstandings and triangulation

### **Homework**

Exempt from all homework  
Allow exemption from homework on an as-needed basis  
Reduce amount of homework or problems/questions/activities  
Alternative/ creative homework activities to reduce stress  
Homework to be done at school during special resource time only with support from teacher or instructional aide  
Provide written instructions for all homework assignments  
Allow student to take a picture of assignments written on board (on smart device)  
Email all homework assignments to the parent (and/or student) and communicate frequently with parent  
Extended deadlines/extra time to complete homework and projects as needed  
Activities broken down into smaller assignments  
Allow parent to transcribe the student’s work

### **Lunch and Recess**

Special location to eat or play instead of cafeteria or playground  
Assigned adult to eat with or to assist with cafeteria routine, playground activities  
Allow to leave and return early to avoid crowded hallways before and after lunch/recess

### **Bus**

Bus driver and parent have each others’ phone numbers - call when child is dysregulated  
Preferential seating on bus - near front  
Driver trained in how to communicate effectively with child to reduce stress (especially in an emergency)  
Trusted adult at school greets child upon arrival at school and accompanies child to bus at end of day

### **Additional Services and Accommodations**

Counseling services - made available to student during school day on schedule or as needed  
OT/PT/Speech/ other identified needs  
Tutoring  
ESY - Extended School Year  
Shortened school day (only mornings or only afternoons)  
Staff training in trauma-informed practices - all staff, not just the classroom teacher