

**Understanding
the
Florida Alternate Assessment**



Information for Parents
2007–2008

The Florida Alternate Assessment

The Florida Alternate Assessment is a performance-based assessment, not a paper and pencil test. It is designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities for whom participation in the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) is inappropriate, even with accommodations.

Who determines if my child participates in the Florida Alternate Assessment?

- Decisions regarding the type of assessment to be administered are based upon the student's individual needs and determined by the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) team, which includes you as the parent, and also teachers, administrators, and service providers.

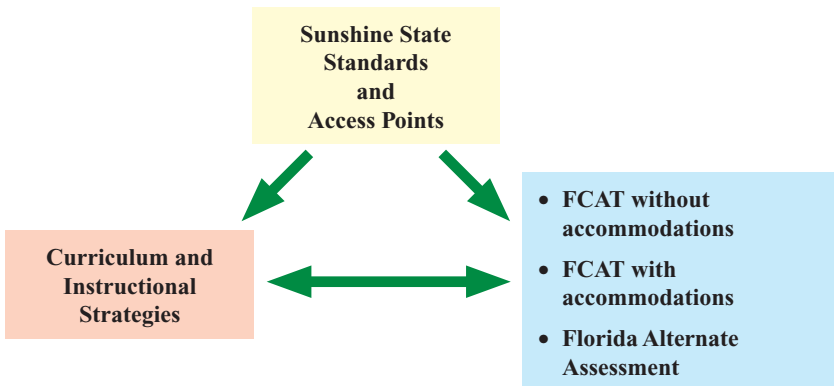
What are the academic expectations of students with disabilities?

- Florida has a standards-driven system for all students.
- The *Sunshine State Standards* and Access Points for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities drive the curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment.
- Student success in achieving the standards is assessed in one of three ways:

FCAT without accommodations

FCAT with accommodations

Florida Alternate Assessment for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities



What are Access Points?

- Access Points reflect the key concepts of the *Sunshine State Standards* with reduced levels of complexity. They ensure access to the essence or core intent of the standards that apply to all students in the same grade.

For more information about the Access Points, visit www.flstandards.org.

What are the levels of complexity?

- Access Points describe the knowledge and skills required at each grade level.
- Each Access Point has three levels of complexity.
- The three levels of complexity are: Independent (In), Supported (Su), and Participatory (Pa), with Participatory level being less complex.



Who can administer the Florida Alternate Assessment?

- The Florida Alternate Assessment is administered to each student individually by the student's special education teacher. If this is not possible, the test administrator must be a certified teacher or other licensed professional who has worked extensively with the student and is trained in the assessment procedures.

When is the Florida Alternate Assessment administered?

- The Florida Alternate Assessment is administered annually and assesses students in Reading (grades 3 – 10), Mathematics (grades 3 – 10), Writing (grades 4, 8, and 10), and Science (grades 5, 8, and 11).

How will the assessment results be used?

Your child's results can be used to:

- assist the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) team in developing annual goals and objectives;
- inform instructional planning;
- improve student achievement in the classroom;
- monitor progress from year to year;
- determine teacher training needs; and
- ensure that students are taught the knowledge and skills outlined in the *Sunshine State Standards* Access Points.

What can I do as a parent to prepare my child for the Florida Alternate Assessment?

- Make sure that your child is well rested.
- Provide your child with a well-rounded diet. This will help ensure a healthy body and a healthy, active mind.
- Encourage your child to do their best.

How can I get more information about the Florida Alternate Assessment?

More information about the Florida Alternate Assessment can be obtained by talking to your child's teacher or school district's ESE Administrator. You can also contact the Florida Department of Education Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services at 850.245.0475.

Translations of this publication are available in Spanish and Haitian Creole through your district's ESE Administrator, or you can download copies of this brochure at <http://www.fdoe.org/ese/>.



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Commissioner of Education