

Teacher Tips

How Do I Know What Size Font to Use?

Teachers often must determine what size print is appropriate to use for their students with orthopedic impairments. Font size is determined based on visual acuity and ability to point to words in a line of print. When the print is too small, many students have difficulty seeing it and are unable to point to each word due to their physical disability.

When considering the appropriate size to use to accommodate a visual impairment, the teacher will need to first print out various sized letters. The idea is to have the student match a letter to decreasingly smaller letters. The student does not need to know the name of the letters, only be able to match. For example, first show the student a large letter “c”, and give 3 choices of letters that are the same size. Ask the student to find the same letter as the top one. If the student is successful, decrease the size of the choices as shown below. When the student can no longer correctly match the letters, the font size is too small and you need to use the next larger size that the student could successfully match. This should be repeated with other letters and then full words. It is important to check full words since some students have difficulty seeing letters next to each other and will benefit from having the spacing between the letters adjusted. You might want to try bolding the letters/words since many students can see smaller sizes when they are bolded. This assessment can also be used with symbols for communication systems.