

504 Plans



WHY IS IT CALLED A “504 PLAN”?

This is a plan that falls under **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**. This is the part of the federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against public school students with disabilities. That includes students with chronic medical conditions, and who meet certain criteria.

WHAT IS A 504 PLAN?

When a child has special needs at school, a 504 plan can be created that outlines how those needs will be met with accommodations, modifications and other services. The information in the plan will describe how any barriers to learning will be removed so your child can be successful at school.

WHO QUALIFIES FOR A 504 PLAN?

Students in grades K–12 with disabilities may qualify for a 504. The term “disability” is defined in very broad terms within Section 504. Section 504 defines a person with a disability as someone who:

- Has a physical or mental impairment that “substantially” limits one or more major life activity (such as reading or concentrating)
- Has a record of the impairment
- Is regarded as having an impairment, or a significant difficulty that isn’t temporary. For example, a broken leg isn’t an impairment, but a chronic condition, like cancer, might be

WHAT DOES A 504 PLAN INCLUDE?

Every school district handles the process a little bit differently because there is no standard plan required by law. All 504 plans should be tailored to meet the specific needs of the child, but should typically include the following information:

- Specific accommodations, supports or services
- Names of the school professional that will provide each service
- The name of the person responsible for ensuring the 504 plan is implemented

HOW DO I GET MY CHILD A 504 PLAN?

It is suggested that you make the request for a 504 plan in writing, with a date and your signature. This is so there is documentation of the request. Make sure to keep a copy for yourself, and provide the case manager, counselor, school social worker or nurse another copy of the request. Once the request is made, a meeting is usually set up at your school to discuss your child's needs and the steps the school will take, but remember, all school districts are a little bit different in their steps so make sure to ask!

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After you receive a copy of your child's 504 plan, keep an eye on how it's being implemented. This is especially important, because the school isn't required to give you regular updates on your child's progress. Don't wait until next year's 504 plan meeting to raise your concerns!

WHAT DO I DO ONCE MY CHILD HAS A 504?

When your child's plan is established, make sure that you keep a copy and understand how it will be implemented. If you would like an update on how the plan is going throughout the school day, make sure to ask your child's teacher or teachers. If you have a concern, talk with the case manager or schedule a meeting with the school as soon as possible to discuss your concerns; it is possible that adjustments may be needed within the plan to better meet the needs of your child.

Helpful Links:

isbe.net/Documents/IEP-504-guidance.pdf

isbe.net/Documents/ch15-section_504.pdf

kidshealth.org/en/parents/504-plans.html