

# 504 Plans

## What is a 504 Plan?

A 504 Plan is a type of plan that falls under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This is a federal civil rights law that protects individuals with disabilities from discrimination. A 504 Plan can help students with learning issues, attention issues and other disabilities, who meet certain criteria, access the general education classroom without any barriers.

## Who can get a 504 Plan?

A student with a disability under Section 504 is someone who

- has a physical or mental impairment that **substantially** limits one or more major life activities;
- has a record of the impairment; or
- is regarded as having an impairment, or a significant difficulty that isn't temporary.<sup>1</sup> (For example, a broken leg wouldn't be considered an impairment. But, a food allergy might).

It is important to note that unlike qualifying for special education services under IDEA, **Section 504 does not require** that a student's disability have a negative impact on their education in order to have a 504 Plan.

## What is a major life activity?

Some examples of major life activities include speaking, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking and communicating.

## How does my child get a 504 Plan?

If you think your child needs a 504 Plan, make a **referral** to the school principal. The school will first need to do an evaluation to decide if your child's disability **substantially limits one or major life activities**. Make this referral in writing and tell the principal the reasons why your child should be evaluated. You will also want to send a copy of your letter to the special education coordinator for the school district. You can look in your child's student handbook or ask the principal for the special education coordinator's name. Also, be sure to keep a copy for your records. **A copy of a sample referral is attached**

**to this fact sheet.** You should also submit a copy of any recent evaluations, hearing tests, letters from physicians or medical records to show that your child has an impairment.

The school can also start an evaluation on your child; however, the school has to get your consent before doing so. If the school wants to start an evaluation on your child without your consent, then the school has to get special permission through a due process hearing first.

## What happens at a 504 Evaluation?

When the school evaluates your child for a 504 Plan, the school will look at documentation of your child's diagnosis (such as records or a letter from a doctor), evaluation results, teacher assessments, school records, independent evaluations, and psychological evaluations.

## Who writes the 504 Plan?

A group of people will attend a 504 conference. The purpose of this conference is to talk about your child's disability and what services and accommodations she will benefit from in order to be successful in school. The people who will be at the meeting are your child's classroom teacher, the school principal, you (the parent), and the special education coordinator for the school district. After talking about what services and accommodations your child needs, the group will then write the 504 Plan.

## What will be in a 504 Plan?

There is no typical 504 Plan. A 504 Plan will be designed to fit your child's individual needs. However, the 504 plan will include specific accommodations, supports and services that your child will need while at school; names of school staff that will provide each service; and the name of the school staff who is in charge of making sure that the 504 Plan is carried out properly.

A 504 Plan can also include services like occupational therapy, physical therapy and counseling services. The only service that will **not** be included in a 504 Plan is speech services.

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<sup>1</sup> 42 §U.S.C. 12102 (1)

### **Important Reminders!**

- Be sure to keep a copy of the 504 Plan in a safe place.
- The school **MUST** review your child's 504 Plan every year
- If you have any concerns about your child's 504 Plan, raise them with the school as soon as possible.

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