



IAP (Individual Accommodation Plan) or 504 Plan

By: Minerva Flores

Section 504 is the 1973 ACT that states, *Discrimination is prohibited based on disability in any federally financed activity or program, including all schools private or public that benefit from federal funds. Districts must provide equal opportunity in areas such as counseling, physical education and/or athletics, transportation, health services, recreational activities, and special interest groups or clubs.*

What is Considered a “Disability” Under Section 504?

A student with a disability eligible under Section 504 has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits learning or another major life activity.

What is the Role of Section 504 in the Public Schools?

Section 504 is a means through which schools

provide necessary accommodations to students with disabilities that do not meet the requirements to receive special education services but however are substantially limiting in their learning or other major life activities.

What is an "Evaluation" Under Section 504?

The school must provide parents notice prior to evaluating their child and/or placement under Section 504. An evaluation under Section 504 is the collecting, gathering, and interpreting of information/data from various sources regarding the student's educational functioning. Information and data can include:

- ◆ aptitude and achievement tests;
- ◆ teacher recommendations;
- ◆ physical and health information;
- ◆ adaptive behavior data;

- ◆ discipline information;
- ◆ parent input;
- ◆ privately obtained data;
- ◆ prior IDEA evaluations;
- ◆ grades and progress reports;
- ◆ and any other relevant information.

What Happens when a Student is Eligible for a 504 Plan?

Once a student is determined eligible then a 504 Plan or IAP (Individual Accommodation Plan) is developed. The team developing the plan should have the following representation:

- ◆ the student's parent or legal guardian;
- ◆ the student's teacher;
- ◆ the student, when appropriate;
- ◆ and an administrative designee

Once the plan is written, the school must provide you with a copy of the plan. The copy will provide you with the information needed regarding your child's accommodations. This will enable you and your child to know whether or not they are receiving the supports outlined in the plan, or if the supports are effective.

Participation in your child's 504 meetings is very important to ensure their plan is effective and meets their needs.

How is Accommodation Plans Used?

Accommodation plans are helpful for children identified with learning disabilities and other types of disabilities. Accommodations include, but are not limited to:

- ◆ Visual aids
- ◆ Highlighted textbooks
- ◆ Positive reinforcements
- ◆ Behavior intervention plans
- ◆ Extended time on tests or assignments

How is Accommodation Plans useful?

Accommodation plans are useful for students

with learning disabilities or gifted students in addressing what may affect their learning, for example:

- ◆ Mathematical concepts and calculating
- ◆ Problems with spoken language
- ◆ Problems with written language
- ◆ Time management difficulties
- ◆ Information processing speed
- ◆ Auditory processing
- ◆ Short-term memory
- ◆ Abstract reasoning
- ◆ Visual processing

Accommodations vs Modifications

Accommodations change what the student is learning and Modification change how they learn. Explaining and understanding the difference between accommodations and modifications in the school setting can help determine placement for students who are eligible for help. After a child's needs are reviewed, a team of adults can decide to try certain accommodations in a regular education setting, before a formal 504 plan.

Accommodations are used regularly or as needed, in the general education setting, for example:

- ◆ **Pacing:** Allowing frequent breaks.
- ◆ **Environment:** Reducing or minimizing distractions (visual, auditory, both); allowing a cooling off period.
- ◆ **Presentation of Material:** Visual, auditory, tactile, multi-teaching approaches; small group instruction; demonstrating or modeling; hands-on activities; providing visual cues.
- ◆ **Testing Adaptations:** Reading test; shortening the length of tests; changing test format, essay vs. fill-in-blank vs. multiple choice, etc.; adjusting the time for test

completion; permitting oral answers; scribing test answers for the student; permitting open book or notes on exams; permitting testing in isolated or different location.

Modifications of content material require a structural cognitive change in the level of the material:

- ◆ **Testing Adaptations:** reducing the reading level of the test.

How often will my child be re-evaluated?

- ◆ Annually.

As a parent or legal guardian, some of your rights under Section 504's procedural safeguards are:

- ◆ Receive Child Find Notice (identification)
- ◆ Receive notice of Parental Rights
- ◆ Prior notice of evaluations and meetings
- ◆ Consent for initial evaluation
- ◆ Notice of the results/actions taken at 504 Committee meetings
- ◆ Examine relevant records
- ◆ Challenge a school's decision, and more.

Can a 504 student still be discipline?

Schools must consider the relationship between the disability and the misbehavior. This does not mean that a student with a disability can't be sent to a discipline center or that they cannot go to in-school suspension, or be suspended from school for three days. The student is expected to follow the district's student code of conduct.

How to Get Started with an Accommodation Plan?

If you feel like your child is struggling in school and may have a learning disability, call the 504 Coordinator in your district to request a meeting to discuss your child's needs and the possibility of an evaluation.

For more information on 504 plans, please refer to the following links:

<http://www4.esc13.net/section504/faqs-section504/>

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>

www.ed.gov/ocr



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