

504 PLAN EXPLAINED

What is a 504 Plan?

A 504 plan is covered under Section 504 of The Rehabilitation Act and is not part of special education. The 504 plan is formal written document describing how the school will support a student with a disability and remove barriers to learning. The goal is to give the student equal access at school through accommodations. Schools are not required to create written 504 plans and each district's 504 plan policy can vary.

A 504 Plan can carry-over to post-secondary education and employment after high school.

What can be included in a 504 plan?

1. 504 plans include accommodations that change how students learn and retain the curriculum
Such as:
 - Changes to the environment (taking tests in a quiet space)
 - Changes to instruction (repeating key concepts using various modalities of learning style)
 - Changes how curriculum is presented (preview of lesson outline)
2. Additional services such as occupational therapy, social and emotional support, study skills instruction, and organization skills guidance.
3. Modifications to curriculum
4. The 504 plan process is simpler than an IEP.
5. A full evaluation may not be necessary
6. The student is not required to qualify for special education.
7. Schools may look at information from sources such as a medical diagnosis, student's grades, test scores, and teacher recommendations.

How to request a 504 plan?

1. Request a 504 evaluation
Send a request by mail or email to the teacher, administrator, or special education coordinator at your school site or district. The school must respond within a certain number of days - depending upon the site.
(See sample letter below)
2. Be specific why you are requesting the evaluation.
3. If available, provide medical documentation, letter of diagnosis, recommendation, or referral.
4. Give consent to have your child evaluated.
5. Follow up via phone, email, or in person.

Sample 504 Plan Request Letter:

Today's Date (include month, day, and year)

Your Name Street Address City, State, Zip Code Daytime telephone number

Name of Principal/IEP Coordinator Name of School Street Address City, State, Zip Code

Re: Your child's name

DOB: Your child's date of birth

Dear (Principal's name),

My name is (your name) and my child, (child's name), is in the in () grade in (name of teacher)'s class at (name of school).

I am writing to formally request that (child's name) be evaluated for special education services under the Child Find obligations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

As you may know, my child has been struggling with (provide detailed information about your concerns, using supporting evidence such as test scores, teacher communications, work samples, etc.).

I have spoken with (name of teacher) about these concerns and the following things have been tried to help. (Describe any interventions that were tried, including response to intervention [RTI] and informal accommodations in the classroom). I believe it is critical for (child's name) to be evaluated.

As part of this process and conversation, I also would like to request that (child's name) be assessed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to see whether (s/he) has a disability as defined by that law. Please note that I am not saying that I am comfortable substituting a 504 assessment for a special education evaluation, only that I think both are appropriate ways to determine (child's name)'s needs.

I understand that you will send me an evaluation plan explaining the tests that may be given to my child. I would also appreciate any other information you have regarding the evaluation process. If you need more information, please contact me at (your phone number).

Thank you very much for your help. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Your name

Copy sent to:

Your child's teacher

*Adapted from The Everything Parent's Guide to Special Education (Adams Media, 2014)