



504 Plans Fact Sheet

Introduction

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.

Eligibility

A student with a disability under Section 504 is someone who falls under at least one of the following:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities
 - some examples of major life activities include speaking, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, and communicating
- has a record of the impairment
- is regarded as having an impairment or a significant difficulty that is not temporary (for example, a broken leg would not be considered an impairment but a food allergy might be considered one)

It is important to note that, unlike qualifying for special education services under Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (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.

Getting 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 the sample referral is attached to recent evaluations, hearing tests, letters from physicians, or medical records to show that your child has an impairment.

Evaluation

The school can also start an evaluation on your child; however, the school must get your consent before doing so. If the school wants to start an evaluation on your child without your consent, then the school must first get special permission through a due process hearing. 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 they will benefit from in order to be successful in school. The people at the meeting will be 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 a 504 Plan.

What Is in the 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 who will provide each service; and the name of the school staff who oversees 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.

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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The information and statements of law in this fact sheet should not be considered legal advice. This fact sheet is provided as a broad guide to help you understand how certain legal matters are handled in general. Courts may interpret the law differently. Before you take action, talk to an attorney and follow his or her advice. Always do what the court tells you to do.

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