



Section 504 plans

A step-by-step guide on how to obtain supportive services for your child in school



What is a Section 504 plan?

Section 504 is a federal law. It protects the rights of people with disabilities who are in programs that get money from the U.S. Department of Education. This includes public schools.

A 504 plan provides accommodations, not modifications.

Accommodation:

changes **how** a child learns

Modification:

changes **what** a child learns

How does it help?

Section 504 is used in public schools. It is meant to make sure that students with disabilities can fully participate in all activities at the same level as students without disabilities. If a student is eligible for a 504 plan, a plan is written up for that student to access programs and after-school activities.

504 plans in the classroom



Accommodations can be given:

- In a regular classroom (extra help can be given if needed)
- Pull-out services (help would be given outside

of the regular classroom)

- Special education (if student qualifies for an IEP)

Who is eligible?

To be protected under Section 504, a student must meet the following criteria:

- Have a **physical** or **mental impairment** that **substantially limits** one or more **major life activities**
- Have a record of such impairment (medical diagnoses, aptitude or achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical conditions, social or cultural background, and/or adaptive behavior)
- Is thought to have such impairment, and it is not thought to be temporary

Physical impairment

Medical condition affecting one or more body systems

Mental impairment

Mental or psychological problem, such as ADHD and learning problems

Substantially limits

- A student cannot do activities that the average student of the same age or grade level can do.
- A student is limited as to the duration, condition and/or manner under which the average student of the same age or grade level can perform the same activity.

Major life activities

- Walking, standing, lifting, bending
- Seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing
- Learning, reading, communicating
- Working
- Eating, sleeping
- Concentrating, thinking
- Operation of major bodily functions

If your child has a condition that causes him or her to fall behind in school, even with accommodations, he or she may need an Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

504 evaluation process

- **Identify** any student who needs special accommodations under Section 504.
- A **referral** can be made by the following:
 - A parent or guardian
 - A school provider, such as a teacher
 - A medical provider, such as a doctor or therapist
- The parent is notified of evaluation.
- An **assessment** is done, looking at all areas of need.
- A 504 team **meeting** is held. The team will decide if a child is eligible for a 504 plan. The parent or guardian must be told about the meeting at least 10 days ahead of time.
- **Development** of a 504 plan by a 504 committee. This may include the school nurse, counselor, social worker or teacher.
- The **plan** is put into place.
- Decide on a case manager to oversee the plan. This might be a school nurse, counselor, social worker or psychologist.

Resources

Key topics in Special Education

dpi.wi.gov/sped/topics/504

A helpful resource that explains the 504 plan process in detail

U.S. Department of Education

ed.gov

Information on civil rights of children with disabilities

Wisconsin FACETS

wifacets.org

Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for Education, Training & Support for children and adults with disabilities

Understood: For learning and attention issues

understood.org

Free access to experts, a secure online community, practical tips and more for parents of children with learning and/or attention issues

Great Schools

greatschools.org/gk/articles/section-504-2/

A parent's guide to Section 504 in public schools

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs

dhs.wisconsin.gov/cyshcn

A program that promotes quality care for children and youth with special health care needs in Wisconsin

What can be done?

Health/safety accommodations:

- Give medicine to student if needed*
- Follow diet plan from medical provider*
- Plan for emergencies
- Train school staff on the student's needs
- Provide needed transportation
- If working for long periods of time, give breaks when needed
- Allow use of bathroom as needed
- Excused if late for classes
- Shorten the school day

***Note:** medicine and diet plans can only be put in place if proper documentation is on file. The plan must come from a medical provider and be signed by the parent or guardian.

Classroom accommodations:

- Extra time on tests or assignments
- Quiet place for taking tests
- Homework given is at child's skill level
- Student can use a calculator, computer or recording device if needed
- Highlighted textbooks
- Get help with note taking
- Extra set of textbooks for home
- Instruction on computer
- Larger print
- Behavior plans
- Visual or audio aids
- Sitting closer to teacher
- Oral tests in place of written tests

The student has to do the same work as other students in the class. The student is allowed accommodations to help them get the work done.



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