

## IEP vs 504 Plans

	IEP	504 Plan
Basic Description	A blueprint or plan for a child's special education experience at school.	A blueprint or plan for how the school will provide support and remove barriers for a student with a disability.
What It Does	Provides individualized special education and <i>related services</i> to meet a child's unique needs.	Provides services and changes to the learning environment to enable students to learn alongside their peers.
What is Costs	These services are provided at no cost to families.	As with an IEP, a 504 plan is provided at no cost to families.
What Law Applies	The <i>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)</i>	<i>Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973</i>
	This is a federal special education law for children with disabilities.	This is a federal civil rights law to stop discrimination against people with disabilities.
Who's Eligible	To get an IEP, there are two requirements:	To get a 504 plan, there are two requirements:
	1. A child has one or more of the 13 disabilities listed in IDEA. The law lists specific challenges, like learning disabilities, ADHD, autism, and others.	1. A child has <i>any</i> disability. Section 504 covers a wide range of different struggles in school.
	2. The disability must affect the child's educational performance and/or ability to learn and benefit from the <i>general education curriculum</i> . The child must need specialized instruction to make progress in school.	2. The disability must interfere with the child's ability to learn in a general education classroom.
		Section 504 has a broader definition of a disability than IDEA. (It says a disability must substantially limit one or more basic life activities. This can include learning, reading, communicating, and thinking.) That's why a child who doesn't qualify for an IEP might still be able to get a 504 plan.

Independent Educational Evaluation	Families can ask the school district to pay for an <i>independent educational evaluation</i> (IEE) by an outside expert. The district doesn't have to agree.	Doesn't allow families to ask for an IEE. As with an IEP evaluation, families can always pay for an outside evaluation themselves.
	Families can always pay for an outside evaluation themselves, but the district may not give it much weight.	
Who Creates It	There are strict legal requirements about who participates. An IEP is created by an IEP team that must include:	The rules about who's on the 504 team are less specific than they are for an IEP.
	The child's parent or caregiver	A 504 plan is created by a team of people who are familiar with the child and who understand the evaluation data and special services options. This might include:
	At least one of the child's general education teachers	The child's parent or caregiver
	At least one special education teacher	General and special education teachers
	School psychologist or other specialist who can interpret evaluation results	The school principal
	A district representative with authority over special education services	
	With a few exceptions, the entire team must be present for IEP meetings.	
What's in It	The IEP sets learning goals and describes the services the school will provide. It's a written document.	There is no standard 504 plan. Unlike an IEP, a 504 plan doesn't <i>have</i> to be a written document.
	Here are some of the most important things the IEP must include:	A 504 plan generally includes the following:
	The child's present levels of academic and functional performance—how the child is currently doing in school	Specific <i>accommodations</i> , supports, or services for the child
	Annual education goals for the child and how the school will track progress	Names of who will provide each service

	<p>The services the child will get—this may include special education, related, supplementary, and extended school year services</p> <p>The timing of services—when they start, how often they occur, and how long they last</p> <p>Any accommodations—changes to the child’s learning environment</p> <p>Any modifications—changes to what the child is expected to learn or know</p> <p>How the child will participate in standardized tests</p> <p>How the child will be included in general education classes and school activities</p>	Name of the person responsible for ensuring the plan is implemented
Notice	<p>When the school wants to change a child’s services or placement, it has to tell families in writing before the change. This is called prior written notice. Notice is also required for any IEP meetings and evaluations.</p> <p>Families also have “stay put” rights to keep services in place while there’s a disagreement about the IEP.</p>	The school must notify families about an evaluation or a “significant change” in placement. Notice doesn’t have to be in writing, but most schools do so anyway.
Consent	A parent or caregiver must consent in writing for the school to evaluate a child. They must also consent in writing before the school can provide the services in an IEP.	A parent or caregiver’s consent is required for the school district to evaluate a child.
How Often It’s Reviewed and Revised	<p>The IEP team must review the IEP at least once a year.</p> <p>The child must be reevaluated every three years to determine whether services are still needed.</p>	The rules vary by state. Generally, a 504 plan is reviewed each year and a reevaluation is done every three years or when needed.
How to Resolve Disputes	IDEA gives families several ways to resolve disputes (usually in this order):	Section 504 gives families several options for resolving disagreements with the school:

	Mediation	Mediation
	<i>Due process complaint</i>	Alternative dispute resolution
	<i>Resolution session</i>	Impartial hearing
	Civil lawsuit	Complaint to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
	<i>State complaint</i>	Lawsuit
	Lawsuit	
Funding/Costs	Students receive these services at no charge.	Students receive these services at no charge.
	States receive additional funding for students with IEPs.	States do not receive extra funding for students with 504 plans. But the federal government can take funding away from programs (including schools) that don't meet their legal duty to serve kids with disabilities.
		IDEA funds can't be used to serve students with 504 plans.











































