



## SPECIAL EDUCATION RIGHTS: ILLINOIS EDITION



# 504 Plans

This fact sheet answers:

- What Is in a 504 Plan?
- Who Can Get a 504 Plan?
- How Is a 504 Plan Different from an IEP?
- And More

### What Is in a 504 Plan?

A 504 Plan explains your child's impairment or disability. It lists all the things your child needs to have so he can take part in school just like anybody else.

### Who Can Get a 504 Plan?

Any child who has a "physical or mental impairment" that "substantially limits one or more major life activity."

These impairments can include:

- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)/Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Blindness or Visual Impairments
- Cancer
- Deafness or Hearing Impairments
- Food Allergies
- Mobility Impairments
- Asthma

Major life activities can include:

- Walking
- Seeing or Hearing
- Speaking
- Breathing
- Concentrating or Learning
- Taking Care of Oneself

### How is a 504 Plan Different From an IEP?

If your child's disability makes it hard for him to learn in school, he may need an Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP gives your child yearly goals that will help him make progress and lists the specialized instruction he will get. If your child can learn in school with some special therapies (called "related services"), accommodations and modifications (which are small changes to school rules), then he may need a 504 Plan.





## What Can My Child Get with a 504 Plan?

Your child can get:

- Nurses to help him learn how to give himself medicine.
- Physical therapists to help him walk longer distances.
- Extra time to move from class to class.
- Less homework or a smaller room to take tests in.

## How Does My Child Get a 504 Plan?

Ask the school to test your child for special education services. Write a letter or email asking for a **“Full Individual Evaluation.”**

If your child has any as doctors or therapists who think special education or extra services will help, include this with your request.

See Equip for Equality’s **“How to Help Your Child Be Successful in School - Getting a 504 Plan or IEP”** fact sheet for more information.

## What Are My Child’s Rights in Private School?

The law for private school students is complicated. Not all private schools have to follow all of your child’s 504 Plan. Contact the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) or Equip for Equality to find out more.

## What Do I Do When My Child Changes Schools?

If your child changes schools, ask the new school to look at the 504 Plan. The new school must follow the plan if a group of people at the school (including people who work in special education) think the plan is good for your child. **If the school does not think the plan is needed for your child, the school must retest your child before it says he does not need a 504 Plan.**

## How Often Should My Child Be Retested?

Schools must retest your child “periodically.” Many schools do this every three years. The school must retest your child before it decides your child no longer needs a 504 Plan.

## Are There Any Limits on 504 Plans?

A school does not need to provide your child with things that it can show would be too hard for the school to provide.



## **What Do I Do If There Are Problems with My Child's 504 Plan?**

Write the school and say what you think the problem is. Ask for a meeting to talk about the 504 Plan.

If the school won't test your child or does not follow the 504 Plan, you can ask for a 504 hearing or file a complaint with the Office of Civil Rights.

See Equip for Equality's "**What to Do When You Disagree with the School**" fact sheet for more information. ■



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## **Have More Questions?**

Call our Special Education Rights Parent Helpline.

**1-866-KIDS-046** (1-866-543-7046)  
[SpecialEd@equipforequality.org](mailto:SpecialEd@equipforequality.org)  
[www.equipforequality.org/helpline](http://www.equipforequality.org/helpline)