



IEP and 504 plans

An overview for parents and other care providers

An individualized education program (IEP) and 504 plan give formal help to students with learning and attention needs. Both plans are open to students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Use this chart to compare the plans.

	IEP	504 plan
What is it?	An IEP is a plan for a child's special education experience at school.	A 504 plan is a plan for a child's access to learning at school.
What does it do?	An IEP gives special education that is unique to each child. It also gives other services (such as therapies and adaptive physical education) to meet the needs of each child.	A 504 plan gives changes to the learning setting to meet the needs of each child.
Who is eligible?	<p>A child is eligible for an IEP if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has one or more of the 13 disabilities listed in IDEA. Learning and attention needs may qualify. • His disability affects his educational performance. His disability affects his ability to learn and benefit from general education. 	<p>The 504 plan has a more broad definition of disability. Some children who do not qualify for an IEP may still be able to get a 504 plan. A child is eligible for a 504 plan if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He has any disability. This may include learning or attention needs. • His disability affects his ability to learn in a general education classroom.
Independent educational evaluation	<p>Parents can ask the school district to pay for an independent educational evaluation by an outside expert. The school district does not have to pay for one.</p> <p>Parents can pay for an outside evaluation on their own. The school system may not honor it.</p>	<p>Parents are not allowed to ask the school district for an independent educational evaluation.</p> <p>Parents can pay for an outside evaluation on their own. The school system may not honor it.</p>
Who makes the plan?	<p>An IEP team makes the child's IEP plan. The team must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child's parent • At least one of the child's general education teachers • At least one special education 	<p>A team of people who know the child make the 504 plan. People on the team need to know how to go over evaluation results. They also need to know options about special services. The team might include:</p>

	<p>teacher</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school psychologist or other specialist who can go over evaluation results • Someone from the school district with special education leadership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child's parent • General education teachers • A special education teacher • The school principal
What is in the plan?	<p>The IEP sets learning goals for a child. It goes over the services the school will give the child.</p> <p>The IEP must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the child is currently doing in school. • Yearly education goals for the child. • How the school will track the child's progress. • The services the child will get. This may include special education and extended school year services. • The timing of services. This may include when services start, how often they occur, and how long they last. • Any changes to the child's learning setting. 	<p>There is no standard 504 plan. Unlike an IEP, a 504 plan does not have to be in written form.</p> <p>In general, a 504 plan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific changes, supports or services for the child. • The names of who will give each service. • The name of the person who will make sure the plan is started and followed.
What do parents need to do?	<p>The school must tell parents in writing when they want to change a child's services or placement. This is called prior written notice.</p> <p>A parent must give written consent for the school to evaluate their child. Parents must also give written consent before the school can give services in an IEP.</p>	<p>The school must tell parents about a major change in placement. Notice does not have to be in writing. Most schools give written notice anyway.</p> <p>A parent must give consent for the school district to evaluate their child.</p>
How often is it	The IEP team must review the IEP at least	The rules are different for each state. Most often,

<p>reviewed or revised?</p>	<p>one time each year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child must be re-evaluated every three years to see if they still need the same services. 	<p>a 504 plan is reviewed each year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child is re-evaluation every three years or when needed.
<p>What is the cost?</p>	<p>There is no charge for IEP services.</p> <p>States get extra funding for eligible students.</p>	<p>There is no charge for 504 plan services.</p> <p>States do not get extra funding for eligible students.</p>
<p>What kinds of supports and services are there?</p>	<p>Supports and services are unique to each child’s needs. These examples may not apply to every child. There may be other options that are not listed.</p> <p>IEP plans may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapy at school such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical Therapy - Occupational Therapy - Speech Therapy • Mobility services • Support staff such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Paraprofessional - Registered Nurse • Academic changes such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learning tools that are written at a lower reading level. - Learning tools that use more simple vocabulary, concepts and principles. - A different grading standard than general education. This may be based on IEP goals. - Changes to testing. This may include tests written at a lower reading level, fewer choices, or giving a word bank to choose from. 	<p>Supports and services are unique to each child’s needs. These examples may not apply to every child. There may be other options that are not listed.</p> <p>504 plans may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of supplies such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elevator - Wheelchair - Crutches • Preferred seats in the classroom such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Near the teacher - Near the front of the room • A second set of textbooks to keep at home • Academic changes such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More time to do a task or take a test. - More time to do a project. - A different way to use learning tools. For example, a student may get a written outline instead of taking notes. - Group tasks or tests. - The option to take an oral test or use a scribe (someone to help write). - Breaking long-term projects up into small sections that are done over time.