



Understanding Educational Accommodations: IEP vs. 504



Federal law requires that school provide support for students who have a disability that impacts their ability to learn. This support may be provided through an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or through accommodations under a 504 plan.

How do I advocate for my child at school?

If you are concerned about your child's development **start a conversation** with your child's teacher. Teachers may have the same concern or want to try informal accommodations. Put your request for formal evaluation in writing, date it, and keep a copy. Be as specific as you can in describing your concerns about your child's learning.

Differences between IEP and 504 plans

Category	IEP Plan	504 Plan
Overview	A plan for special or modified education for a child with a disability	A plan for how the school will provide support and remove educational barriers for a child with a disability
What it Does	Provides individualized education and related services to meet a child's unique needs	Provides services and changes to the learning environment to enable students to learn alongside their peers
Who is Eligible?	A child must have one or more of the 13 disabilities listed in IDEA. The disability must affect the child's ability to learn with the general education curriculum. The child must need specialized instruction to make progress in school	A child with any disability can apply for a 504 plan. The disability must interfere with the child's ability to learn in a general education classroom
Modifications	The child can have modified assignments and/or a modified curriculum	The child can have modified assignments but not a different curriculum
Services	The child is eligible for services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, etc.	The child is not eligible for extra services
Plan	Requires a written plan. Goals must be determined and reviewed yearly	Does not require a written plan, goals, or monitoring of progress
Review	The plan must be reviewed yearly and the child must have a full re-evaluation to determine eligibility every 3 years	No requirement but sometimes periodic review
Applicability	Applicable in educational settings only	Applicable in school, work, and/or university
Parent Involvement	Parents are part of the IEP team. They may revoke consent to a plan	Schools must get permission to evaluate but can create a plan without the parent