



Section 504 Plans

Not all children with a disability meet state and federal eligibility requirements for special education programs and services under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA). However, they might be eligible for accommodations or services through Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. To qualify under Section 504 the student must have “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.” If the student is eligible under Section 504, the district has to develop a 504 plan.

504 Plan vs. IEP: What’s the difference?

Special Education and IEPs

Students who qualify for special education programs and services with a disability listed in the IDEA have their educational plan written in an individualized education program (IEP).

Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* and 504 Plans

The student must have a documented disability that impacts learning in the general education classroom. The 504 Plan usually outlines the accommodations and services that will allow a child to access the curriculum. A 504 Plan is less specific than an IEP.

Creating a 504 Plan

Parents must give consent for the school to evaluate a child for a 504 Plan. Parents can request an evaluation, and it is suggested to do this in writing. The plan usually lists accommodations and services a school will provide. Examples are additional time for tests, note taking assistance, or other supports based on the need of the child. For a webinar, tips for developing a 504 Plan, 504 Plan templates, and more go to [Michigan Alliance for Families: Section 504](#).

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Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act*

504 Plans are not special education.

504 Plans are required for eligible students by Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act*. The federal law is a civil rights law for all people with disabilities. It is not specifically an education law and it is not part of special education. The law protects all people with disabilities from discrimination and makes provisions for providing rehabilitative services. In a public school setting, this means schools must make accommodations for eligible students through a 504 Plan.

Can a student have a 504 Plan and an IEP?

If the student meets the requirements under Section 504 and the IDEA, the student will have an IEP. A separate 504 Plan is not needed.

Resources



[Michigan Alliance for Families: Section 504](#)

- [Center for Parent Information and Resource \(CPIR\): Section 504 Review and Students with Medical Disabilities \(Video\)](#)
- [Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education \(MARSE\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights: Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights: Frequently Asked Questions About Section 504 and the Education of Children with Disabilities](#)