

504 Plans vs. an IEP

What's the difference between a 504 plan and an IEP?

	IEP	504 plan/General ED
Basic Description	Individual Education Plan (IEP) - to receive special education goals and services.	A plan developed to ensure that a child who has a disability identified under the law and is attending an elementary or secondary educational institution receives accommodations that will ensure their academic success and equal access to the learning environment.
What It Does	Provides individualized special education and related services to meet the unique needs of the child following an evaluation identifying academic need.	Provides accommodations within the academic environment for students with a documented or suspected disability.
What Law Applies	The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) This is a federal special education law for children with disabilities.	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 This is a civil rights law to remove barriers to learning through personalized accommodations.
Who Is Eligible	A student who has been found eligible under one or more of the 13 areas of eligibility listed in IDEA. The disability must affect the child's educational performance and/or ability to learn and benefit from the general education curriculum. A medical diagnosis does not automatically qualify a student for an IEP.	A student who has a record of physical or mental impairment that "substantially" limits one or more major life activity (such as reading or concentrating).
Who Creates the Program/Plan	There are strict legal requirements about who participates. An IEP is created by an IEP team that must include: parent/guardian, HST, Education Specialist, evaluators, and service providers such as psychologist, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, etc. or other specialist who can interpret evaluation results and a district representative.	A 504 Plan team members typically include the parent/guardian, HST, and a 504 coordinator. An administrator may also be present to support the conversation. The requirements about who participates on the 504 team are less specific than they are for an IEP.
What's in the Program/Plan	The IEP creates specific learning goals for the student and describes the services that will be provided to meet the student's identified need.	The 504 plan documents the student's disabling condition, how the disability impacts the student's academics, and the accommodations.