Professionals: Tips to Support IEP’s and 504 Plans

For students who require an IEP* (Individual Education Program) or 504 Plan*, providers, i.e. doctors, therapists and others, are important allies to both parents and the school. Keep these tips in mind:

- Make sure to discuss a ROI with parents for school communication
- What are the healthcare needs of the child/youth?
- Healthcare needs may impact the child / youth in their educational setting
  - This may be physical limitations, attention issues, behavioral, social / emotional concerns, mental health conditions etc.
- All schools and teams are different; some may be open to families and provider input while others may not be so accepting
- Know key agencies to refer parents to for additional information
- You are a great advocate and your expertise in both the student’s strengths and limitations are critical for the IEP or 504 plan.
- Medical diagnosis and educational concerns may not match up. For example, a child may be diagnosed with Autism but not meet that eligibility criteria for Autism in the educational setting.
  - This does not mean the school is not recognizing or “believing” the diagnosis
  - Students can have the same supports and services under different eligibility categories i.e. categories do not determine services
- Just because the child/ youth has a diagnosis, it does not mean they will qualify for either an IEP or 504 plan.

*An IEP provides for specialized instruction and / or related services
*A 504 Plan outlines accommodations. See chart for differences in each.

Resources:
American Academy of Pediatrics  https://www.aappublications.org/
Attitude  https://www.additudemag.com/
Stone Soup Group  https://www.stonesoupgroup.org

*Look for specifics at disability specific sites, these usually have great ideas for accommodations and needs for children/ youth with condition
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<tr>
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<th>IEP</th>
<th>VS</th>
<th>504 Plan</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Federal Laws</strong></td>
<td>IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)</td>
<td>Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973</td>
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<td><strong>What it Does</strong></td>
<td>Provides individualized special education &amp; related services to meet the student’s unique needs</td>
<td>Provides services &amp; changes to the learning environment to meet the needs of the student as adequately as their peers</td>
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<td><strong>Eligibility Requirements</strong></td>
<td>Student must meet eligibility criteria in 1 of 14 disability eligibility categories and require specialized instruction and/or related services</td>
<td>Student must have a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities i.e. learning, mobility, communication etc.</td>
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<td><strong>What’s Included</strong></td>
<td>Present levels, annual goals and objectives, services including related supplementary, extended school year, start / stop dates and times allotted, accommodations, modifications, participation in standardized testing, how the student will be included in general education / peers, any additional pertinent information on student</td>
<td>Specific accommodations, supports or services for student, name of who will provide these supports and services, name of person responsible for the implementation of the 504 plan</td>
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<td><strong>When does it End</strong></td>
<td>When the team has evaluated student and they no longer meet special education eligibility, they age out, graduate</td>
<td>504 is a civil rights law which is available throughout the lifespan, 504 plans can be established in higher education, vocational studies, and work</td>
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