



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



IEP VS 504 Plan

Federal Laws	IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
What it Does	Provides individualized special education & related services to meet the student’s unique needs	Provides services & changes to the learning environment to meet the needs of the student as adequately as their peers
Eligibility Requirements	Student must meet eligibility criteria in 1 of 14 disability eligibility categories and require specialized instruction and/or related services	Student must have a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities i.e. learning, mobility, communication etc.
What’s Included	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	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
When does it End	When the team has evaluated student and they no longer meet special education eligibility, they age out, graduate	504 is a civil rights law which is available throughout the lifespan, 504 plans can be established in higher education, vocational studies, and work