

Section 504 Plan: Information for Parents/Guardians and Students

What is Section 504?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal law that requires public schools to provide eligible students with disabilities the accommodations and services they need to access the general education curriculum, opportunities for learning, and school activities to the same extent as their nondisabled peers. The student may receive accommodations and modifications.

Unlike special education, Section 504 does not provide specialized instruction, and a 504 plan cannot alter the general education curricular requirements. Students cannot have both a 504 plan and Individualized Education Program (IEP) at the same time. If a student with a 504 plan is found eligible for special education, they should be exited from Section 504 and any accommodations or services they need should be provided through their IEP.

A student is eligible for a 504 plan if they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. There is a broad range of impairments that may qualify a student for Section 504 including:

- Diabetes
- Severe asthma
- Juvenile arthritis
- Mobility or vision impairments

Examples of mental impairments that may qualify a student for Section 504 include:

- Anxiety disorder
- Depression
- Attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)



Frequently Asked Questions

What is a “Substantial Limitation?”

A student is considered to have a substantial limitation when the student is “unable to perform a major life activity that the average student in the general population can perform.” The impairment must be somewhat unique when compared to the average student of approximately the same age

What are “Major Life Activities?”

Major life activities may include, but are not limited to, functions such as caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, bending, reading, concentrating, thinking, and communicating.

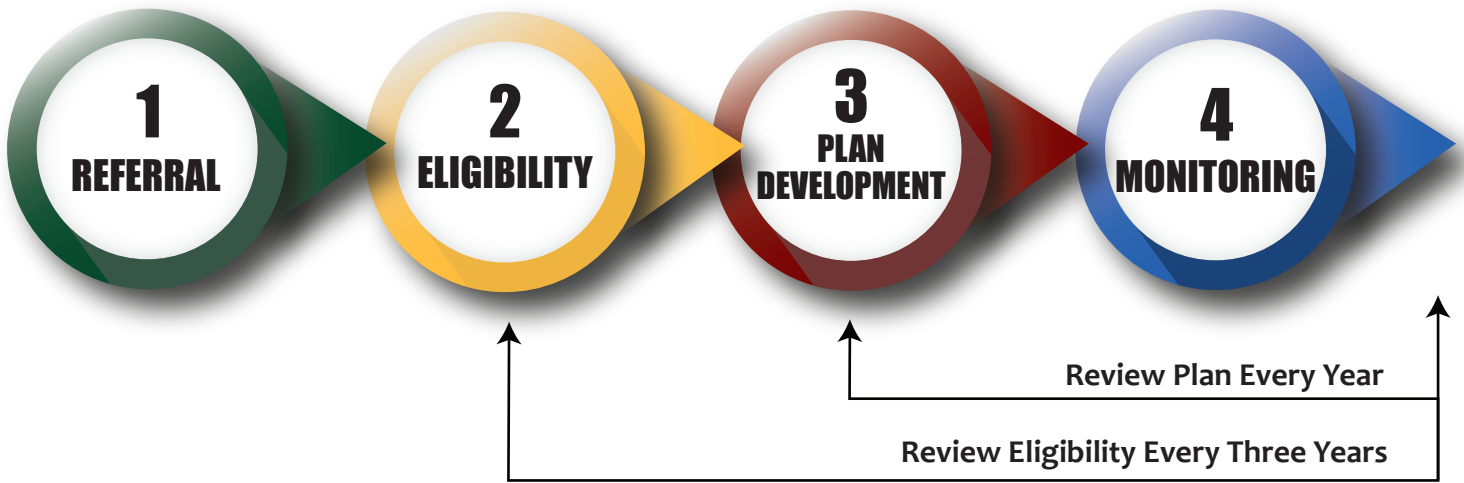
What should I do if I believe my student has a disability and may require a 504 plan?

Contact your student’s school counselor. Describe your concerns about your student’s disability and the impact it is having on them within the school setting. The counselor will help you decide on the next steps

Is Section 504 the same thing as special education or an IEP?

No. Special education and Section 504 both provide services and supports for students with disabilities, but they do so in different ways and have different eligibility criteria. If you believe your student has a disability, work with their school psychologist and counselor to determine the appropriate process for your student and their needs.

The 504 Process



1. Referral

Parents/guardians refer their student to the 504 process if they believe that their student has a physical or mental impairment that could make their student eligible for Section 504. Each school's counselor will facilitate the process. Other individuals may also make referrals, such as health care professionals, teachers, and other school staff members.

2. Eligibility Determination

At the eligibility meeting, the 504 team will review all available information to determine whether the student is eligible under Section 504. Note, a medical diagnosis is not required to be found eligible under Section 504, nor does a medical diagnosis automatically qualify a student under Section 504.

3. Plan Development

If the student is found eligible, the 504 team will develop a 504 plan for the student, describing the personalized accommodations and services that the student needs in order to access the general education curriculum at the school. This 504 plan will be shared with the parent/guardian and all teachers and school staff who regularly work with the student.

4. Monitoring

The 504 team will meet annually to review the student's 504 plan and make any necessary updates or revisions. Parents/guardians can also request a meeting if they think that the 504 plan needs to be reviewed. In addition to reviewing the student's 504 plan each year, the 504 team will also review the student's eligibility for Section 504 every three years.

Please contact your student's school counselor for more information on Section 504.



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