

What are IEPs and 504 Plans?



According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, an IEP, or an Individualized Education Plan, is a formal plan that involves specialized instruction, supportive services, and measurable goals. These plans are used by schools to help with planning, teaching, and supporting the learning needs of students.

Resources

[IEPs and 504 Plans: A Guide for Parents - HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org/IEPs-and-504-Plans-A-Guide-for-Parents)

[Advocacy Tips for Parents - PAVE](#)

[Steps to Read, Understand, and Develop an Initial IEP - PAVE](#)

[PAVE Provides Sample Letters to Support Families in their Advocacy - PAVE](#)

[Student Rights, IEP, Section 504 and More - PAVE](#)

<https://wapave.org/sample-letter-to-request-a-functional-behavioral-assessment/>

[healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/My-child-is-receiving-special-education-in-school.aspx](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/My-child-is-receiving-special-education-in-school.aspx)

<https://www.treehouseforkids.org/our-services/eligibility/>

IEP goals should be reviewed annually, and regular progress reports are required. Examples of supportive services may include speech/language therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, specialized transportation or mental health counseling. Examples of accommodations may include smaller classroom sizes, preferential seating, extra time on tests/homework, or providing visuals alongside verbal instructions.

According to the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), 504 plans provide educational accommodations to students who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity such as eating, sleeping, standing, lifting, concentrating, or communicating. The purpose of a 504 plan is to remove barriers to learning and ensure equal access for all students in school. Examples of accommodations may include, but are not limited to, increased time on exams, breaks during physical education, reduced length of assignments, or unlimited bathroom access.

How to Request an IEP/504 Plan?

If you feel that your student would benefit from special education services such as an IEP/504 plan, you should submit a request for an evaluation in writing to your school district. Here is an example letter on how to request an evaluation: [Sample Letter to Request Evaluation](#). In your request, be specific about your concerns of your student and provide any relevant documents. Your student's PCP and/or pediatrician can also help you with any supportive documentation you may need to request the evaluation with the school district.

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What Should be in an IEP/504 Plan?

Each IEP/504 plan should include information such as the student's current performance levels, goals, development, how the student functions with their peers, and how your student will be assessed on statewide/district-wide tests. It should also include assistance and accommodations provided, who is providing the assistance/accommodations, and medical requirements. It should also include dates when services will begin, locations and how long they will last. Lastly, it should include when the annual review date was completed, most recent evaluation was, and when the re-evaluation date is due.

The First IEP/504 Plan Meeting:

Before the meeting, come prepared by looking over education laws and what interventions may be offered based on your students' needs. A meeting to discuss the IEP must be held within 30 days after a school determines that a student needs special education services. Parents/caregivers may invite anyone to this meeting, including a friend, advocate, or caseworker. Make sure you know who will be at your meeting! An IEP/504 team has required attendees which can include your student's teacher, a special education teacher, psychologists, therapists, school administrator, and other school personnel.

At the meeting, be sure you know everyone's job and what role they serve on the team. If you don't understand something during the meeting, ask for clarification until the answer is clear. If you hear something confusing, ask the school to put their position and rationale in writing so you can follow up. Request to end the meeting if it stops being productive. Tell the other team members that you would like to continue working with them and ask to schedule another meeting if needed.

After the meeting, review your notes and follow-up where there is an action or something that needs follow-up. If you disagree with the outcome of the meeting, review your Procedural Safeguards and consider your dispute resolution options. Consider asking for another meeting, mediation, or a Facilitated IEP meeting, if issues are unresolved.

