



Section 504 Plans

Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* is a federal civil rights law which was created to stop discrimination against individuals with disabilities. In a school setting, Section 504 ensures eligible students with disabilities have equal access to education through the development of a Section 504 Plan. Some students with a disability who do not require specially designed instruction through an individualized education program (IEP) may receive accommodations and supports through a Section 504 Plan.

504 Plan vs. IEP: What's the difference?

Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* and 504 Plans

To qualify under Section 504, a student must have a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities and either have record of the impairment or be regarded as having such an impairment. A 504 team will evaluate and determine eligibility under Section 504 and will also determine whether or not the student requires accommodations. If the student is eligible and requires accommodations, the district must develop a 504 Plan for the student. However, a student eligible for Section 504 may not need a 504 plan due to mitigating measures (such as low vision devices, medication, equipment, prosthetics, hearing aids, etc.). Eligibility should be revisited periodically to identify changes in student needs and mitigating measures. Like the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*, Section 504 requires a school district to provide all qualified students with disabilities a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

Special Education and IEPs

A student with a disability who qualifies for special education programs and services under the IDEA requires specialized instruction as well as accommodations and supports which are determined by an individualized education program (IEP) team and written into an IEP. An IEP is designed to address the unique education and behavior related needs of a student with a disability and enables the student to be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum and annual IEP goals. In Michigan, although an individual may continue to have a disability, entitlement to special education ends when the student either graduates from high school with a diploma, reaches the age of 26, or when the parent, or student who has turned 18, revokes consent for special education.

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Creating a 504 Plan

Parents can request an evaluation. It is recommended, although not required, to do so in writing. Parents must give consent for the school to evaluate a student for eligibility under Section 504. If a student is found eligible and in need of accommodations, the 504 plan will list accommodations and supports a school will provide in order for the student to have access to an education. Examples are additional time for tests, note taking assistance, or other supports based on the needs of the student. For a webinar, tips for developing a 504 plan, 504 plan templates, and more go to [Michigan Alliance for Families: Section 504](#).

Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*

What is the *Rehabilitation Act*?

The *Rehabilitation Act* of 1973 is a federal civil rights law for all people with disabilities. It is not specifically an education law. The law protects all people with disabilities from discrimination and makes provisions for providing rehabilitative services. Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* requires all public school districts to make accommodations for eligible students through a 504 plan.

Can a student have a 504 Plan and an IEP?

When a student meets the requirements under Section 504 and is also eligible for special education programs and services, the student's needs will be supported through an IEP. Since the IEP will include accommodations based on the student's needs, a separate 504 plan is not needed.

Resources



[Michigan Alliance for Families:
Section 504](#)

- [Center for Parent Information and Resource \(CPIR\) - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](#)
- [Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\): Section 504 Review and Students with Medical Disabilities \(Video\)](#)
- [Disability Rights Michigan, Section 504](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights: Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)
- [U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights: Frequently Asked Questions About Section 504 and the Education of Children with Disabilities](#)