

# Help Me Understand My 504 Plan!

A Guide for Students



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# What is a 504 Plan?

A 504 Plan is a plan that helps students with disabilities or health conditions do well in school. It makes sure you get the support you need to learn just like everyone else. It's called a 504 Plan because it comes from Section 504 of a law called the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This is a civil rights law. A civil rights law is a law that helps protect people from being treated unfairly because of things like their disability, race, or who they are.

# Why do I need a 504 Plan?

You may need a 504 Plan for different reasons.

1. You have a health condition or disability that makes school harder for you.
2. You need supports to help you be successful at school.
3. It helps you stay in regular classes while still getting the help you need.
4. **It's the law!** 504 Plans make sure students with disabilities or health conditions get the support they need so they can learn like everyone else.

# What are accommodations?

Accommodations are a very important part of your 504 Plan. Accommodations are changes that help you learn the same things as other students but in a way that works better for you.

Some examples of accommodations are:

- Extra time to finish tests or assignments
- Taking breaks during class and tests
- Sitting in a quiet or special spot in the classroom
- Getting help with organizing your work
- Using tools like a calculator, fidgets, or noise cancelling headphones
- Getting copies of notes or class materials
- Being allowed to eat snacks or take medicine at school
- Being able to leave class early or come in late
- Using a computer or tablet for writing or reading
- Getting an extra set of textbooks at home or on your computer
- Having instructions read out loud
- Being allowed to use speech-to-text tools
- Going to the nurse when needed

- Using a listening device

## What is a 504 Plan meeting?

A 504 Plan meeting is all about you. This is when people who support you at school come together to talk about how you are doing and how to help you learn better. This meeting is not about you getting in trouble, it's a meeting to make sure you are getting the right support so you can do your best.

Your 504 Plan meeting will happen at least once a year to make sure your plan is still working and to make any changes if needed.

## Who will be at my 504 Plan meeting?

The people at your 504 Plan meeting are there to work together to make a plan that helps you do your best at school. Your 504 Plan team members will include:

- YOU – Your voice is important.
- Your Parents or Guardians
- Your teachers
- A counselor or school nurse
- A 504 coordinator or special education staff member
- Sometimes other people that know about your needs, like your doctor or therapist

## What are the different parts of my 504 Plan?

1. **Your Information** - This part has your name, grade, and school.
2. **Your Disability or Health Condition** – This part explains why you need a 504 Plan.
3. **What You Need Help With** – This part explains what is hard for you at school.
4. **Accommodations** – This part is where your teachers can read about things that help you learn better. This section includes a list of changes or extra support that the school MUST provide to you.
5. **Who Will Help You** – This part names the teachers or other staff members who will make sure your accommodations happen.
6. **Review Date** – This part explains when your 504 Plan will be reviewed to see if it's working or needs changes.

# What if the school is not following my 504 Plan?

If you are not getting the help you are supposed to – it’s OKAY TO SPEAK UP. Here are some ideas of what you can do:

1. Talk to a trusted adult. This can be a teacher, a counselor, your parent or guardian, or anybody else that you trust. You can say something like:  
“I’m supposed to get \_\_\_\_\_ in my 504 Plan, but it’s not happening.”
2. Ask to talk about your 504 Plan. This is called a 504 Plan Meeting. You can ask a trusted adult to help set this up for you.
3. Keep speaking up. You can respectfully remind people about what’s in your plan. Remember this is a **LEGAL DOCUMENT**. This means that schools must follow your 504 Plan.

## Why should I care about my 504 Plan?

It is important that your voice is heard. The more you understand about your 504 Plan, the more power you have over your own education. It is the school’s legal responsibility to make sure you get the support you need to be successful at school.

You can be your own **self-advocate**. This is a skill you will need your whole life. Being a self-advocate means speaking up for yourself and letting people know what works best for you and what doesn’t work for you.

## Terms to Know

TERM	DEFINTION
504 Plan	A plan that gives you extra help or changes at school if you have a disability or health condition.
Accommodations	Changes that make learning easier for you without changing what you are expected to learn.
Civil Rights Law	A law that protects people from being treated unfairly because of things like a disability or your race.
Section 504	The law that says schools must help students with disabilities learn like everyone else. This is part of the civil rights law called the Rehabilitation Act.
Equal Access	Making sure every student has the same chance to learn and take part in school activities.

General Education Classroom	A regular classroom where all students learn together.
Modifications	Changes to what you are expected to learn or do in school.
Self-Advocate	When you respectfully speak up for yourself and let others know what works best for you in school.
Special Education Classroom	A smaller class with extra support and is taught by a special education teacher.