

Factsheet for Virginia's Parents

In What Ways are 504 Plans and IEPs Different?

	IDEA	Section 504
Eligibility for Services	Your student must meet very specific disability specific disability criteria and require special education and related services in order to access the general curriculum.	It is easier to qualify for a 504 plan . A student can have any disability that affects his life in a major way and, also affects learning.
The Plan	There are strict legal requirements that say who must participate in IEP development, and the IEP itself is very comprehensive, including all special education and related services in addition to accommodations. Parents are equal members of an IEP team .	A 504 plan is created by a team who knows the student who and understands testing data and service options. There is no standard format for a 504 plan . It does not have to be a written document--but it should be to protect the student. Parents do not have to be included when developing a 504 Plan.
Educational Benefit	IDEA states that your student will benefit from his education. Routine progress reporting is required under IDEA.	Section 504 provides for access to the general curriculum. Routine progress reporting is not required under 504.
Procedural Safeguards	IDEA has more parent consent requirements, the right to an independent educational evaluation, the right to be equal participants in your student's education; and more rights under disciplinary procedures. IDEA also provides for standardized methods to resolve disagreements.	The rights listed in the column on IDEA are either not available or are much more limited under Section 504.

504 Plan or IEP?

Mary uses a wheelchair due to Muscular Dystrophy. She needs more time to get to class and breaks to stretch. Mary performs well academically. Mary can benefit from a 504 Plan to put these accommodations in writing so that all her teachers understand her needs.

Mark has Dyslexia, a learning disability. His dyslexia significantly affects his ability to access the general curriculum, and Mark needs specialized services and supports, including reading instruction, changes to the math curriculum and more time to take tests. Mark likely needs an IEP to be successful.

Jennifer has Autism. She gets good grades, but has challenges with focus and processing. She needs to sit up front, have more time for tests, and needs help with notetaking. She does not need specialized instruction or related services and can benefit from a 504 plan.

PEATC's mission focuses on building positive futures for Virginia's children by working collaboratively with families, schools and communities to improve opportunities for excellence in education and success in school and community life.

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