

A Guide to Section 504: What You Need to Know to Support Your Cancer Survivor in School

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TRAINING & CONSULTING GROUP

A note about this guide

Dear Parent, Guardian or Support Person,

As an educator for over twenty years, and a parent of a cancer survivor, I've seen the Section 504 process unfold from both sides. I've learned a lot over these years; but mostly, that no matter what the situation parents/guardians/support persons are our children's first, best, and most impactful advocates!

My daughter was diagnosed with Pre-B Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia the fall of her fifth grade year. I remember one of the first things- once the initial shock and fear wore off- that I worried about was "when will my daughter be able to get back to school?" and "what can we do to ensure she is successful once she returns?" Luckily, as an educator I understood how to navigate the educational process. I also knew that her success would be due, in large part, to a strong "504 plan". Now, a junior in high school she still has a 504 plan to help meet her unique needs.

It's with this knowledge and appreciation for the unique needs of our cancer survivors that this guide was developed. I'm thankful to be able to use my experience to provide you with a comprehensive guide to understanding Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. This guide is designed to give you an overview of law, the 504 evaluation process, and how it can be used to benefit your child. Most importantly, this guide will give you tools, tips and resources you can use to advocate for your child's best interests in school.

Depending on where your child and family are in the cancer journey you may, or may not, be thinking about transitioning back to school. When you are, I hope you use this guide to help you to navigate and demystify the process, and to arm yourself with the knowledge and power you need to feel confident to advocate for your child's educational rights.

All the best,



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What is Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973¹?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is **separate and different** from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Both acts are federal legislation that guarantees the rights of children with learning and other disabilities to a free and appropriate public education. Children under IDEA are protected by the creation of an Individual Education Program (IEP), while children under Section 504 are protected by the creation of a 504 plan.

While some cancer survivors may qualify for protections under IDEA, this guide will focus solely on how Section 504 can be used to support cancer survivors' success in school and adulthood.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits disability discrimination by recipients of federal financial assistance. **All** public schools and school districts, as well as all public charter schools and magnet schools, that receive Federal financial assistance from the US Department of Education must comply with Section 504.

Section 504 provides students:

- protections against discrimination on the basis of disability; and
- students who qualify under Section 504 are entitled to receive regular or special education, and related aids and services that are designed to meet their individual educational needs as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities are met ([USDOE, 2016](#), pg. 2).

Section 504 is designed to “level the playing field” for students with disabilities so they are able to achieve at the same level as their peers.

Who is eligible for Section 504 and how do they qualify?

Students who are determined to have a disability, temporary or permanent, are eligible under Section 504.

An individual with a disability is defined as a person who:

- has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life function or activity;
- has a record of such an impairment; or
- is regarded as having such an impairment.

¹ <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-resource-guide-201612.pdf>

Who is qualified for Section 504 protections?

A student with a disability is a *qualified individual* with a disability if the student is of an age at which:

- students without disabilities are provided elementary and secondary educational services; or
- it is mandatory under State law to provide elementary and secondary educational services to students with disabilities ([USDOE, 2016](#), pg. 9).

Why would I want my child to be eligible for Section 504?

Chances are your child has side-effects or late-effects from their cancer treatments that are impacting one or more of their major life functions or activities. If this is the case, your child will likely need accommodations and supports at school to be successful. Students who are qualified under Section 504 are entitled to a Fair Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). School districts often document the elements of an individual student's FAPE under Section 504 in a document, typically referred to as a Section 504 plan ([USDOE, 2016](#), pg. 10).

A 504 plan is a “contract” between the parents/guardians/support persons and the school. It describes the specific accommodations and supports the school agrees to provide for the student.

The “504 plan” is a legally binding document that describes the specific accommodations that will be made for the student and who is responsible for delivering them. It also describes the setting where they will be delivered- general education classroom or special education classroom. A 504 plan is designed to ensure that the needs of the disabled student are met as adequately as if they were not disabled.

As your child enters high school, the 504 plan, especially any testing accommodations are used for college entrance assessments like the ACT or SAT. Additionally, once your child graduates from high school their 504 plan will transition with them to college. Colleges and universities are not required to implement the 504 plan in the same way as elementary and secondary schools, but they do offer supports to students

based on their existing 504 plans. The 504 plan also transitions into adulthood for those who continue to need Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)² accommodations in the workplace.

Is my childhood cancer survivor eligible for Section 504?

Your child likely does qualify for Section 504 protections based on either their current diagnosis and treatment, or the late effects of cancer treatment.

**Your child is likely to be eligible for Section 504 if:
they are school aged;
can be considered “disabled” due cancer diagnosis and treatment;
and their disability is impacting a major life function.**

Current effects of cancer treatment

Children with cancer can be impacted in multiple ways that would fall within the determination of a child with a disability (physiologically, psychologically, cosmetically, or anatomically). You should consult your child’s oncologist to discuss any current effects of cancer treatment.

In addition to the treatment, and side effects of medications your child’s treatment protocol and schedule will likely impact their ability to attend school regularly. This impact on access to school and learning would be considered an impact on a major life function- schooling.

Late effects of cancer treatment

According to the [American Cancer Society](https://www.cancer.org/treatment/children-and-cancer/when-your-child-has-cancer/late-effects-of-cancer-treatment.html)³, “Most treatment side effects appear during or just after treatment and go away a short time later. But some problems might not go away or might not show up until months or years after treatment. These problems are called late effects”.

² https://www.ada.gov/ada_title_I.htm

³ <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/children-and-cancer/when-your-child-has-cancer/late-effects-of-cancer-treatment.html>

The [National Cancer Institute](#)⁴ provides a comprehensive list of late effects can impact cancer survivors:

- Organs, tissues, and body function
- Growth and development
- Mood, feelings, and actions
- Thinking, learning, and memory
- Social and psychological adjustment

Cancer survivors will be monitored by their doctors and nurses after completing treatment for late effects. Parents/guardians/support persons should also pay close attention to any changes in their children regarding their learning, attention, behavior and emotional states.

Common effects of childhood cancer treatment

The table below presents some of the most common learning and physiological effects of childhood cancer. Whether your child experiences these effects may be influenced by the type of cancer, the medications and procedures used during treatment, and your child's age, gender and health prior to cancer diagnosis. These effects may be experienced during treatment or years after treatment.

Parents/guardians/support persons should use information to talk with your child's doctors to determine if your child is suffering from these, or other effects. Your doctor can help determine, based on this information, whether your child would qualify for the determination of a child with a "disability" for the purposes of Section 504. This determination, along with your child's diagnosis and treatment plan should be shared with your child's school during the 504 evaluation process.

⁴ <https://www.cancer.gov/types/childhood-cancers/late-effects-pdq>

Table 1: *Common Effects of Childhood Cancer Treatment*⁵

Common Learning Effects/Problems	Common Physiological Effects/Problems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning disabilities • Lower IQ scores, which can vary depending on the intensity of the treatment • Lower academic achievement test scores • Problems with memory and attention • Poor hand-eye coordination • Slowed development over time • Behavior problems • Non-verbal skills like math • Emotions • Problems with memory • Problems with paying attention • Trouble with solving problems • Trouble with organizing thoughts and tasks • Slower ability to learn and use new information • Trouble learning to read, write, or do math • Trouble coordinating movement between the eyes, hands, and other muscles • Delays in normal development • Social withdrawal or trouble getting along with others • Depression and suicidal ideation • Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neurological problems which may include seizures, headache, and neuropathy • Pituitary gland dysfunction which can result in: fatigue, listlessness, poor appetite, cold intolerance, and constipation • Vision problems which may be due to prosthetics due to surgery; blurred vision, double vision, and glaucoma • Hearing problems which can include: hearing loss, ringing in the ears, trouble hearing words when background noise levels are high, dizziness (if treatment affects the inner ear) • Thyroid dysfunction which can result in: extreme tiredness, dry skin, unexplained weight gain, constipation, slowed bone growth, poor memory, depression, and thinning hair • Muscles/bones effects like: unequal growth (the treated side of the body doesn't grow the same way as the untreated side), bone pain, joint stiffness, changes in the way the child walks, weak bones that can break easily • Heart/cardiovascular which may include: heart disease, damage the heart muscle or cause problems with its rhythm • Lung problems may include: decreased lung volume (lungs can't hold as much air), shortness of breath, which might be worse with exercise, constant cough, lung tissue that becomes scarred and thickened (called

⁵ <https://www.cancer.gov/types/childhood-cancers/late-effects-pdq>

	pulmonary fibrosis), which limits how much the lungs can expand, inflamed lung tissue (called pneumonitis), which can cause trouble breathing
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What do I do if I think my child needs a 504 plan?

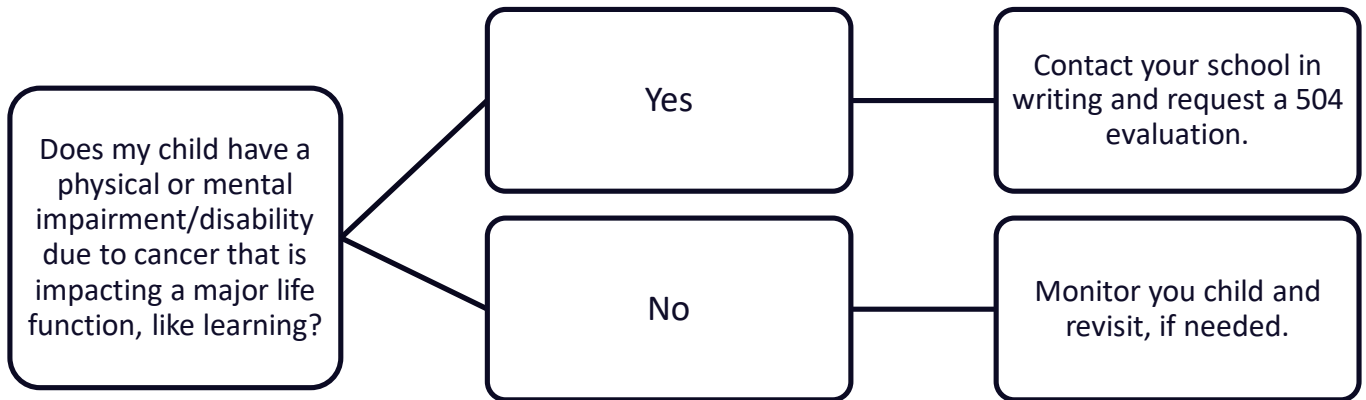
If a parent/guardian/support person believes his or her child has a disability-whether temporary or permanent, they may ask a principal, counselor, social worker, or teacher to arrange for an evaluation of the student ([USDOE, 2016](#), pg. 18). Parents/guardians/support persons should notify their child’s school in writing that their child is in need of related services because of a disability due to their cancer diagnosis or treatment (see sample letter Appendix A).

Although a parent/guardian/support person does not have an absolute right to a Section 504 evaluation; upon request, a school must evaluate a student if the school has reason to believe the student is in need of special education or related services because of a disability.

- If the school agrees that the student should be evaluated under Section 504, the evaluation must be completed in a timely manner. This is usually within 60 calendar days.
- If the school does not agree to evaluate the student, the school must inform the parents/guardians/support persons of this in writing and inform them of their right, and the process to follow, to challenge the school’s decision.

If a parent/guardian/support person disagrees with any decisions regarding the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of his or her child, the parent/guardian/support person may seek an impartial hearing (often called a due process hearing) that provides the parents/guardians/support persons with an opportunity to participate and permits representation by an attorney and a review procedure ([USDOE, 2016](#), pg. 18).

Parents/guardians/support persons can use the following decision tree to determine whether or not your child needs a 504 plan:



What is included in the Section 504 evaluation process?

The 504 evaluation process can be initiated by the parents/guardians/support persons or by the school directly. Regardless of who starts the process, it should always include:

- an evaluation to determine disability and impact on major life function(s)
- a meeting to review evaluation results and other data
- a determination of a disability and eligibility for Section 504
- (for eligible students) a determination of appropriate accommodations and development of a plan
- implementation of the plan
- annual review of the plan

The 504 evaluation process is summarized in the following graphic. Each step of the process is described in detail in the following sections of the guide.



What happens during a 504 evaluation?

When a school is aware of a student's disability, or has reason to suspect a student has a disability, and the student needs or is believed to need special education or related services, it would be a violation of Section 504 if the school delays or denies the evaluation ([USDOE, 2016](#), pg. 12). Under Section 504, school districts must conduct an evaluation in a timely manner, typically within 60 days.

A school district must evaluate students who are suspected of having a disability, or more than one disability, in all related or all specific areas of educational need ([USDOE, 2016](#), pg. 13). This evaluation shall be done at no cost to parents/guardians/support persons. The evaluation of a student must be individualized.

During the evaluation, the 504 team will use a variety of sources to minimize errors. The information must be documented by the 504 coordinator, and all significant factors related to the student's learning process must be considered. Again, these sources and factors may include aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social and cultural background, and adaptive behavior.

Although Section 504 does not require a specific process, school districts must have standards and procedures to evaluate students who may have a disability and need special education or related services. Specifically, the evaluation standards and procedures must ensure that:

- Evaluations consist of more than IQ tests;
- Evaluations measure specific areas of educational need. These could include speech processing, inability to concentrate, and behavioral concerns;
- Tests are selected and administered to the student in a manner that best ensures that the test results accurately reflect the student's aptitude or achievement or other factor being measured, rather than reflect the student's disability, except where those are the factors being measured;
- Tests and other evaluation materials are validated for the specific purpose for which they are used; and
- Tests are appropriately administered by trained personnel ([USDOE, 2016](#), pg. 16).

What is the purpose of a 504 plan meeting?

Throughout the Section 504 evaluation process, a knowledgeable group of people will determine if the student has a disability and, if so, what services the student needs. This meeting should take place in a timely manner, usually within 60 days of the request for evaluation made in writing by the parent/guardian/support person.

This knowledgeable group of people is often called the "504 team". The team usually includes:

- school 504 coordinator/administrators,

-
- the child’s teachers,
 - the child’s parents/guardians/support persons, and

The team may also include:

- students,
- nurse,
- counselor, and
- school psychologist

How does the team determine a disability?

In determining a student’s disability and needs, the 504 team will meet to review the results of the evaluation and any additional data or information that can be provided by teachers, parents/guardians/support persons or other adults knowledgeable about the child/students. The team should consider:

- aptitude and achievement tests,
- teacher recommendations,
- physical condition,
- social or cultural background,
- adaptive behavior, and
- medical diagnosis or the results of a medical assessment obtained by the school district ([USDOE, 2016](#), pg. 19).

How does the team determine appropriate accommodations?

During the 504 meeting, once the team has determined eligibility they will identify the appropriate accommodations, aids or services that the child/student needs given their disability based on the evaluation of all available data.

Students who are identified as having a disability and needing special education and/or related aids and services are entitled to special education and a broad range of supplemental and related aids and services, as needed, such as tutors, note-takers, or one-on-one aides; assistive technology, psychological and counseling services; or speech or occupational therapy. These services and supports are called **accommodations**.

Accommodations shouldn’t be selected based on a stereotypical child’s needs, but rather based on each individual child’s needs. It is important to choose accommodations that help address and minimize the

effect of the disability on the major life function (learning), and align with your child’s specific learning needs.

There are no limits to the number of accommodations that can be included in a 504 plan, but accommodations should only be selected by the team if the team believes it will address what is being impacted by the disability. Parents/guardians/support persons should advocate for the specific accommodations that they believe best aligns to their child’s needs, and those that they believe will make the biggest impact on their child’s success.

To the extent that services and aids, or changes to policies and procedures for a student with a disability can be implemented by a student’s regular education teacher, the regular education teacher is responsible for implementing them ([USDOE, 2016](#), pg. 24).

**Teachers are responsible for implementing the accommodations.
The school district is ultimately responsible for ensuring there are sufficient qualified personnel available to provide the supplemental and related aids and services.**

This guide provides parents/guardians/support persons a variety of accommodations in the following areas of need: medical, classroom environment, general academic, specific academic, executive functioning-organization, executive functioning-attention, aides/assistive technology, and distance learning (see Appendix B). Many of the accommodations provided were accessed via web sites and other resources.⁶ These accommodations are not exhaustive and should be considered a guide. You’ll notice that some accommodations are listed in more than one area of need.

Accommodations Worksheet

No one knows your child’s strengths, weaknesses and needs better than you do! The Accommodations Worksheet, and the sample accommodations provided in Appendix B, are designed to help you select the accommodations that you think will make the biggest impact on your child’s success. You should take this completed worksheet with you to your 504 meeting to help you identify the accommodations for your child’s 504 plan.

⁶ http://www.lovejoyschools.com/504_accomodations.htm
http://www.warmlinesrc.org/uploads/5/9/5/8/5958794/section_504_accomodations.pdf

How do I use the worksheet?

You may want to complete this worksheet with the social worker, oncologist or survivor team at your child’s hospital or clinic. If your child is old enough, and able to participate in this discussion, you may want to include them in selecting accommodations they think will have the most impact on their learning.

For each area of need identified, consider the accommodations in Appendix B. Remember that this isn’t a complete list of accommodations that are available, but just suggestions. Accommodations from the list can be used in more than one area of need. Once you’ve select the accommodations, write a brief note or explanation why you think that accommodation would benefit your child.

Below is a completed sample Accommodations Worksheet. The sample provides accommodations and notes for each area of need to demonstrate the types of notes you’ll want to make specific to the accommodations needed. Whether or not your Accommodations Worksheet will be completely filled out will depend on your child’s specific areas of need. It’s OK to leave sections blank if they don’t apply to your child.

A blank Accommodations Worksheet Template is available in Appendix C.

Accommodations Worksheet: *Sample*

Area of need	Accommodations	Notes
Medical (transitions, physical limitations, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fast Pass to be used to access nurse or early exit from classSecurity cart to transport	To make it between classes she needs to be able to leave before bell and classes are spread apart difficult to walk those distances; minimize fatigue
Classroom environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Work alternates short concentrated periods with breaks	Needs frequent breaks due to fatigue
Executive Functioning-Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Weekly check-in with teacher/advisor or learning coachBinder/organization checks	Struggles to stay organized and find things from school; needs support to organize, manage time and plan
Executive Functioning-Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide student with assignment bookCheck that homework assignments are written in full detail	Struggles to remember her assignments, or can’t remember because of poorly written notes
General Academic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Limit homework to 30 minutes per night	Due to fatigue, and lack of ability to focus and work for long periods of time; treatment schedule requires

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modified, alternative or decreased work Extra time to complete assigned work 	missed school and extra time helps keep up with her work
Specific Academic (reading, math, writing/spelling)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce the amount of required copying from board 	Muscle strength for extended writing has been impacted by treatment
Aides/Assistive Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audiobooks Provide computer with appropriate software for written assignments (word processing software includes spelling-prompt software, etc.) 	She has difficulty reading due to eye damage from tumor; muscle strength for extended writing has been impacted by treatment
Distance/Virtual Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assign a learning coach/advisor to check in at least weekly, monitor progress and work completion, and provide social/emotional support 	Needs additional support and structure to be successful in the online environment

How can I prepare for the 504 meeting?

Parents/guardians/support persons should come to the 504 meeting prepared to advocate for their child’s unique needs. It is important to remember that while everyone wants what’s best for your child, you are their advocate in the room.

Organize your child’s data before the 504 meeting

Parents/guardians/support persons should collect, organize, and prepare data and information about their child prior to their scheduled 504 meeting. If possible, parents/guardians/support persons should organize this information in a binder or folder to make it easy to review and share with the 504 team.

If your child is **currently in treatment** and needs support to be a successful learner, you will want to include:

- medical diagnosis or the results of a medical assessment;
- documents from your oncologist and/or social worker that details the treatment protocol and how treatment is impacting your child physiologically, mentally, emotionally, cosmetically or anatomically;
- any side effects of their medications; and
- completed accommodations worksheet.

If your child is **experiencing late effects** from cancer treatment, and it's impacting their learning and ability to be successful in school, you will want to include:

- medical diagnosis or the results of a medical assessment;
- documents from your oncologist and/or social worker about how their treatment's late effects are impacting your child physiologically, mentally, emotionally, cosmetically or anatomically; and
- completed accommodations worksheet.

If your child was **struggling academically before** their cancer diagnosis you will also want to include:

- your child's evaluations, report cards, classroom observations; and
- any email correspondence with your child's teachers about issues or concerns, and classwork or homework samples.

What can I expect during a 504 meeting?

Before the meeting starts the 504 coordinator should provide you a Procedural Safeguards document that explains your rights, and what you can do if you feel that these rights have been violated during the 504 process. Keep this document- read it later and keep it with your child's 504 data file for future reference.

The majority of the 504 team are school and/or district staff, so as a parent/guardian/support person you may feel outnumbered and overwhelmed. This is totally normal!

Having an agenda for the meeting will help:

My child's strengths.

How cancer treatment is/has impacted my child's ability to learn.

My child's frustration (preferably, in their own words).

What my child needs to be successful (accommodations that will help).

During the meeting:

- Your child's teacher(s) will provide information about how your child is doing in their class, what supports they might already be trying and how they are working.
- The administrator will share the results of the evaluation and the determination for eligibility.
- Once eligible, the team, including you, will discuss accommodations that would be appropriate for your child. The administrators, counselors and other staff may provide specific suggestions.

Once the team has agreed on the accommodations that will be included in the 504 plan, everyone will sign the. This signature indicates your attendance during the meeting, and that you understand the plan that has been created. Parents/guardians/support persons are not required to sign the plan; the school is required to implement the plan regardless of signature.

Tips for a successful 504 meeting

While a 504 meeting can feel intimidating, especially if it your first, it doesn't have to be if you:

- Remember the purpose of the 504 meeting (see pages 12-13).
- Bring someone else with you- whether this is your first 504 meeting or you've been to many, it's helpful to have someone else there to listen, take notes, pass you questions or ideas, and to be able to debrief with you afterwards.
- Come prepared with your:
 - Data/information binder- don't depend on or leave it to the school to have all of the data for the discussion.
 - Accommodations worksheet, with your notes.
 - Notebook, or blank sheets in your binder to take notes during the meeting.
- Ask clarifying questions to make sure that you understand the data and information that is being shared.
- Ask the 504 team to explain any acronyms that they are using during the meeting.
- Demonstrate your willingness to collaborate and partner with the school to come up with solutions.

What happens after the 504 meeting?

Your child's teacher(s) are responsible for implementing their 504 plan. The school's 504 coordinator (usually an administrator) will share copies of the 504 plan with all of your child's teachers. Teachers should begin to implement the accommodations immediately.

Remember:

Teachers are responsible for implementing the accommodations in your child's 504 plan. It is NOT yours or your child's responsibility to ask for accommodations to be implemented.

No matter their age or grade, they should know that their teacher(s) will be helping them learn best in ways that might not look the same for other students in their classes. Whether they attended the 504 meeting, or not, you should review their 504 plan and their specific accommodations with them.

It is important that they understand each of the accommodations that are in their 504 plan, and why they are included.

Depending on the specific accommodations included, you may be able to see evidence of the 504 accommodations being used through your child's homework or assignments. While your child is **not responsible** for asking for their accommodations, they should be able to let you know whether they are getting them or not. **Some children feel comfortable advocating for their accommodations, if they aren't being implemented; again, this is not their responsibility and doesn't excuse teachers from their responsibility to implement the 504 plan.**

How can I monitor my child's 504 plan?

After your 504 meeting you will want to check in with your child, their teacher(s) and the 504 coordinator to see how things are going. Your initial follow-up should be a few weeks (2-3 weeks) afterward your 504 meeting. You might want to ask:

- Are the accommodations being implemented in class?
- Does this vary by teacher (if your child has more than one teacher)?
- Which accommodations are most frequently being used?
- Are the accommodations helping or addressing the issues that they are designed to help?
- Do we need to meet again to discuss other options?

After this initial check-in, if you have questions or issues about how the 504 plan is working contact your child's teacher(s) directly. If needed follow up with the 504 coordinator as well.

How often is the 504 plan reviewed?

Your child's 504 plan should be reviewed, at least, annually. It is important to make sure you:

- Talk to your child, if it's age appropriate, about which accommodations are being used, how frequently and if they think they are helping.
- Track your child's academic performance and growth from the time the accommodations began.
- Have records of your communications between teachers and 504 coordinators, especially if you are concerned about how or whether the plan is being implemented properly.

During the annual review the 504 evaluation process is conducted using any new data and information to determine whether your child is still eligible for a 504 plan. Also, during the annual review the 504 team will discuss the accommodations that are currently being used to determine if they need to be updated, modified or changed based on your child's needs.

Effective 504 plans

If your child’s 504 plan has leveled the playing field, they should be “doing well”. That isn’t a sign they no longer need a 504 plan; rather, you need to continue using the plan to support their success!

What if the 504 plan isn’t working or teachers aren’t implementing the plan?

The 504 team can also come together more frequently if there are issues with implementation of the 504 plan or if circumstances change regarding your child’s diagnosis that further impact their learning. If this is the case, you will need to request a 504 meeting, in writing, to address these issues.

“Disagreements between parents/guardians/support persons and the school district regarding whether the school district has made FAPE available are subject to Section 504’s due process procedures” ([USDOE, 2016](#), pg. 25). In other words, parents/guardians/support persons can file a complaint against the school with the Office of Civil Rights if they believe the school or district is not complying with their child’s 504 plan. If this is the case, you’ll want to make sure you have documentation and evidence to support your claims.

References

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools (December 2016). Retrieved July 20, 2020 from: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-resource-guide-201612.pdf>.

Appendix A: Sample Request for 504 Evaluation⁷

Dear:

(Teacher's name, School Psychologist, Principal, 504 coordinator, send each member a copy, retain one for personal records)

I am submitting this letter in concern of my/our son/daughter _____. My/Our child is a student currently enrolled in the _____ at _____ school in the _____ school district. My child has a medical diagnosis of _____ that impacts his/her education experience. In lieu of this condition I/we would like to address some concerns with your Multidiscipline Evaluation Team. We would also like to review the services and potential services that my/our child would receive under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Please contact me within two weeks of the letter date, to make arrangements to discuss the potential options for my child. I can be reached at:

home telephone :

work telephone :

cell telephone :

Email Address:

If you or your academic team is in need of any more information or documentation, please call me.

Sincerely,

⁷ Phoenix Children's Hospital 1 Darn Cool School's 504 Plans for Children with Special Needs

Appendix B: Accommodations

Medical Accommodations

Accessibility:

- Fast Pass to be used to access nurse or early exit from class
- Excused absences or lateness
- May need to leave early or arrive late to class to avoid high traffic areas of campus
- Minimize the amount of textbooks that need to be carried between school and home
- Use of equipment, i.e., wheelchair to be used at school
- Intermittent homebound instruction
- Elevator key/pass to access second floor classrooms
- Classrooms assigned to first floor (if no elevator)
- Roller backpack/bag
- Security cart to transport student across campus during passing periods
- Assign “walking buddy” between classes

Communication:

- Parents/guardians/support persons will communicate with nurse about any medical issues or changes, the nurse will communicate with staff
- Staff must communicate and report any fever or excessive fatigue to nurse immediately

Supports:

- Modify length of school day or number of classes
- Dietary accommodations
- Provide private place to rest
- Homebound instruction
- Speech, occupational or physical therapy
- Counseling support or services
- Bus or specialized transportation, i.e., wheelchair accessible bus, door to door pickup/drop off
- Peer education, i.e., deliver Children’s Cancer Network’s HOPE program to peers, teachers and staff

Classroom Environment Accommodations

Accessibility:

- Preferred seating, close to the teacher or front of room
- Seat near 'study buddy'
- Testing in a separate, non-distracting location
- Visual distractions in classroom are minimal
- Auditory distractions in classroom are minimal
- Increase distance between desks
- Seat away from distracting stimuli
- Seat in study carrel or use partitions
- Reduce distractions on or near desk

Instruction:

- Small group setting for instruction, and/or testing or specific projects, as recommended
- Classroom has predictable daily routines
- Consistent and clear limits are set for classroom behavior
- Work alternates short concentrated periods with breaks
- Team teaching
- Identify teaching-style/student match (e.g. structured, nurturing, etc.)

Executive Functioning- Organization Accommodations

- Shorten assignments/work periods
- Simplify complex directions
- Break long assignments into smaller parts
- Assist student in setting short term goals
- Preferred seating, close to the teacher or front of room
- Provide completed copy of classroom notes/handouts
- Extended time for tests and classroom assignments; extensions for deadlines
- Weekly check-in with teacher/advisor or learning coach
- Binder/organization checks
- Remind student to check over work product
- Teacher to stand near student when giving directions or presenting lessons
- Increase novelty
- Alternate high and low interest tasks
- Increase choice of tasks

Executive Functioning- Attention Accommodations

Instruction and assignments:

- Give assignments one at a time
- Provide student with assignment book
- Check that homework assignments are written in full detail
- Supervise student in writing full assignment in book or provide written instructions
- Provide written checklist for getting organized
- Provide notebook with dividers and folders for work
- Plan academic instruction for student's peak attention time (e.g., a.m.)
- Require active responses in instruction (talking, moving, organizing, working at board, interacting with computer)

Supports:

- Check desk/notebook for neatness: reward it
- Provide extra set of books to keep at home
- Establish object placement routines
- Use color and physical/spatial organizers
- Provide cognitive behavioral feedback:
 - positive feedback for attention to task (frequency based on what student can currently do),
 - short-term reinforcers (e.g. happy face, check mark, star, in-class rewards), and
 - long-term (e.g. accumulate points for rewards at home)

Physical:

- Allow student to stand at times during seatwork (especially during end of task)
- Provide opportunity for 'seat breaks' (structure with errands, physical activity, etc.)
- Provide short break between assignments
- Give child substitute verbal or motor responses to make while waiting
- Provide fidget object for manual activity (e.g. koosh ball, clay, worry beads, etc.)

General Academic Accommodations

Time:

- Extended time on tests and classroom assignments
- Allow for frequent breaks due to fatigue
- State testing: extended time, directions read/clarified, read test when needed and frequent breaks
- Extra time to complete assigned work

Modified assignments:

- Modified, alternative or decreased work
- Assignments modified keeping the learning objective a focus
- Shorten assignments/work periods
- Simplify complex directions
- Break long assignments into smaller parts
- Reduce amount of homework
- Limit homework to _____ minutes per night
- Limit home SSR, simultaneous reading, or family reading to _____ minutes per night
- Adapt assignment to minimize writing (e.g. circle, cross out, write above line, etc.)
- Permit assignments to be printed or typewritten without penalty
- Permit writing assignments to be turned in on audio-cassette
- Permit writing assignments to be given orally
- Do not grade handwriting
- Do not grade spelling
- Permit extra credit assignments
- Permit re-submitted assignments

Aids/Supports:

- Verbal, visual, or technology aids
- Assistive technology, audio books or supports
- Tutoring/intervention support
- Assist student in setting short term goals
- Pair written instructions with oral instructions
- Develop private signal from pupil to teacher to request repetition of oral directions
- Repeat oral instructions
- Check homework daily

Specific Academic Accommodations

Teaching reading:

- Teach previewing strategies
- Select key passages
- Teach reading for meaning
- Teach phonetic decoding skills
- Use echo reading or simultaneous reading approach to reading acquisition
- Teach visual discrimination skills to reading acquisition
- Teach auditory discrimination skills to reading acquisition
- Teach underlining strategies

Reading practice:

- Encourage sustained silent reading
- Provide visual breaks after each line of the page
- Fold paper or cover paper so that only part is visible
- Read with window
- Enlarge print of written material
- Use highlighting system to limit amount of reading
- Use highlighting system to focus reading and studying
- Avoid oral reading
- Encourage oral reading
- Develop mnemonic strategies to address reversals

Writing/Spelling

Accessibility:

- Provide specialized software for word processing (e.g., enhanced spell checking, etc.)
- Do not require copying from board or book (provide photocopied instructions or problems or refer to number)
- Reduce the amount of required copying from board
- Adapt assignments to require less writing (e.g., provide photocopy, which may be enlarged, to circle, cross out write above/below line, etc.)
- Use electronic spell checker (hand-held and/or computer)

Assignments:

- Accept alternatives to written reports (oral, tape recorded, display, projects)
- Eliminate cursive writing
- Limit spelling list words
- Use simultaneous multisensory methods to encourage spelling memorization

- Fill in missing letters in preprinted portion of spelling word with omissions
- Circle correct version of word given several choices

Math

- Permit use of calculator
- Provide graph paper to space numbers
- Model correct computational procedure
- Encourage self-talk
- Provide enlarged print problems and work area
- Encourage turning lined paper sideways to maintain column alignment
- Use of manipulatives
- Drawing and modeling

General Aides/Assistive Technology Accommodations

- Provide peer assistance/adult assistance in note-taking
- Provide tape recorder and permit tape recording of class
- Provide keyboarding skills training
- Provide computer with appropriate software for written assignments (word processing software includes spelling-prompt software, etc.)
- Provide computer for in-class note-taking
- Provide instructional software in subject matter area: _____
(semi-independent, self-paced, repetition, variety, multi-sensory, non-judgmental feedback)
- Provide textbooks on audio tape (i.e. through aural media catalogue)
- Provide opportunity to complete written assignments on computer
- Provide extra set of textbooks which may be marked
- Provide enlarged copy of reading assignments/written assignments
- Provide tutor for specified period of time and frequency
- Classroom aide or allow parents/guardians/support persons to volunteer to provide additional support in class

Distance or Virtual Learning Accommodations⁸

- Assign a learning coach/advisor to check in at least weekly, monitor progress and work completion, and provide social/emotional support
- Put requests or directions in writing
- Establish a system that provides students enough notice about change in expectations or schedules
- Provide the students with self-monitoring resources, such as check lists, rubrics, or planning guides
- Providing instructional videos or screen shots of the specific behaviors that are expected in the online or blended learning environment will assist in the development of new skills
- Use of recorded content either for instruction or student assignments might allow them to participate more fully in the program
- Break instructional content or activities into smaller segments, thus allowing them to focus on the objectives in a way that does not cause undue stress or anxiety
- Provide an appropriate level of adult or peer supports necessary to help assist the student to better understand initial content, to practice or rehearse instructional strategies, or to appropriately assess educational functioning
- Offer one-on-one “office hours” or tutorials
- Ensuring that the acoustics of both the student’s learning environments, as well as that of the teacher, have been checked for their instructional effectiveness
- Limit the use of visually busy content to avoid confusion
- Augment or personalize real time chat sessions and lectures due to the speed of the verbal or written content being shared

⁸ <https://mvlri.org/research/publications/supporting-students-with-disabilities-in-k-12-online-and-blended-learning/>

Appendix C: 504 Accommodations Worksheet Template

Area of need	Accommodations	Notes
Medical		
Classroom environment		
Executive Functioning-Organization		

Executive Functioning- Attention		
General Academic		
Specific Academic (reading, math, writing/spelling)		

Aides/Assistive Technology		
Distance/Virtual Learning		
Other		