



Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: Fact Sheet

Section 504 is...

A federal civil rights law passed in 1973. It bans disability discrimination at public schools. It also applies to colleges and private schools that get federal funding. The law covers students of all ages.

Section 504 protects people who...

Have a disability. This means any physical or mental condition that substantially limits a major life activity, which can include reading, learning or concentrating.

The law is very broad

- It covers almost all conditions, including learning and attention issues like dyslexia, dyscalculia and ADHD.
- It can protect kids who don't qualify under the special education law, IDEA.

Section 504 requires public and private schools to...

Give reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities so they can have equal access to school activities. Schools don't need to change their programs—just make sure they're accessible.

504 plans

Public K–12 schools must also provide a 504 plan when a child's disability interferes with the ability to learn. This is part of a child's right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE). 504 plan supports may include...

Accommodations, like extended time on tests or using a calculator

Assistive technology, like audiobooks or recorders

School services, like speech therapy or study skills instruction (this is not as common)

Section 504 gives parents rights, too

For example, parental consent is required for a 504 plan, and parents have the right to receive notice of decisions about their child. When there's a dispute with a public school, parents have the right to an impartial hearing. Parents and students may also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.