



504 PLAN IEP



Understanding the Difference

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS IN NEW JERSEY

Both 504 Plans and IEPs are designed to support students and help them succeed in school, but they are not the same.

	504 PLAN Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act	IEP Individualized Education Program (IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
 WHO IS IT FOR?	Students with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (e.g., learning, concentrating, walking, seeing, hearing, working). The student does not need to have a specific learning disability.	Students who have a disability that meets one or more of the 13 categories under IDEA (e.g., specific learning disability, autism, speech/language impairment, other health impairment, etc.) and who need special education and related services .
 PURPOSE	To ensure students have equal access to education by removing barriers and providing accommodations.	To provide specialized instruction and related services to help the student make meaningful progress in the general education curriculum.
 SERVICES & SUPPORT	Provides accommodations and/or modifications to help the student access the learning environment (e.g., extra time, seating changes, breaks, assistive technology).	Provides specialized instruction, related services, and supports tailored to the student's unique needs (e.g., speech therapy, occupational therapy, counseling, behavior support).
 HOW IS IT DECIDED?	A 504 Plan is based on eligibility determined by the school's 504 team . Does not require a specific evaluation format under IDEA.	Eligibility is determined through a comprehensive evaluation and by an IEP team that includes teachers, specialists, and parents. Parental consent is required.
 LEGAL BASIS	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
 PLAN DOCUMENT	504 Plan	Individualized Education Program (IEP)
 REVIEWS	Reviewed at least annually (or as needed).	Reviewed at least annually (or more often if needed).
 PARENT RIGHTS	Parents have the right to be informed and to participate in meetings about the plan.	Parents are equal members of the IEP team and have procedural safeguards under IDEA, including mediation and due process rights.

