

## Successful 504 Meeting Tips

### Make sure you're invited.

Section 504 doesn't require schools to invite parents to 504 plan meetings. Make sure you find out when your child's annual 504 meeting will take place. Then ask to be invited. Ask early in the school year so you don't miss the meeting. Most schools are happy to have parents at the table.

### Pull and review your child's records.

Pull out your copies of your child's current 504 plan, recent progress reports and report cards. Collect samples of his homework, tests and notes from the teacher. Gather your own notes and observations. Review what you have, and look for issues that need attention. Where is your child making progress or still struggling? Which of the supports and services are (or are not) helpful? Are there any new challenges to report?

### Think about modifications and accommodations.

There are many modifications and accommodations that may help students with 504 plans. To figure out which your child may need, consider all learning difficulties, including organization and study skills. And if your child already has accommodations and modifications, do you think they're effective? If not, are there different things the school might try? For example, a child's assistive technology may need to be upgraded, replaced or discontinued. The team also needs to consider any new instruction and technology tools that might be more helpful for your child.

### Help the team get to know your child.

No one on the 504 committee knows your child the way you do. During the 504 plan meeting, share your perspective on your child's personality, interests, struggles and success. Describe how he handles homework and studying for tests. Also, tell them about his activities outside of school. This will give the school insights into your child's abilities and interests. It also will remind the team to tailor his 504 plan to him as an individual.

### Ask for clarification.

Even if you're well prepared, you may hear new terms and references during a 504 plan meeting. When this happens, ask for explanations. You have a right to understand every detail and decision. You may want to ask in advance for notes to be taken during the meeting. Then ask for a copy of the notes.

### Make sure the plan is complete and specific.

The rules for writing a 504 plan are a little loose, so ask for structure and specific details. For example, a teacher or school staff member needs to be responsible for

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every service, modification and accommodation listed in the plan. Their names should be included in the 504 plan.

### Request a copy of your child's new 504 plan.

Ask the committee leader to send you a copy of your child's new 504 plan. Keep the plan in a safe but convenient place. That way you can refer to it during the school year and take it with you to parent-teacher conferences.