

IEP (individualized educational plan)

- *Goal:* a specialized education plan for a child who has a disability that impacts how he/she learns in a general education curriculum
- *Origin:* Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a federal law that ensures special educational services are being provided, includes requirements for IEP content
- *Eligibility:* 1. A child has ≥ 1 of the 13 diagnoses in IDEA
2. The disability must affect how a child learns in a general education curriculum
- *Who comes up with plan?* The IEP team: child (> 14 yo), education decision maker (foster parent usually), DCF social worker, academic & special education teachers, school psychologist (carries out evaluation and interprets results), district representative (has knowledge about outside services)
- *What is in the plan?* A written document detailing learning goals, description of services, current status of child's academic and functional performance, annual education goals, how the school will measure progress, timing of service, accommodations, changes to what child is expected to learn, how child will participate in standardized tests (e.g. MCAS), how child will be included in general education classes & activities
- *When is consent needed?* Your signature on a consent form or letter is needed to initiate evaluation, and on the IEP document in order for school to provide services

- Special education accommodations for K-12 students
- No cost to caregivers
- Plan is reviewed yearly
- Child is re-evaluated every **3 years**

504

- *Goal:* an accommodation in the classroom that helps level the playing field for a child w/ a disability that may affect walking, learning, focus, communication, etc. Child continues to participate in general education curriculum with a 504.
- *Origin:* Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a federal civil rights law that protects an individual with a disability from being discriminated by program that receives federal \$ -> free appropriate public school education (FAPE)
- *Eligibility:* 1. A child w/ any disability (including learning or attention issues) that affects ability to learn in a general education classroom
 - Section 504 broadly defines disability -> a child who does not qualify for an IEP may qualify for a 504 plan
- *Who comes up with plan?* There is fewer criteria for who makes up a 504 team. The team may include the child, the education decision maker (foster parent usually), academic & special education teachers, the school principal, and guidance counselor
- *What is in the plan?* Unlike an IEP, a 504 does not need to be a written document. It typically defines the specific accommodation or support and the names of the people who will provide each service. It is important to identify who is overseeing the implementation of the 504 especially if the child is in high school.
- *When is consent needed?* A school can initiate and implement a 504 w/o permission from the education decision maker but the school must inform and invite the decision maker to all meetings.
- *Examples:* Extended time for tests & assignments, preferential seating, verbal/ visual/ technology aids

Information was gathered from the resources below. If you want to learn more, check out the following:

Autism Society of Massachusetts: IEP vs. 504 narrative

- [Understanding the Difference Between an IEP and a 504](#)

Understood: IEP vs. 504 table

- <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/the-difference-between-ieps-and-504-plans>

CASA: Comprehensive guide to IEP for foster parents

- Check resource folder

DESE: 13 conditions covered under the IDEA Act (eligibility for IEP)

- <https://www.doe.mass.edu/specialeducation/families/definitions.html>



Understood: 13 conditions covered under IDEA in lay terms (eligibility for IEP)

- <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/special-education-basics/conditions-covered-under-idea>