



# IEP vs 504 PLANS

*Understanding the difference  
so you can advocate with confidence.*



## IEP

Individualized Education Program

vs.

## 504 PLAN

Section 504 Plan



### DEFINITION

A legally binding plan under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for students who need special education and related services.

A plan under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that provides accommodations so a student can access and participate in school.



### WHO QUALIFIES?

Students who have a disability that impacts their educational performance and require specialized instruction or related services.

Students who have a disability that substantially limits one or more major life activities, but do not need special education.



### PURPOSE

To provide specialized instruction, related services, and support to help the student make meaningful educational progress.

To remove barriers and provide reasonable accommodation so the student has equal access to learning and school activities.



### WHAT IT INCLUDES

- Specialized instruction
- Related services (e.g., speech therapy)
- Goals and measurable progress
- Services tailored to individual needs
- May include modified curriculum

- Accommodations and modifications
- Access to general education
- Does not include specialized instruction
- Focus on equal access, not altering the curriculum



### EXAMPLES OF SUPPORTS

- Orton-Gillingham reading instruction
- Speech/language therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Social skills support
- Extended time + direct instruction

- Extra time on tests
- Preferential seating
- Breaks as needed
- Assistive technology
- Access to notes or outlines



### LEGAL FOUNDATION

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973



### REVIEWED / UPDATED

At least once per year.

At least once per year (or as needed).



### KEY TAKEAWAY

If your child needs **specialized instruction or related services** to make progress, an IEP may be the right fit.

If your child needs **accommodations or supports** to access learning in general education, a 504 Plan may be the right fit.



### REMEMBER:

Every child is unique. The best plan is the one that meets your child's individual needs and helps them succeed in school and beyond.

