



A Parent's Guide to 504 and IEP Services in Howard County Public Schools

A 504 Plan – A document developed for a school-aged student who has a disability that substantially limits a major life activity(ies) and requires accommodations to participate in the general education curriculum and school system programs and activities. The document includes accommodations for testing, classroom instruction, and school system sponsored co-curricular and extracurricular activity access.

Individualized Education Program – A document developed for a student ages 3–21 with a disability who requires specialized instruction. This document outlines where the student is currently functioning and identifies goals for one school year. The document also includes accommodations and modifications for testing and classroom instruction, services and placement decisions.

Individualized Family Service Plan – A family-focused document developed for a child from birth–3 who has a developmental delay and requires specialized instruction. This document outlines where the child is currently functioning and includes services, supports and resources to address functional outcomes for the child and family.

Process for obtaining a 504 Plan or an IEP – There are different processes and eligibility requirements for a 504 Plan or an IEP. The appropriate school team will work with you to address your concerns.

Document Components	504 Plan	IEP/IFSP
Eligibility Criteria	A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities	An educational disability that impacts a child's access to the general education curriculum and requires specialized instruction
Documented Disability	√ – several conditions	√ – 14 educational disability categories
Protected by law	√	√
Age of eligibility	*K– life	birth – 21
Accommodations	√	√
Curricular Modifications		√
Supplementary aids	√	√
Specialized instruction		√
Access to related services	√ – designed to give students with disabilities equal access	√ – required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education

**applies to eligible students in an HCPSS prechool program*