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New York State Education Department

Vocational/Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities
Vocational Rehabilitation Services
One Commerce Plaza, Room 1609
Albany, New York 12234
Telephone: 1-800-222-JOBS(5627)
Email: vesidadm@mail.nysed.gov

The Advocacy Center

590 South Avenue
Averill Court
Rochester, NY 14620
Telephone: 585-546-1700
Email: jblackwell@advocacycenter.com
Website: www.advocacycenter.com

U.S. Department of Education

Office for Civil Rights
Lyndon Baines Johnson Dept. of Ed. Bldg.
400 Maryland Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20202-1100
Telephone: 800-421-3481
Email: OCR@ed.gov

Western New York Independent Living, Inc. (WNYIL)

3108 Main Street
Buffalo, NY 14214
Telephone: 716-836-0822
Email contact: wnyilinfo@wnyil.org
Website: www.wnyil.org



Informational Websites:

For facts, tips and answers to more of your questions.

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
www.aacap.org

Great Schools
www.greatschools.org

Parent to Parent of WNY
www.parenttoparentnys.org

Boston Valley Elementary
Hamburg Central School District



Main Office Phone: 716-646-3240

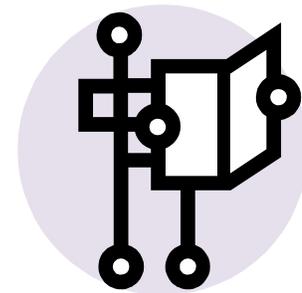
Last Update September 2010

Boston Valley Elementary
Hamburg Central School District



A Parent's Guide to
Section 504:

Top 10 Frequently Asked
Questions & Answers



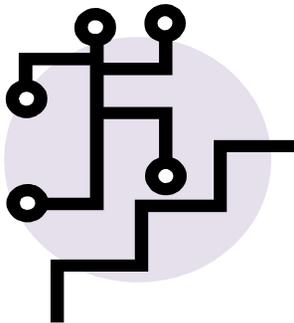
"Don't bunt. Aim out of the ballpark."
- David Ogilvy

Work together to 'level the playing field'.



Top 10 Questions That YOU Need To Know The Answers To:

1. What is Section 504?
2. What is a 504 plan?
3. How does a 504 plan differ from an IEP?
4. Who can refer a child for consideration for evaluation under Section 504?
5. How is a 504 plan created?
6. How often is a 504 plan updated?
7. What should I bring to meetings?
8. What do I need to know? What questions should I ask?
9. What do I tell my child? How do I include him/her?
10. Who do I contact if I have a problem?



“Success is the sum of small efforts,
repeated day in and day out.”

1. What is Section 504?

(Section 504 of the Rehab. Act of 1973, 45 CFR Part 84.)

Section 504 is an anti-discriminatory, civil rights statute developed in 1973. It prohibits the discrimination of students with disabilities in any program/activity that receives federal funding. Section 504 requires that the needs of these students with disabilities are met under reasonable accommodations.

2. What is a 504 plan?

A 504 plan is an individualized plan created by a committee in which the student’s disability and needs are identified. In addition, the accommodations that will be set forth by the school to meet the student’s needs are specifically outlined in the 504 plan.

3. How does a 504 plan differ from an IEP?

While both plans are written individualized plans, they differ in the purpose they serve. A 504 plan is developed for students who require only reasonable accommodations within the school environment. An IEP is developed for students who require specialized instruction in the case that reasonable accommodations do not sufficiently benefit the student.

4. Who can refer a child for consideration for evaluation under Section 504?

Anyone: Teachers, doctors, or parents. However, “the school district must also have reason to believe that the child is in need of services under Section 504 due to a disability.” (www.greatschools.org) Parents must be given notice before their child is evaluated/placed under Section 504.

5. How is a 504 plan created?

Identification: Educators have a legal duty to recognize students with disabilities. Doctors and parents can also request an evaluation or the implementation of an accommodation. Not all accommodations require an evaluation to be implemented.

Intervention: Educator implements strategies aimed to aide the student and documents results/concerns.

Referral to 504 Coordinator: Educator refers student if the interventions did not work, or if the concerns remain.

Review by 504 Committee: 504 team reviews and considers documentation (teacher’s reports, notes from doctors/agencies, grades, discipline reports, health/attendance records etc.), assigns additional accommodations and/or interventions and monitors for effectiveness.

6. How often is a 504 plan updated?

After the 504 plan is initially put in place the accommodations should immediately be applied. The committee will meet again after a period of at least 6 weeks. At this time they will determine if the plan is bringing success or if another route should be sought out. After this meeting, there are no set time lines for which the committee needs to meet on a yearly basis. The committee must meet to reevaluate the student every three years or whenever significant adjustments are made to the plan. As a parent, you have the right to request a committee meeting at any time.

7. What should I bring to meetings?

As the parent, it is important to attend your child’s 504 meetings prepared. Start a file containing a copy of your child’s current 504 plan, most recent evaluations, report cards, doctor’s notes and whatever else you would like to have the committee review and consider. Be sure that all paper work is updated and correct.

8. When going to a meeting, what do I need to know? What questions should I ask?

BEFORE heading to a meeting, know the 3 P’s:

People attending the meeting

Purpose of the meeting

Pertinent issues YOU want to discuss

Ask that your doctor’s notes and any updated information be recorded in the summary of the meeting. Be sure you know what the next step is before you leave the meeting. If you do not understand, ask for clarification. The committee is there to support you and your child.

9. What do I tell my child? How do I include him/her?

Your child will more likely thrive under Section 504 if they understand that their 504 plan is a plan for success. It is put in place to help them *achieve*, not to hinder them or make them stand out. It should be a plan that the child “owns”: guide them in self-reflection of the progress they have made and listen to their personal needs and goals.

One of the most important things you can do for your child is to empower them to be a self-advocate.

10. Who do I contact if I have a problem?

There are steps to take when you suspect a 504 violation, noncompliance, or have a question about the process.

1. *Talk to the teacher-* Try to work things out directly with the teacher first, as he/she is usually the one responsible for implementing the accommodations.
2. *Talk to the principal-* If the teacher is unwilling or unable to provide accommodations, make a specific request to the principal for what is needed.
3. *Talk to the 504 coordinator-* If both the teacher and principal are unwilling or unable to execute the plan, contact the school’s 504 officer. The plan may need to be amended so that it is workable, or it may need to be more strongly enforced.
4. *Talk to the state parent advocacy center-* Other parent advocates with experience can help find answers to your questions. (see back page for contact info.)
5. *Contact the U.S. Dept. of Education Office of Civil Rights-* If you feel further enforcement is needed, contact the U.S. Dept. of Education. (see back page for contact info.)