

SUPPORTING THE STUDENT WITH SICKLE CELL DISEASE



CAREGIVER INFORMATION ON 504 PLANS AND IEPs

As your child prepares to return to school, keep these items in mind:

Both 504 Plans and Individual Education Plans (IEPs) can be used for K–12 students who are in need of assistance beyond what is provided in a general education classroom setting. Both 504 Plans and IEPs can make a significant difference in the student’s learning experience. 504 Plans and IEPs are similar in some ways but quite different in others. This chart compares them to help you understand the differences.

	504 PLAN	IEP
General description	<p>A 504 Plan is a plan for how a student with a chronic illness such as sickle cell disease will access learning in a general education setting without the need for special education programming and services.</p> <p>More information can be found in the handbook <i>Supporting the Student with Sickle Cell Disease: A Comprehensive Handbook for Your School Community</i>.</p>	<p>An Individual Education Plan (IEP) is a plan for a student’s special education programming at school. A student is eligible for an IEP if their academic needs cannot be met in the general education classroom without additional special education programming and related services such as school-based speech therapy, occupational therapy or physical therapy.</p> <p>More information can be found in the handbook <i>Supporting the Student with Sickle Cell Disease: A Comprehensive Handbook for Your School Community</i>.</p>
What it does	<p>Provides services and changes to the learning environment in the general education classroom to meet the needs of the student as adequately as other students. For students with sickle cell disease, 504 Plans should include accommodations to address absenteeism, academic performance and physical complications.</p>	<p>Provides individualized special education programming and related services to meet the unique needs of the student. For students with sickle cell disease, diagnosis-specific information and accommodations to address absenteeism, academic performance and physical complications should also be included in the accommodations/modifications section of the child’s IEP.</p>

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	504 PLAN	IEP
Who is eligible?	A student from kindergarten through college who has a physical, mental or other health impairment that interferes with major life activities, but can learn from the regular education curriculum.	A student in kindergarten through 12th grade who has a disability that requires specialized education.
What type of accommodations can be provided?	The student learns from the regular curriculum but has accommodations such as extra time to finish assignments, an extra set of books at home and access to a water bottle on the student's desk throughout the day.	A special education program that is entirely different from the learning plans that non-IEP students are using. For example, a special educator may use a different method for teaching math. In addition, related services can be provided, such as transportation, speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, psychological counseling and assistive technology.
What is the process for obtaining one?	A caregiver writes a letter to the school principal explaining the student's diagnosis and type of accommodations the student needs. Caregivers are also encouraged to provide school personnel with documentation from the child's healthcare provider that explains the child's diagnosis and type of accommodations the student needs. Additionally, the school can and may conduct its own evaluation to supplement the documentation provided by the student's caregivers.	School personnel may suggest a multidisciplinary team evaluation or a caregiver may request the same in a letter to the school principal. The team evaluates the student's health and learning style to identify needs or disabilities. If the family obtains a private evaluation, the school district can consider the findings but is not required to do so. For students with sickle cell disease, caregivers are encouraged to provide school personnel with documentation from the student's healthcare provider that explains the student's diagnosis and type of diagnosis-specific accommodations the student needs.
Can the plan ever be changed?	Yes, the team monitors the student and will adjust the plan as necessary and annually. Caregivers may request a 504 Plan review meeting at any time.	Yes, the team is required to monitor the student and adjust the plan as necessary and annually. Caregivers may request an IEP meeting at any time to review or suggest changes.
What about college students?	All documentation must be provided by the student (colleges will not test for learning disabilities/impairments). The 504 Plan will outline accommodations for the student, such as extended time for tests, priority registration, help with note taking or a TTY for a student with hearing impairment. Check with your college's disability office for more information.	IEPs do not exist in the post-secondary/college setting.

References:

Education Law Center. (n.d.). *A Comparison of the Rights of a Child with a Disability Who Needs 'Special Education' and a Child Who is a 'Protected Handicapped Student'* [Brochure]. Author.

Team, U. (n.d.). The Difference Between IEPs and 504 Plans. Retrieved from <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/the-difference-between-ieps-and-504-plans>

Additional Resources:

U.S. Department of Education (DOE): A Guide to the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) <https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>

U.S. Department of Education (DOE): Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/504-resource-guide-201612.pdf>

