



Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: Fact Sheet

Section 504 is...

A federal civil rights law passed in 1973. It bans disability discrimination at public schools. It also applies to colleges and private schools that get federal funding. The law covers students of all ages.

Section 504 protects people who:

HAVE A DISABILITY.

This means any physical or mental condition that substantially limits a major life activity, which can include reading, learning or concentrating.

The law is very broad...

- It covers almost all conditions, including learning and attention issues like dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD, sickle cell, organic brain issues and many other conditions.
- It can protect students who don't qualify under the special education law, IDEA.

Section 504 requires public schools to...

- 1) Conduct an evaluation to determine if a student has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity
- 2) If found eligible, the school will generate appropriate accommodations

504 Plans

The function of 504 is not to maximize a student's potential—it is to level the playing field.

Section 504 gives parents rights, too

For example, parental consent is required for a 504 plan, and parents have the right to receive notice of decisions about their child. When there's a dispute with a public school, parents have the right to an impartial hearing. Parents and students may also file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights.