

**Record: 1**

Section 504 accommodation plans.

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**Article**

Discusses the development of Section 504 accommodation plans aimed at providing the necessary support that students with disabilities need in order to succeed in the general education classroom. Kinds of accommodations; Case study.

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## **SECTION 504 ACCOMMODATION PLANS**

**Discusses types of accommodations and offers an individualized plan for students qualifying under Section 504**

Bobby, a fourth grader recently diagnosed with attention-deficit disorder (ADD), does not complete class assignments, frequently forgets to bring necessary materials to class, and often calls out answers to questions in class. Susan, an 11th grader, is noticeably withdrawn, complains regularly of headaches and stomach-aches, frequently requests to go to her locker or the rest room, and has been diagnosed with an eating disorder. Joel, a kindergartner with asthma, uses an inhaler, occasionally experiences shortness of breath, and frequently informs his teachers that he needs additional rest.

What do these students have in common? Although they are not currently receiving special education services, students such as Bobby, Susan, and Joel have special needs that require a response from the general education staff and adjustments in the curriculum (Council of Administrators in Special Education, 1991). This response comes in the form of an individualized accommodation plan, an essential element in providing a free, appropriate public education within the legal framework of Subpart D of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Section 504 applies to individuals who have special needs but who are ineligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA). Children with attention-deficit disorder, communicable diseases, medical conditions, temporary conditions due to illness or accident, arthritis, cancer, special health-care needs, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), AIDS-related complex (ARC), or those infected with the human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV) are potential recipients of 504 services (Council of Administrators, Office of Civil Rights, 1993).

When parents, guardians, or school personnel believe that a student may be entitled to 504 services, a Section 504 referral should be made, and district personnel must determine if the student is qualified. The school district must have procedures that include a review process and a decision point that answers the following questions (Montana Office of Public Instruction, 1992):

1. Does the student have a physical or mental impairment?
  2. Does the impairment affect one of the major life activities such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, or working?
- If the answers to these questions are yes, the student may be entitled to a Section 504 accommodation plan.

### **Accommodation Plans**

An accommodation plan is a document that "details the adjustments or modifications made by the classroom teacher(s) and other school staff to enable the students to benefit from their educational program" (Utah Office of

Education, 1992, p. 9). Although implementing accommodations is generally considered the responsibility of general education (Council of Administrators, 1991), a team approach is used to develop the accommodation plan. This team should consist of individuals (including the parents) who are knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the student's evaluation data, and placement options (Hawaii Administrative Rule, 1992). The team should review the nature of the disability, determine how the disability affects the student's education, decide if specialized services are needed, document such decisions in the student's file, and review such decisions periodically (Council of Administrators, 1991).

### Kinds of Accommodations

Accommodations or services must be based on the student's educational needs rather than on a label (Stain-back, Stainback, & Forest, 1989). Therefore, the accommodations listed here, which are appropriate for students qualifying under Section 504, are organized by educational need rather than disability. This list is intended to serve only as a general guide, and readers are encouraged to consult individual references for additional clarification.

#### Curricular

- Use legible materials (Council of Administrators, 1991).
- Highlight or underline key terms or concepts in the student's text or handouts.
- Use supplemental texts written at an adjusted reading level.
- Put books or stories on tape.
- Include location cues, such as page numbers, on study guides so students can find answers efficiently (Burnette, 1987).
- Simplify key vocabulary in the text using the cued text or marginal gloss strategies (Leverett & Diefendorf, 1992).
- Allow the use of preprinted lecture outlines or preprinted picture notes for lectures (Masters, Mori, & Mori, 1993).
- Allow the use of semantic maps or graphic organizers (Horton & Lovitt, 1989), storyboards (Developing a story board, 1990), story frames (Fowler, 1982), or story maps for writing activities.

#### Compensatory

- Allow the student to use a spell-checker, word processor, typewriter, tape recorder, thesaurus, dictionary, or other reference materials during writing assignments.
- Allow the student to use cue cards, manipulatives, number lines, math fact charts, or calculators.
- Color code the operation signs in arithmetic problems.
- Allow use of a pencil grip, large pencils, or large lined or raised paper for writing tasks (Masters et al., 1993).
- Allow the student to use either manuscript or cursive.
- Allow tests to be read orally.
- Allow students to use their own spelling technique or the underlining option for spelling (Anderson, 1984).
- Investigate the use of auditory trainers (Garwood, 1987).

#### District or School

- Allow the student more time to advance to the next class (Council of Administrators, 1991) or allow the student to advance to the next class a minute or so early (Wood, 1991).
- Modify the student's schedule (Council of Administrators, 1991).
- Approve early dismissal for service agency appointments (Council of Administrators, 1991).
- Increase the number of excused absences allowed due to health concerns (Council of Administrators, 1991).
- Adjust transportation and parking arrangements (Council of Administrators, 1991).
- Increase the number of "tardies" allowed due to mobility concerns.
- Allow flexibility in meeting physical education requirements.
- Allow variations in the established dress code due to allergies or health concerns.

#### Building/Classroom

- Place the student closer to the teacher or others who can be of assistance, and separate the student from distractions (Winters, 1985).
- Allow the student to work in a quiet uncrowded area of the room, in the hall (Winters, 1985), or at a study area with headphones (Masters et al., 1993).
- Allow the use of different-size desks or chairs.
- Control the temperature, lighting, and noise level and use an air purifier (Council of Administrators, 1991).
- Schedule classes in accessible areas (Council of Administrators, 1991).
- Develop an evacuation plan (Council of Administrators, 1991).

#### Organizational

- Provide special folders for the student in which to keep papers and an individualized checklist as a reminder for needed materials (Wood, 1991).

- Allow the student to have a simplified locker combination or lock or to have a locker without a locker mate.
- Extend time for assignments, provide timers with a bell or buzzer, and construct timelines for task completion (Masters et al., 1993).

#### Health

- Administer prescribed medication (Council of Administrators, 1991).
- Provide alternative meals for students on special diets.
- Adjust physical activity requirements.
- Implement appropriate procedures for students who have seizures (Epilepsy Foundation of America, 1987).

#### Grading

- Employ a pass/fail grading system.
- Vary the weight given to tests, projects, and assignments (Masters et al., 1993).
- Implement alternative evaluation approaches such as portfolios, mastery learning, contract grading, and self-evaluation measures.

#### Behavioral

- Implement an individualized behavior-management system using appropriate reinforcers and consequences.
- Establish and periodically practice classroom procedures for individual or group activities, transitions, and routine housekeeping tasks (Walker & Shea, 1991).
- Provide training in behavior-management skills to parents, guardians, and faculty members (Smith & Rivera, 1993).
- Teach and allow the student to follow the steps used in cognitive behavior modification (Newcomer, 1993).
- Develop an individualized communication system (such as a private signal) for use when the student is frustrated or needs assistance.
- Provide individual or group counseling (Nichols, 1986).

#### Case Study

School districts must provide services to children with ADD or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) who are not IDEA eligible but who qualify under Section 504. ADD and ADHD are considered impairments that limit one or more of the major life activities, for example, learning. Figure 1, which is an adaptation of the form used in the Eau Claire public school system in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, shows the accommodation plan for a fictional third-grade student diagnosed with ADHD who qualifies under Section 504. In this case study, after the 504 referral form was received and appropriate assessment activities were completed, a team of knowledgeable individuals gathered and discussed the child's unique needs, brainstormed appropriate ways of meeting those needs, and developed a mutually agreed upon 504 accommodation plan that detailed the services provided and the individuals responsible for implementing those services. The school counselor, who assumed the position of 504 coordinator in this case, will follow district guidelines regarding documenting and filing this plan. The plan will be reviewed at least annually, or more frequently, if needed or upon request.

#### Conclusion

Given the recent interest surrounding the legal implications associated with Section 504 and recent Office of Civil Rights rulings, educators have the responsibility and the challenge to ensure that Section 504 policies and procedures are developed and implemented in a timely manner. An essential element in meeting this challenge is developing 504 accommodation plans for qualifying individuals. These plans, developed by a team of knowledgeable individuals, provide the necessary support in the general education classroom so that qualified students--like Bobby, Susan, and Joel--receive a free, appropriate public education.

Figure 1  
General education accommodation plan--example.  
(Note. Information and names are fictional.)

#### General Education Accommodation Plan

Name: Joshua Green      School/Grade: Platte Valley Elementary, 3rd  
Date: 6/5/95              Teacher: Myrna Mae (lead teacher)

#### Participants in Development of Accommodation Plan

Mr. and Mrs. Walter Green  
parent(s)/guardian(s)

Julie Hartson  
principal

Myrna Mae, Teacher  
teacher(s)

Arlo Wachal, Teacher

Joel Schaeffer, Counselor

Violette Schelldorf, Nurse

Building Person responsible for monitoring plan: Joel Schaeffer,  
Counselor

Follow-up Date: 6/5/96

Currently on Medication x Yes (underbar) No

Physician Eveard Ewing, M.D.

Type Ritalin

Dosage 15 mg. twice daily

Area of Concern	Intervention of Teaching Strategies	Person Responsible for Accommodation
1. Assignment completion	1. Daily assignment sheet sent home with Josh  2. Contract system ini- tiated for assignment completion in math and social studies	Myrna Mae Parents will initial daily, and Josh will Myrna Mae, Arlo Wachal
2. Behavior/ Distractibility	1. Preferential seating -study carrel or near teacher, as needed 2. Daily behavior card	Myrna Mae, Arlo Wachal  Parents will
initial  will	sent home with Josh	daily; and Josh  return to home
3. Consistency of Medication	1. Medication to be administered in private by school nurse daily at noon	Violette Scheldorf

Comments:

Josh will remain in the general education classroom with the  
accommodations noted above.

Parental Authorization for 504 Plan  
I agree with the accommodations described in this 504 plan.

I do not agree with the accommodations described in this 504  
plan. in this 504 plan. I understand I have the right to appeal.

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