

Transcript – The difference between an IEP and a 504 plan

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[00:00] Introduction

[Description: A title cards with purple text on a white background.]

[On-screen text: What's the Difference Between an IEP and a 504 Plan?]

[Description: A person with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a purple shirt, sits in a leather armchair in a living room setting.]

[On-screen text: Amanda Morin, Parent advocate]

Amanda: There are many differences between an IEP and a 504 plan. The first and most fundamental is they're governed by different laws.

An IEP is governed by a special education law. 504 is governed under a civil rights law. And that makes a difference in what kinds of services and how an IEP plan and 504 plan come together.

[00:28] Eligibility requirements: IEP

To qualify for an IEP, you have to have one of 13 specified conditions or disabilities that are written in the law. For example, a specific learning disability, which would be something like dyslexia, would be a condition that a child would qualify for an IEP under.

Having one of those 13 identified disabilities isn't enough to make sure your child gets an IEP. Whatever is going on with your child, whatever that disability is, also has to affect his performance in the classroom.

And that's really important to know because sometimes parents think that just having a disability qualifies for an IEP. But you also need to make sure that it's making a difference. It has what's called "educational impact" — adverse impact — in the classroom for how your child's learning.

[01:10] Eligibility requirements: 504 plan

For a 504 plan, a child needs to have a disability that is getting in the way of his learning in the general education classroom.

The difference isn't that he needs specialized instruction, it's that he needs some changes to get benefit from his education the same way as other kids in that classroom.

And so kids who have ADHD often have 504 plans. And what happens is just changes are made to the environment, and those changes are called accommodations. And those changes are made in the general education

classroom and don't require specialized instruction. So, for example, a child with ADHD may need extra time to work on a test or to get his homework done.

[01:47] Effectiveness

So some people are concerned that a 504 plan isn't as good as an IEP.

And the truth of the matter is that a 504 plan or an IEP can meet your child's needs. It just depends on how well it's put together.

A well-written, well-implemented plan that everybody knows what's going to be happening and in place and is working on it can be very helpful for a child who doesn't need that specialized instruction.

As long as there's a lot of follow-through and everybody's checking in to make sure it's working well, a 504 plan can be very helpful for kids in the classroom.

[02:20] Key takeaways

[Description: A white screen appears with a list of key takeaways. As each takeaway is read by the narrator, it highlights on the screen.]

[Narrator and on-screen text: Key takeaways

- An IEP is governed by a special education law.
- A 504 plan is governed by a civil rights law.

- A 504 plan covers kids with disabilities who don't require specialized instruction.]

[**Description:** The screen transitions to show four different content thumbnails with related links from Understood.]

[**On-screen text:** More to explore on Understood. [Understanding special education](#); [Free and appropriate public education \(FAPE\)](#); [The difference between IEPs and 504 plans: A chart](#); [Can a student have both an IEP and a 504 plan?](#)]

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