

Section 504

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act is a federal anti-discrimination law intended to create a level playing field in regular education. Section 504 covers qualified students with disabilities who attend schools receiving Federal financial assistance. To be protected under Section 504, a student must be determined to: (1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or (2) have a record of such an impairment; or (3) be regarded as having such an impairment. Section 504 requires that school districts provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to qualified students in their jurisdictions who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities (Office of Civil Rights). Section 504 was not created to give unfair advantage. Accommodations must apply only to the named impairment.

What is a “Major Life Activity?”

Major life activities include caring for one’s self, performing a manual task, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and learning.

What is a “Record” of Impairment?

A record of impairment may include a history of an impairment and/or a diagnosis of assessment of an impairment.

When is an Individual “Regarded” as having such an Impairment?

When the district’s perception of, response to, reaction, or attitude toward the student results in treating the student as having an impairment, then the student will be considered disabled and protected under Section 504.

[Parent and Educator Resource Guide to Section 504 in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools](#)