

Your guide to IEPs and 504 plans

MAKING THE MOST OF SCHOOL ACCOMMODATIONS



► What is an IEP?

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is meant to specifically outline a student's special education accommodations, modifications, and goals. The IEP can include special services (for example, speech, physical, or occupational therapy, or personal aide assistance), which are provided at no cost to the family.

► What is a 504 plan?

A 504 plan outlines how a school will remove barriers and provide support for a student with a disability. These accommodations most often come in the form of services (for example, medication support from the school nurse) and changes to the learning environment (for example, unrestricted bathroom time or catch-up plans for missed work due to illness).

► Top tips for creating and reviewing an IEP or 504 plan

1. Work collaboratively with your child's team. You are the expert in your child, but principals, teachers, and school district representatives are experts in the IEP/504 plan system. School staff may also have experience with IEP/504 plans for students with other chronic illnesses or disabilities that could be helpful for your child's plan.
2. Consider walking through a day in the life of your child to ensure all possible accommodations are considered.
3. Don't assume the school representatives know about cystic fibrosis (CF) and its manifestations. Consider providing a quick overview of CF at a planning meeting, or direct them to the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation's **Teacher's Guide to CF**.
4. Be sure to ask if there are any other students with CF at the school. Extra planning will be needed to keep all people with CF safe.
5. Encourage older students to provide insight into their school life and suggest accommodations that work for them. The care team at your CF center may also have good suggestions.
6. Don't be afraid to advocate for what you think is best. You know your child best, and what they are capable of.
7. Plan ahead. Request a meeting with new teachers before the school year begins or within the first few weeks to review accommodations, particularly when your child is starting at a new school. For students starting college, accommodations can be discussed as early as orientation.

► Getting ready for IEP and 504 plan meetings

The range of possible school accommodations is massive, and it can be easy to get caught up in the formality of the process. Prepare for an IEP or 504 planning meeting with your child's school by thinking about possible accommodations that could be useful.



Bathroom access

People with cystic fibrosis (CF) may have more frequent or longer trips to the bathroom. Consider bathroom accommodations such as unrestricted access to student bathrooms or use of a private bathroom (for example, in the nurse's office). You may also need to consider school and classroom rules, and accommodations to those rules. For example, for schools with a strict hall pass system, perhaps your child could be given a permanent pass.

► **Think about:** *Does your child need unrestricted bathroom access or increased privacy?*



Making up for missed work

Planning ahead for extended absences (such as hospital stays, or during outbreaks of respiratory illnesses) may help to relieve some pressure when your child does need to miss school. Consider accommodations such as prioritized catch-up assignments, excused work, extra time for tests, and, if applicable, a plan for distance learning.

► **Think about:** *How does homework fit into your child's school, activity, and treatment balance? How will you plan for long absences from school?*



Meals and snacks

People with CF have specific dietary needs that may be different from other students. Consider accommodations such as access to extra snacks, ensuring appropriate rehydration after gym class or recess, and access to a refrigerator if needed.

► **Think about:** *How often does your child need to eat? How will they rehydrate after gym class or recess?*



Medications

Schools have strict rules in place regarding medication storage and onsite administration, but people with CF need to take treatments at specific times of day. Consider outlining your child's treatment plan in their IEP or 504 plan, including who will be responsible for administering each type and dose of medication. You may also want to consider who will conduct training on medication administration: can a caregiver train the school staff, or will they require training from a CF professional?

► **Think about:** *Who will be in charge of administering each dose of medication? How will you account for changes in enzyme requirements depending on the plan agreed upon with your child's care team?*



Other disabilities and accommodations

► **Think about:** *Does your child require other accommodations in order to thrive in school? Examples could include having the teacher use a classroom microphone, preferential seating in the classroom or on the school bus, or more time for tests.*