



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### WHAT IS A 504 PLAN?

The "504" in "504 plan" refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which specifies that no one with a disability can be excluded from participating in federally funded programs or activities, including elementary, secondary, or postsecondary education. "Disability" in this context refers to a "physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities". This can include physical impairments; illnesses or injuries; communicable diseases; chronic conditions like HAE, asthma, allergies and diabetes; and learning disabilities.

A 504 plan spells out the modifications and accommodations that might be needed for a child with HAE if the condition is preventing them from the opportunity to perform at the same level as their peers. Accommodations might include such things as an extra set of textbooks, home instruction, or technology to support learning.

It's important to note that policies and procedures for 504 plans may vary by state, and even amongst individual school districts. Parents and/or caregivers of children who need a 504 plan should contact the

## YOU, YOUR CHILD AND 504 PLANS (FAQ)

child's school district to find out who they should work with to get their 504 plan initiated. Determining eligibility for services under Section 504 is a team decision. Team members often include teachers, school administrators, school nurses, school psychologists, counselors, therapists, the parent and/or caregiver, and the child, if appropriate. You should insist that the child's physician has significant input into the team's decision-making process.

### HOW DOES A 504 PLAN DIFFER FROM AN IEP?

It's important to know the difference between a 504 plan and an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). An IEP is a comprehensive document that (1) serves as a blueprint or roadmap for a child with special education needs, and (2) specifies **what** a child will be learning in school.

A 504 plan deals specifically with **how** a child will be learning within the school. A 504 plan is issued to students who are able to participate in a general education classroom but need unique accommodations.

### ARE 504 PLANS REALLY NECESSARY?

The kind of accommodations and modifications offered by a 504 plan is often similar to what you may have worked out privately with your child's school or teacher in the past. Drafting an outline in a legal document may seem like too much trouble, but individual schools and their policies vary by district and state so it's always best to put your plan in writing. A new teacher, new principal, new superintendent, or a move to a new school or town can render all your handshake agreements invalid. Having a legally binding plan lets everyone know what's to be done and how to go about it while promoting consistency and accountability.

