

Let's Talk About...

Spina bifida and 504 plans

Children with spina bifida have special physical and learning needs. Fortunately, 504 plans, individualized education programs (IEPs), and healthcare plans can help you and your child's school prepare for these needs.

What is a 504 plan?

A 504 plan provides specific accommodations, support or services to the classroom setting that help your child go to school. These 504 plans are created for students with mental and physical problems. Those who might create a 504 plan include:

- Parents
- Teachers
- Principal
- Student administrator
- Your child's therapist
- Your child's doctor
- Support staff (nurses, counselors, psychologists, or speech-language pathologists)

What is an individualized education program (IEP)?

An IEP is a plan for special education students. If your child qualifies for special education, the school's special education teacher may write an IEP for your child instead of a 504 plan.

To qualify for special education, your child has to meet one of 13 categories written in the special education rules. For example, your child may qualify for a specific learning disability if they do less in school than expected from an intelligence test.

If your child does not qualify for that category, they may qualify in the other health impaired category.

What is an individualized healthcare plan?

An individualized healthcare plan lists specific health services your child needs at school. Your child's school nurse should write this plan even if you don't have a 504 plan or an IEP. Once you've worked with the school nurse to write the healthcare plan, he or she will train the school staff on how to help your child.



What services should the school provide?

Your child's school may provide the following services through an individualized healthcare plan or 504 plan:

- Special transportation
- First aid for latex allergies
- Rest areas and short school days (for fatigue)
- A wheelchair for traveling long distances
- Physical education adapted for your child
- Recess accommodations

