

What's the Difference between IDEA and 504?

	IDEA	Section 504
IEP documentation	A written individualized education program (IEP) is required.	A plan describing placement and services is required, but an IEP is not.
Related services	Related services that may help a student benefit from special education, such as speech therapy, are required.	Services for all students must be equal. A school may provide general or special education to ensure equality, but additional services are not required.
Evaluation consent	Parents' consent to perform an evaluation is generally required.	Parents' consent to perform an initial evaluation is generally required. Parents need to be notified before reevaluation.
Available funding	Federal funding is provided to help states with special education costs.	Federal funding is not provided.
Eligibility	All students eligible under IDEA are also eligible for Section 504.	Not all students who are eligible for Section 504 are also eligible for IDEA.
Age requirements	In general, services must be provided to eligible students between the ages of 3 and 21 – ages may vary in different states. (Children under 3 may be eligible for early intervention services under Part C.)	There are no age requirements under Section 504.
Parent involvement	Generally required.	Recommended.
Language requirement	Information must be provided to parents in a language they understand.	Same requirement as IDEA.
Private school placement	If a school can't provide free, appropriate public education and must place a student in a private facility, the costs are paid for by the home school district.	Placement decisions are generally made on a case-by-case basis.
Costs	Parents are only required to pay for fees that are also charged to students without disabilities.	Parents are only required to pay fees for services that parents of students without disabilities must pay for, such as locker fees.