

504s & IEPs: Educational Tools for your Child's Success

If your child is facing the challenges of juvenile arthritis, know that you're not alone. There are two powerful tools that can make a big difference in their education: 504 plans and IEPs.



A 504 plan functions like a tailored guide, ensuring your child receives the right support in their educational journey. It might include accommodations like extra time for tasks or specialized seating to enhance their comfort. An IEP is Individualized Education Program, a tailored roadmap designed to cater to your child's unique learning requirements. Whether it's specialized teaching methods or therapy services, an IEP can open doors to their academic success.

In order to get a 504 plan or an IEP, you'll need to work with your child's school. Consider asking your child's teacher what the process is like at their school, but most schools have a coordinator for these programs. You'll need to request either or both of these plans in writing, and there are many sample The Arthritis Foundation has a [PDF with information](#) you may want to share with teachers. Some things that may be helpful for your child may include:

- **Flexibility around being on time** for school and moving between classes.
- **Additional time to complete tasks**, especially those requiring handwriting or physical movement.
- **Help with taking notes** in class.
- **Access to a laptop** so they can type answers for in-class work, homework, or tests.
- **An extra set of physical textbooks** to keep at home or electronic copies of textbooks.

- **Ability for your child to fidget,** change positions regularly, or get up and move throughout class without discipline.
- **Ability to sit out** physical activities as needed.
- **Having all classes on the ground floor,** if the school has multiple floors.
- **If your child is on immunosuppressing medications,** you may want to ensure that their ability to wear a mask is honored in the school setting, if they choose to wear one.
- **Make sure that substitute teachers** will have notes about all of the above as well.
- **Work with the nurse** at the school to ensure that they understand your child's needs.
- **Ask about what an evacuation** or emergency plan looks like, especially if your child uses an assistive device.

For 504 and IEP plans, you'll have regular check-ins to see how things are going. Keep notes. Ask for more meetings if you need them. If you're struggling to get the accommodations your child needs, reach out to your local [Independent Living Center \(ILC\)](#) or [Parent Training & Information Center](#). These centers can help you to advocate and may even be able to loan you or help you get access to funding for technology that will help your child.

Include your child in decision making, from 504 plans to healthcare. As they get older and learn more about their condition, they can take over more and more in meetings and appointments. Working in this way can help prepare your child to take over their own healthcare as they transition to adulthood.

Resources

- [Independent Living Centers \(ILC\)](#)
- [Parent Training & Information Center](#)
- [Juvenile Arthritis: A Teacher's Guide \(PDF\)](#)
- [Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis Accommodations \(PDF\)](#)
- [A Guide to the 504 Plan for Students With Disabilities](#)
- [Protecting Students With Disabilities](#)
- [IEPs and 504 Plans: A Guide for Parents | HealthyChildren.org](#)
- [Guide to the Individualized Education Programs \(IEPs\)](#)
- [504 Plan Accommodations for Juvenile Arthritis](#)
- [Sample 504 Accommodations for Your Child With JA | Arthritis Foundation](#)
- [How to Handle a 504 or IEP Dispute | Arthritis Foundation](#)
- [504 Plan FAQs | Arthritis Foundation](#)
- [Explaining Arthritis to Your Child's School and Teachers](#)
- [School 504 Plans for Kids with Periodic Fever Syndromes](#)
- [7 steps to getting a 504 plan for your child](#)

