

The logo for ECHO IDAHO is a large, stylized letter 'E' composed of three parallel diagonal stripes. The top stripe is yellow and contains the word 'ECHO' in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The middle stripe is light gray and contains the word 'IDAHO' in black, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The bottom stripe is yellow and contains the text 'K12 Section 504' in black, sans-serif capital letters, rotated diagonally to follow the stripe's angle.

ECHO IDAHO

K12 Section 504

Putting Plans into Action: Implementation and Supporting Transitions

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Questions to answer from previous presentations.

- How to really connect with parents when they are very reluctant to be put on a 504?
- I would love to have guidance on students who may need one or two accommodations, but that are truly accommodations that teachers should be providing to all students. How do you address this as a team member within the meeting? Also, how do you address with some of our team-mates who are often case managers that not all students with a diagnosis need a 504, but that can absolutely be 504 protected?
- Behavior plans

Scenario

A 7th grade student, Ethan, has been struggling significantly with attention, organization, and completing assignments. Teachers have noticed that despite strong effort, Ethan often forgets materials, misses deadlines, and needs frequent redirection to stay on task. His grades are beginning to drop, and his confidence is fading.

The school team has gathered data showing that Ethan would benefit from accommodations such as extended time, check-ins with a teacher, and organizational supports. The team recommends developing a 504 plan to ensure consistent access to these supports across classes.

However, Ethan's parents are hesitant. They say they don't want their son "labeled," and they worry a 504 plan will follow him negatively in the future. They insist that he just needs to "try harder" and that supports can be handled informally by teachers without making it "official."

The staff is concerned that without a formal plan, Ethan's accommodations may not be consistently provided, putting him at risk for further academic and emotional struggles.

Possible responses

Response 1: Normalize & Reframe the 504

"I hear your concern about not wanting Ethan to be labeled — that's a common worry for parents. A 504 plan isn't about labeling; it's about ensuring equal access. It doesn't go on his transcript or follow him in a negative way. What it does do is create a written guarantee that supports are provided consistently, no matter the teacher or the class. That way, Ethan doesn't have to start over each year explaining his needs."

Response 2: Emphasize Partnership & Strengths

"We see Ethan as a capable and bright student, and we want to make sure his strengths shine. Right now, his attention and organization challenges are creating roadblocks. A 504 plan allows us, together with you, to remove those roadblocks so Ethan can show what he truly knows. This isn't about lowering expectations — it's about giving him a fair playing field."

Response 3: Address the “Try Harder” Concern

"We agree — Ethan is working hard. In fact, one of the signs he may need accommodations is that he's putting in so much effort but not seeing the results he deserves. A 504 plan doesn't take away his responsibility to try, but it helps make sure his hard work pays off. For example, with extended time or organizational check-ins, he can show the knowledge he already has without being held back by the things that are harder for him."

Hard Conversations

Best practices are strategies good teachers use with all students — like giving clear directions, checking for understanding, or providing wait time.

An accommodation, on the other hand, is something a student ***must have*** in order to access learning at the same level as their peers. Best practices benefit everyone, but **accommodations are legally required and individualized to meet a student's specific needs.**

Meeting Both Prongs

When to acknowledge there is a disability, but you don't need a plan.

Parts of a Behavior Plan

<https://tinyurl.com/2cn8umxo>

Best Practices vs. Accommodations

Example 1: Directions

- **Best Practice:** Teacher gives verbal and written directions to the whole class.
- **Accommodation:** Student must be provided directions broken into step-by-step chunks with teacher checking for understanding within 10 minutes of start of assignment.

Example 2: Assessments

- **Best Practice:** Teacher allows all students a reasonable amount of time to finish tests, with reminders about pacing.
- **Accommodation:** Student must be given time-and-a-half on all classroom and district assessments.

Example 3: Classroom Environment

- **Best Practice:** Teacher arranges seating to promote engagement and reduces distractions for the class.
- **Accommodation:** Student must have preferential seating near the teacher or away from specific distractions written into the 504 plan.

Learning Objectives

Put 504 plans into practice with consistency

Track progress and adjust supports as needed

Prepare students for smooth grade-level and school transitions

Encourage student voice and self-advocacy

Create systems for accountability and follow-through

From Paper to Practice

A Plan is only effective if: **who** does **what**, **where/when**, **how often** and **how it's checked** are all explicit

Key Questions:

- Who is responsible for sharing paperwork with all “need to know” individuals?
- Who makes sure the teachers have the tools they need to implement the plan?
- Will you progress monitor and if so who does this?

Enhancing 504 Plan Implementation

Streamlining Processes

- Use **standardized forms and checklists** for consistency
- Establish **flexible timelines** (annual review is best practice; update as needed)
- Incorporate **regular progress-monitoring check-ins**
- Provide teachers with **concise quick-reference guides**

Strengthening Collaboration

- Communicate **proactively with parents and staff**
- Share **successes and data** consistently
- Create opportunities for **student self-advocacy**
- Maintain **flexibility** by reviewing and adjusting supports

Teacher Buy-In and Training

- Make sure teachers have buy in to the accommodations that were written.
- Model strategies if needed or training for tools if needed.
- Communicate successes = build confidence in relationships

Monitoring and Accountability

- Documentation (grades, teacher reflections, assessments)
- Implementation of process of reviewing accommodations as a team.
- Make changes if something is not working; what might?
- Avoid the “one and done” mentality.

Case Study Recap:

Mya is a 10th grade student that is struggling to pass her classes. She is constantly behind in her work and often sits in the hall with friends to complete her work. When she is asked to participate within the classroom she responds with a meltdown that often results in her being referred to the office. Her parents had her tested. The scores were in the average range. She and her parents are not sure how to help Mya be successful at school on her own.

Case Study Recap: Recommendations

Since Mya has been tested and she is struggling to complete her work, the team referred her to RTI. After an evaluation period it was determined that more supports were needed. Since she did not qualify for special education based on the professional evaluation testing, Mya was referred for Sec.504. An eligibility meeting was held where the team looked at all of the data and determined Mya would be eligible for Sec504 with a plan. The parent provided the full evaluation at the meeting. It determined Mya had dyslexia and ADHD. From this diagnosis the team was able to provide an accommodation plan that supported Mya academically and socially.

Accommodations for Mya

Academic

- Provide preferential seating within the classroom - **Best practices**
- Assist student in setting goals to complete task (“what am I working towards?”) - **Best practices**
- Allow for breaks (ex: 20-5)
- Provide daily check-in for progress - **Best practices**
- Provide clear, consist instructions, when multiple steps are required, break them down
- into smaller steps (masking/chunking tasks) - **Best practices**
- Allow for a graphic organizer to assist student in organizing their thoughts and
- assignments (due dates, larger projects, break-up larger assignment timelines)
- Provide prompts for the student to initiate getting started (What are you working on?) - **Best practices**
- Student is learning self-advocacy (Can you help me get started this time...)
- Provide using assistive technology like text-to-speech software and audiobooks.
- Provide alternative formats such as larger print or less text per page opportunities for alternative responses like oral reports instead of written ones

Accommodations for Mya

Behavioral/Social

- Allow for social stories to assist with mental flexibility
- Provide a strategies wall to assist student to get "unstuck" - **Best practices**
- Provide positive feedback - **Best practices**

Supporting Transitions

- Elementary–Middle: more teachers changes to accommodations
- Middle–High: greater academic rigor
- High–Post-secondary: self-advocacy

**Gradual shift of responsibility of schools to the individual.

Dismissal from Section 504

Dismissal

Written Notice

Student Involvement

- Teaching self-advocacy skills
 - Students knowing their accommodations and how to ask for help
- Encouraging ownership of supports
- Building confident transitions

Key Takeaways

- Implementation requires good collaboration, clarity and monitoring
- Support transitions with intentional planning & student involvement
- Success = students accessing education independently and confidently

References

- Partners Resource Network (out of Texas)
 - <https://prntexas.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Sample-504-Plans-TA.pdf>
- Enrich: Slides and videos of their program for 504s.
 - <https://sites.google.com/d49.org/enrich-guidance-and-manuals/section-504>
- SESTA-Special Education Support and Technical Assistance
 - <https://idahotc.com/SESTA#:~:text=Idaho%20SESTA%20provides%20resources%2C%20technical,students%20with%20disabilities%20throughout%20Idaho>