

Differences in Language from High School to College Disability Services

High School Language

Students who are graduating from high school may have received special education services either under The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. These students may use some of the following terms:

IEP

The IEP is an Individualized Educational Program. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the cornerstone of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which ensures educational opportunity for students with disabilities. The IEP is a quasi-contractual agreement to guide, orchestrate, and document specially designed instruction for each student with a disability based on his or her unique academic, social, and behavioral needs.

http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/iep/iep.html

Terms that may be used in reference to IEP's may include:

Referral- students in elementary and secondary school may be referred for special education testing.

Goals and Objectives- The IEP should contain goals and objectives for all areas in which the student cannot substantially benefit from the general educational program.

Transition- Beginning at age 14 (or younger), a statement of transition services the student will need to reach post-school goals is included in the IEP.

Evaluation Report

Previously known as the Assessment Summary Report. It is the final report following testing and must include information reported by the parents, evaluation results, interpretation of evaluation results and determination of eligibility by addressing criteria components verifying the student is a student with a disability and is in need of (or continues to need) special education services, (the school psychologist's report), information from the case manager including classroom observations, and the educational needs of the child. Following this report the IEP is written if the student qualifies for services.

Case Manager

Usually the special education professional. This person is responsible for managing everything involved with the students special education services from developing and implementing the IEP's to arranging all meetings of the multidisciplinary team.

Accommodations

Most students who receive special education services spend all or a portion of their day in general education classrooms. Accommodations in the classroom are made according to those listed on a section of the IEP (Lerner, 1997).

Section 504 Plan

A 504 Plan is a legal document falling under the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It is designed to plan a program of instructional services to assist students with special needs who are in a general educational setting. A 504 Plan is not an Individualized Education Program (IEP) as is required for special education students. However, a student moving from a special education placement to a general education placement could be placed under a 504 Plan.

<http://www.chtu.org/504.html#what>

Students who have 504 Plans may include students:

- with a physical or emotional disability
- who are recovering from a chemical dependency
- who have an impairment (i.e. Attention Deficit Disorder) that restricts one or more major life activities.

Examples of "**major life activities**" include: caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, working, and learning. The student, parent/legal guardian, teachers, principals, Pupil Services administrators, support staff (i.e. nurse, counselor, psychologist, language/speech pathologist) as well as the student's physician or therapist may be involved in the placement process including the 504 meeting.

Accommodations

For students who have a Section 504 Plan, "reasonable accommodations" must be made in the general education classrooms (Lerner, 1997).

Self Advocacy

Students who receive services under IDEA or Section 504 may be taught self-advocacy skills as part of their education. This involves learning how to tell others about their disability and how to advocate for themselves in order to receive the appropriate accommodations.

Unfortunately these skills are frequently not taught and the student comes to college with minimal preparation in this area.

College Language

Section 504

Once students graduate from high school they no longer fall under The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and must rely solely on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The purpose of Section 504 is to prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities in programs receiving federal financial assistance. Students with disabilities are protected from discrimination in schools receiving federal financial assistance, whether or not they are protected by the IDEA.

ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act was signed into law in 1990. Like Section 504 the ADA is a civil rights law. It extends the civil rights and antidiscrimination protections of Section 504 from the federal government, recipients of federal funds, and its contractors to state and local governments, employers, or any instrument of the government and any privately owned business or facility open to the public. The primary impact of the ADA on special education services for students with disabilities in school districts is to reinforce and extend the requirements of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Yell, 1998).

Self-Disclosure

In reference to admission into postsecondary education, the regulations of Section 504 protect qualified students with disabilities from being denied admission or discriminated against solely on the basis of their disability. In order to protect persons from discrimination, a postsecondary school cannot inquire if an applicant has a disability. In postsecondary schools the student must self-identify. However, after admission the institution may make confidential inquiries about the disability in order to determine the appropriate accommodations that may be required. In addition, postsecondary institutions cannot limit the number of students with disabilities that they accept (Yell, 1998).

Current Documentation

Students who wish to receive accommodations through Disability Services must provide current documentation of their disability that is no more than 3 years old. Persons who are qualified by professional training and practice to diagnose and treat the impairment leading to the disability and who are not family members of the student must have prepared the documentation. Also, it must be typed or word-processed on letterhead of either the agency hosting the practice or the practitioner. Current IEP's or Section 504 Plans are not adequate documentation. The student needs to provide the Evaluation report with test scores, psychoeducational test results from a qualified practitioner or the diagnosis of a licensed psychologist or doctor complete with suggested accommodations. Some students may be unaware of this (see Gustavus Services Handbook for Students with Disabilities).

Accommodations

"According to Section 504, educational institutions are required to make reasonable accommodations for students who are identified as having a disability" (Learner, 1997). The term accommodation refers to any technique that alters the academic setting or environment, without changing the amount of work in the classroom or the content of that work (Jacob, Wadlington & Baily, 1998). Students who have had IEP's or Section 504 Plans in the past

may be surprised to learn that they will no longer receive a plan, and will need to rely solely on the reasonable accommodations and letter of introduction provided through Disability Services.

Self-advocacy

Self-advocacy becomes critical for a student with a disability when they reach the postsecondary level. The student is now the manager of his or her own case. If they expect to receive any accommodations they must self-identify to Disability Services, provide current documentation, request services and accommodations, deliver letters of introduction to their professors and be responsible for their own actions to name a few. All students with disabilities need to understand that there are no retroactive accommodations and that is their responsibility to make an appointment with Disability Services and take the appropriate steps. The Services Handbook for Students with Disabilities outlines this in detail.

Confidentiality

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) applies to all students who attend institutions that receive federal financial assistance. This covers all records, files, documents, and other materials that contain personally identifiable information that is directly related to a student and are maintained by the educational agency or the person acting for that agency. All educational agencies that receive federal funds have a set of strict guidelines to follow regarding the FERPA laws (Yell, 1998).

References

<http://www.chtu.org/504.html#what>

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