



The 504 Bulletin

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NEW 504 FORMS!

Finally! ASD has recently received authorization (licensure) regarding Adobe Professional and has been able to move forward in the online development of the Section 504 forms. Our apologies for the delay, but we are finally in a position to make this happen.

Information and technology have been made available to all ASD schools and you should now be able to access, fill out, save and submit all 504 forms electronically. If you are having difficulty doing this please contact Nancy Bertino in the Office of Special Education (x4272) for assistance. We appreciate your patience and hope to use the electronic process to move the database and collection of student information forward smoothly.

*Later in this bulletin you will find information concerning the data received during the early part of this school year. The completion of the electronic process should allow you and the district to access and evaluate more complete and meaningful data on an ongoing basis.

NOTE: One license per school was purchased. If additional licenses are desired, the individual school will need to make the purchase.

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504 Data

Based on the latest information from the VAX system, there are currently 440 students with current 504 plans. This contrasts with the actual _____ plans submitted by building-level 504 coordinators to the ASD 504 office. The discrepancies are being examined and individual schools will be contacted in the near future to finalize an accurate tally for the first term of the 2008-09 school year.

Initial 2008-09 504 plan counts are as follows:

<u>School level</u>	<u># Students Vax</u>	<u># Plans submitted</u>
<u>Elementary</u>	96	
<u>Middle</u>	63	
<u>High</u>	197	
<u>Charter</u>	57	
<u>Other</u>	27	



§504 Questions and Answers

1. I hear the term "accommodation" all the time. Just what does that mean in the context of a 504 plan?
2. Once a student is identified as eligible for services under Section 504, is that student always entitled to such services?
3. How much is "enough" information to document that a student has a disability?

Disability Information

ADJUSTMENT DISORDERS

What is an adjustment disorder?

An adjustment disorder is defined as an emotional or behavioral reaction to an identifiable stressful event or change in a person's life that is considered maladaptive or somehow not an expected healthy response to the event or change. The reaction must occur within three months of the identified stressful event or change happening. The identifiable stressful event or change in the life of a child or adolescent may be a family move, parental divorce or separation, the loss of a pet, birth of brother or sister.

What causes adjustment disorders?

Adjustment disorders are a reaction to stress. There is no single cause between the stressful event and the reaction. Children and adolescents vary in their temperament, past experiences, vulnerability and coping skills. The child's developmental stage and the capacity of their support system to meet their specific needs related to the stress are factors that may contribute to their reaction to a particular stress. There is no evidence to suggest a specific biological factor causes adjustment disorders.

Who is affected by adjustment disorders?

The disorders are quite common in children and adolescents, and occur equally in females and males. The disorders occur in all cultures and the signs may vary based on cultural influences. Adjustment disorders occur at all ages, however adolescent symptoms of adjustment disorders are primarily behavioral such as acting out.

How are adjustment disorders diagnosed?

A child or adolescent psychiatrist or qualified mental health professional, usually makes the diagnosis following a comprehensive psychiatric evaluation and interview with the child and the parents. A detailed personal history of development, life events, emotions, behaviors and the identified stressful event is obtained during the interview.

Information Related to Disabling Conditions

Each month we will feature information concerning medical, mental or emotional conditions which may be disabling for a student qualified under Section 504. While the information will, by design, be brief we will also try to include websites and other resources for further information concerning the condition, thus, enabling teachers, parents and administrators access to more detailed and inclusive information as to the condition, treatments and potential accommodations for students identified within the 504 context.

Disability Information continued

What are the symptoms of an adjustment disorder?

In all adjustment disorders, the reaction to the stressor seems to be in excess of a normal reaction, or the reaction significantly interferes with social or educational functioning. There are six subtypes of adjustment disorder that are based primarily on the type of major symptoms experienced. The following are the most common symptoms of each of the subtypes of adjustment disorder. Of course, each child may experience symptoms differently. Symptoms may include:






- * Adjustment disorder with depressed mood
 - * depressed mood
 - * Tearfulness
 - * Feelings of hopelessness
- * Adjustment disorder with anxiety
 - * nervousness
 - * worry
 - * jitteriness
 - * fear of separation from major attachment figures

Treatment for adjustment disorders

Determined by a medical provider, treatment may be based on:

- * The child's age, overall health and medical history
- * Extent of the symptoms
- * Subtype of the adjustment disorder
- * Tolerance for specific medications, procedures, therapies
- * Expectations for the course of the stressful event

What Were They Thinking?

-  "Student has broken arm"
-  "Mom doesn't want student on SpEd due to 'label'"
-  "Student needs academic help."
-  "Accommodations needed for HSGQE"
-  "Student needs math help due to poor grades"

NOTE: The above are examples of eligibility statements used in ASD 504 plans—Are the statements sufficient to identify eligibility?

Treatment may include:

- * Individual psychotherapy using cognitive-behavioral approaches
- * Family therapy
- * Peer group therapy
- * Medication



§504 Questions and Answers

1. Some students with disabilities need accommodations to their educational program in order to participate in the general curriculum and to be successful in school. In the educational context, the term accommodation means something that allows the student to complete the same assignment or test as other students, but with a change in the timing, formatting, setting, scheduling, response and/or presentation. The accommodation does not alter in any significant way what the test or assignment measures. Examples of accommodations include a student who is blind taking a Braille version of a test or a student taking a test alone in a quiet room.
2. No. The protections of Section 504 extend only to individuals who meet the regulatory definition of someone with a disability. If a school district reevaluates a student in accordance with the Section 504 regulation at 34 C.F.R. 104.35 and determines that the student's mental or physical impairment no longer substantially limits his/her ability to learn or any other major life activity, the student is no longer eligible for services under Section 504.
3. The amount of information required is determined by a multi-disciplinary committee gathered to evaluate the student. The committee should include persons knowledgeable about the student, the meaning of the evaluation data, and the placement options. The committee members must determine if they have enough information to make a knowledgeable decision as to whether or not the student has a disability. Information obtained from all sources must be documented and all significant factors related to the student's learning process must be considered. These sources may include aptitude and achievement tests, teacher recommendations, physical condition, social and cultural background, and adaptive behavior. In evaluating a student suspected of having a disability, it is unacceptable to rely on presumptions and stereotypes regarding persons with disabilities or classes of such persons.