

Differences Between K-12* Education and College

K-12 IDEA 97	K-12 ADA 504 Plan	College 504 and ADA
		No guarantee. Student responsible for own success
District identifies disability	Parent provides documentation of disability	Student provides documentation of disability and need for accommodation
Free evaluation of disability	Parent responsibility	Student's responsibility if they suspect an issue they can request evaluation.
District develops Individual Education plan (IEP)	Parent/school develops plan	Student identifies accommodation needs
Entitled to services identified on IEP	Services determined by plan	College services not automatic; each college decides eligibility and services
District ensures that the IEP is implemented	District/parent/student responsible	Student responsible for own progress
Teacher advocate	Parent/student advocate	Student advocates for self
Fundamental alterations to program of study permitted as identified on IEP	Fundamental alterations to program of study permitted as identified on 504 plan	None allowed: Accommodation may not alter fundamental nature of course or impose an undue burden on an institution
Personal services: e.g., transportation, personal attendant, nurse	None provided	None provided

*The term K -12 refers to the years in school from kindergarten through the end of high school.

Differences Explained--

In High School, a student often has a "504 plan" that suffices for services. Most of the time, the high school does NOT test the student who falls under 504, but offers "modifications" to help the student succeed. The special ed student, in contrast, MUST be regularly tested and/or reevaluated in order to remain in the special education program. The problem of adequate and comprehensive documentation comes into play when the "504" student goes to college. In most cases, the screening instruments often used for developing a "504" plan are insufficient as documentation for college accommodations. The student goes from an environment that is structured to "ensure student success" to one that is designed to "allow equal access." The *success* of the student is up to the student in the college setting. The college must ensure *access*, NOT *success*.