



## CRITICAL DECISION POINTS

# Understanding the Differences between Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 Plans

# IEP

Eligibility for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) is based on the fourteen categories of disability identified by the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA). The child's impairment must have an educational impact and require specialized instruction for her to qualify as a child with a disability under IDEA.

A 504 Plan is based on eligibility under the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973*, and not the IDEA. A child may be identified as a student with a disability under this statute if she has a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits a major life activity.

# 504

### NOTE:

If, in addition to the protections provided under the IDEA, a child also needs services falling under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, those services could be included in the IEP and only one plan would be provided for that child.

## Questions to Ask the School:



What impairment or disability was considered when determining whether my child was eligible for accommodations or services?

Are there additional areas of need that should be considered for my child? If there are additional areas of suspected need, what additional testing will be needed to determine my child needs services in those areas?



What information (progress reports) will I receive from the school to assist me in understanding if my child is making appropriate progress?

When will another meeting be held to review my child's progress and to update the 504 Plan or IEP? How can I request that a meeting be held if I have concerns about my child's progress in meeting her educational goals?



## When to Consider:

At your child's initial eligibility meeting or at subsequent meetings, should a change need to be made.

Parental input is important throughout the eligibility process in order to assist in determining which type of plan, if any, would be appropriate for your child.