Designing 504 Plans to Promote Equity and Inclusion:

*Parents as Partners with Schools*

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Participants will learn about:

- the role of student self-advocacy within the 504 process
- how to be an effective advocate for your child
- the purpose and process of Section 504
- development of accommodations and services
- communicating for effective partnering with schools
Turn-and-Talk

First, think of a **positive** experience that you have had with your child’s school.

Then, turn to a neighbor and share what made this a **positive experience**.
Equity: Promoting Inclusion by Meeting Individual Needs

**Equality**

**Equity**
Student Voice
Self-Advocacy is...

- Speaking up for yourself.
- Based on self-awareness.
- Using effective communication skills.
Self-Advocacy is **not**…

- Doing it all yourself without the help of others.
- Having all of the answers.

*It is about asking the right questions.*
Student Self-Awareness

• Exploring personal interests, strengths and challenges
• Knowing the difference between wants and needs
• Making choices based on interests, strengths and needs
• Identifying and setting goal

Disability Awareness

• The student’s disability does not define them
• Know what the disability is
• Understanding and accepting the impact of the disability
• Identify accommodations that work

https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/parent-resource-center
Supporting Disability Awareness

Encourage identification of

✓ Strengths
✓ Things they know how to do well
✓ Things they enjoy doing
✓ Things they have done that they are proud of
✓ Talents
✓ Things they have learned
✓ Positive personality traits
Communication

• The ability to effectively use communication skills such as **negotiation, compromise, and persuasion** is critical to becoming a successful self-advocate.

• The foundational skills of **labeling, expressing, and regulating** emotions contribute to effective communication.
Think of something that you will do after today’s session to support your child in growing their self-awareness, communication, and self-advocacy.
Putting it all together: 504 Plan contents and purpose

A student's 504 Plan details modifications, accommodations, and services that are needed for the student with a disability to participate in and enjoy the benefits of school programs at the same level as his peers without disabilities.

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Defining Accommodation

When providing an accommodation to a student with a disability, we are:

*Adjusting* or *adapting* the way a student might typically be expected to access *any programs and services* provided by the school division – *in order to remove disability-related barriers.*
Accommodation Categories

**Presentation:** change how an assignment, lecture or assessment is delivered

**Response:** allow student to complete work in different ways/formats

**Setting:** change the location or the conditions in which the work is delivered/completed

**Timing/scheduling:** adjust the length of time, or the way time is organized, for an assignment or assessment
Eliminating Disability-Related Barriers to FCPS Programs and Activities

Accommodations, modifications and services apply not only to a student’s academic needs, but can relate to any access-related barriers the student faces based on their disability.
Applying the Problem-Solving Process

Problem Identification
- What is the problem?

Problem Analysis
- Why is the problem occurring?

504 Plan Design
- What are we going to do about the problem?

504 Plan Implementation and Monitoring
- Have we done what we said we would?

Define Disability/Limitation
- Understand Needs

Address Needs & Eliminating Barriers
- Are Student's Needs Being Addressed?
The Role of Parents in the Problem Solving Process
The Role of the Student in the Problem Solving Process
Reflection

Think about something that you have learned today that will help you and your child have a positive experience when partnering to develop effective 504 Plans.

Share with a partner
FCPS and Community Resources

Dyslexia Handbook: https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/special-education-instruction/dyslexia-handbook. Guidance to FCPS schools and families regarding dyslexia (a language-based reading disability) and related resources.

Family Engagement Resources: https://www.fcps.edu/resources/family-engagement/family-engagement-resources. Information about programs and supports offered in FCPS to build stronger family-school partnerships.


Healthy Minds Blog: https://www.fcps.edu/blog


FCPS and Community Resources (continued)

Portrait of a Graduate Family Resources: https://www.fcps.edu/about-fcps/portrait-graduate/resources. How parents can support their child at home in developing “Portrait of a Graduate” attributes.

Resources for Families and Students: https://www.fcps.edu/resources. FCPS online resources for a variety of topics.

School Counseling Services: https://www.fcps.edu/resources/student-safety-and-wellness/school-counseling-services


Section 504 Information: https://www.fcps.edu/section504.

Student Wellness: Tips and Strategies: https://www.fcps.edu/student-wellness-tips

Technology Tools to Support All Learners: https://www.fcps.edu/node/36595

Twice Exceptional Learners (2e): https://www.fcps.edu/node/33071. Information for parents of students who have strong thinking and reasoning abilities as well as special needs.
504 Plan Meetings: Quick Tips for Parents

Before the Meeting:

* Work with your child’s 504 case manager to set a mutually-agreeable date and time for the meeting.

* Gather together relevant documents (e.g., medical or other evaluation reports, etc.).

* Inform the case manager if you are planning for additional person(s) to attend the meeting with you.

* Talk with your child about what is working well and areas in which he or she might need additional support.

* Decide on your/your child’s top 2 or 3 priorities that you want to be sure are covered during the meeting.
504 Plan Meetings: Quick Tips for Parents

**During the Meeting:**

* Support your child’s participation in the 504 Plan meeting, whenever possible.

* Ask the committee members to introduce themselves (if they haven’t already) and identify their role/expertise.

* Ask the team to use the 504 Plan Meeting Agenda if it has not yet been distributed.

* Focus on active listening.

* Focus on your child’s unique strengths, weaknesses and disability-related needs.

* Remember that the 504 Plan document is not an “insurance policy” for your child. The purpose of the document is to include all accommodations and services that are necessary (required) for your child to have the equal opportunity to participate in FCPS programs and activities, including the academic program.
504 Plan Meetings: Quick Tips for Parents

After the Meeting:

* Talk with your child about how he or she feels about the 504 Plan accommodations.
* Give the school time to take data on the accommodations and “work the plan.”
* Ask the case manager to share any follow-up information with you regarding your child’s 504 Plan.
* Keep the lines of communication open. We all do better when we presume positive intentions in others and notice/thank them for their sincere efforts.
* At any time, the school or the family have the right to request that the knowledgeable committee reconvene to revisit the 504 Plan and make any necessary changes.
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