




Nystagmus in a School Setting

Frequently Asked Questions

Is Nystagmus covered under a 504 or an IEP?

- Students with nystagmus don't automatically qualify for special education services (IEP). In order to be eligible, a student must:
 - Have a disability ***and, as a result of that disability...***
 - Need special education in order to make progress in school
- Students with nystagmus always qualify for a 504 Plan



Why does my student have a 504 in one school district and a IEP when we moved to another school district?

- States and school districts follow local policies when assigning IEPs. Some districts/states allow for a visually impairment to automatically qualify a student for an IEP. Other districts require a student to be below grade level to qualify for an IEP.
- A student with nystagmus must receive classroom accommodations. Accommodations can be through either an IEP or a 504.

What is a 504?

- A 504 refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. It created and extended civil rights to people with disabilities.
- It provides children and adults with disabilities reasonable accommodations in education, employment and other settings.
- A 504 Plan is provided by a school to address the special needs of a student with a disability.
- For nystagmus this would involve addressing the vision impairment and the effects on the educational environment and the student's learning.



What are Accommodations and Modification?

Modification involves a change to what a student is taught or expected to learn.

Accommodations is something that will help the student learn the same material and meet the same expectations as their classmates. Students with nystagmus should receive accommodations not modifications.

There is a separate handout in the ANN resource section that goes into more details on Accommodations vs Modification.

What Should I Bring to an IEP/504 Meeting?

- **Pediatric Ophthalmology Report** - This is a general report from your pediatric ophthalmologist
- **Low Vision Specialist Report** - This report will identify best font size, reading speed and other information that is important in an educational environment. Most school districts can provide this assessment.
- **Information Sheet on Nystagmus** - You can use the Parent/Teacher conference handout in the ANN resources. Tailor the handout with your child's information.
- **Personalized Information on your Child's Needs** - Bring any other information that you want to share. This could be class assignments, additional doctor reports, etc.

Who Attends the 504/IEP Meeting?

Who attends will vary from school district to school district. In general, you may meet with a combination of these educational professionals. One person may fill more than one role. For example, the principal may act as both the administrator as well as the district representative.

- Teachers
- Counselor
- Administrator
- Special Education Specialists
- Vision Specialist
- District Representative



Things to Remember

- You are the expert on your child's needs
- They are the experts in regards to educating your child
- Build a strong collaborative relationship

What are Some Potential Accommodations for Nystagmus?

Accommodations will vary from child to child. Not everyone with nystagmus needs the same accommodations. Low vision specialists may provide the best reports for determining accommodations because they perform more comprehensive testing.

- Large print materials (For some people with nystagmus, large print can cause eye fatigue which can make the nystagmus worse) Know what is the perfect font size for your student.
- Copies of overhead and board presentations
- Sit in front of room (best side for null point)
- Have own copy of materials can not share with a classmate

Potential Accommodations Continued

- Extra time on test and assignments
- Copy of class notes from the teacher or another student.
- No scantron (bubble) tests. They may cause eye fatigue. Write answers on test paper.
- Sunglasses and hats (to deal with sunlight or glare)
- Ability to move seats as needed
- Visit classroom the day before school starts so your student can explore the classroom wall displays and layout before the other students arrive.
- Technology (magnifiers, laptops, cameras, etc.)
- Use of recording devices

What Should I Expect for State and National Testing (SAT and ACT)?

- State and national tests typically follow the current IEP or 504 plan. The Classroom test accommodations will be followed for these tests.
- College Board and ACT will also follow the school IEP or 504 Plan.
- Low vision specialists may provide the best reports for determining testing accommodations because they perform more comprehensive testing.
- FYI Extra time: Double time requires that the student split the SAT over two days. As a result, the student will miss a day of school for testing. Time and a Half will result in a longer testing day (i.e., six hours as opposed to four).