

Section 504

Classroom Accommodations

An Overview for PKU Parents and Caregivers

What is Section 504?

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. It ensures that students with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit one or more major life activities have equal access to education and are provided with necessary accommodations. PKU is considered a disability under Section 504 because it significantly impacts a major life activity, eating. PKU can also affect learning, another major life activity.

Common 504 Accommodations for PKU *(list is not exhaustive)*

- At least 48 hours' notice for food-based classroom activities or celebrations
- Permission to bring special foods from home
- Careful supervision/reminders to ensure that student consumes medical formula at the required times
- Proper storage of medical formula and specialized foods
- Access to refrigeration and a microwave, if needed
- Flexibility for medical appointments with excused absences
- Reduced homework or make-up assignments after missed school due to medical needs
- Modified workload or extended time during periods of dietary imbalance or illness
- Teachers, aides, cafeteria staff and administrators should be trained on PKU and the student's dietary and medical needs
- Copy of the 504 Plan and Health Plan will be included in the classroom teacher's substitute folder
- Special Diet menu for school-provided meals

Section 504 vs. Individual Education Plans

Section 504 plans are put in place for students who have a disability that affects a major life activity, but who are capable of learning and succeeding in the classroom, if provided the right accommodations for their needs. Students who receive support through Section 504 do not require specialized or individualized instruction. This support is not included on a Section 504 plan. Section 504 support falls under The Americans with Disabilities Act.

Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) are created for students who require specialized instruction to learn effectively at school. An example of specialized instruction is individualized instruction in behavior or academics provided by a special education teacher. If your child's PKU, causes difficulty learning at school, they may qualify for IEP support. IEPs are provided under The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), special education law.

Children with PKU qualify for a Section 504 plan. Some may qualify for an Individual Education Plan (IEP) depending on their individual need for support. Your child's school may also implement a Health Care Plan to provide guidance to teachers and staff on the management of your child's PKU.