

## Requesting Accommodations for Your Child

*In the U.S., §504 bars discrimination on the basis of disability in any public agency receiving federal financial assistance, which includes public schools. §504 also requires covered schools to make necessary and reasonable accommodations for students who have disabilities that significantly impact a major life activity. Just because your child has a diagnosis, it does not mean that they are covered by §504, but many students will be.*

*The purpose of accommodations is to “level the playing field” for your child – to enable them to learn and perform so that they get as much benefit out of their public education as their non-disabled peers. Accommodations may be needed for classroom functioning, but they may also be needed for other settings or activities such as after-school clubs or sports.*

*In many cases, accommodations can be worked out informally with a teacher and no written plan is generated. While that often works well, it may be to your child's advantage to have written documentation that they are in need of accommodations.*

*While there is nothing that prohibits you from making a request for an accommodation verbally, it is better to put the request in writing so that if there is ever a dispute or any due process proceeding, you can prove what you requested and when. This is likely to be particularly important if your child is experiencing behavioral or disciplinary difficulties and the school is essentially punishing him or her for symptoms of their disability without taking it into account and/or without making some accommodations so that your child can function more appropriately.*

*A sample letter is provided below. Please note that this information is to be used as a guide for format and content only and is not legal advice. If legal advice is needed, contact a special education attorney.*

September 11, 2000

Mr. James GiveMyKidaBreak, Principal  
The Friendly Little Schoolhouse  
123 Downtheblock Road  
Mytown, Mystate, Myzip

Re: (Name of Your Child and His/Her Date of Birth)

Dear Mr. GiveMyKidaBreak:

I am writing to you concerning my child, Joey, who is a student in Ms. NiceTeacher's class.

Joey is experiencing difficulty in school due to symptoms of (specify diagnosis, such as ADHD, Tourette's Syndrome, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, etc.). These symptoms are making it difficult for Joey to learn and perform in the school setting.

Specifically, Joey is experiencing problems in the following ways:

He has eye tics that are slowing him down in reading and handwritten work.  
His handwriting is also very sloppy.  
He has trouble keeping his attention focused in class.  
He has trouble copying from the blackboard.

I am requesting that Joey be given the following accommodations because of his disabilities:

1. Extended time on reading, handwritten work, and tests.
2. Modified materials so that he has a larger workspace for handwritten work.
3. Do not grade him on neatness.

4. Teacher cueing to help him refocus when his attention drifts.
5. Reduced amount of copying from the board. Instead, he should be given copies of boardwork by the teacher.

I am attaching a letter from Joey's doctor documenting that he has these diagnoses and that he needs these accommodations.

If you have other ideas about accommodations that you think would be necessary and appropriate for Joey, I'd be happy to discuss them with you. I look forward to hearing from you in response to this request.

Sincerely,

Your signature

(print or type your name)

Your address

Your daytime telephone number

Your evening telephone number

cc: Section 504 Compliance Officer\*

Attachment: letter from Dr. Jones

*\* Note: You will have to call your school district's administrative offices to find out the name and address of the district's 504 Compliance Officer, but every public school district is required to have one.*