

## YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL AND YOU: *Partnerships for Disabilities Assistance*



*Bleeding disorder community teens on a Teen Connection trip*

If your child is diagnosed with any of the disabilities listed, and they require specialized instruction, they could qualify for an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). There are two federally mandated plans that can entitle school-age students for assistance. States also are mandated to provide special education services or related services and accommodations to children with a diagnosed disability. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1974 [Amended 2004] requires states to provide a “free appropriate public education” to children with disabilities so they can be educated to the fullest extent possible with other children.

If qualified, children are provided with special education AND related services under an IEP. Specialized instruction is defined as adapted instruction designed to meet the unique need of the child with a disability. This means the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction is changed to ensure the child’s access to the general curriculum. A bleeding disorder fits into the IDEA’s “Other Health Impairment” category, which is defined as impairment due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder, or hemophilia that adversely affect a child’s educational performance.

The Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 focuses on nondiscrimination. It maintains that “no otherwise qualified individual with a disability will be excluded from participation in, be denied the bene-fits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 serves as an extension of Section 504, providing for the elimination of barriers related to accessibility for the disabled to buildings, transportation, and communication. Both Section 504 and ADA also provide related services and accommodations to qualified individuals with a disability through a 504 plan.

The intent is to provide access or remove barriers to participation. It provides students with the same rights and services as their “non-disabled peers.” The ADA/504 provisions define a Medically Related Disability as a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities or those basic activities that the average person in the general population can perform with little or no difficulty. Major life activities as they relate to bleeding disorders may be defined as walking, writing, sitting or standing. Related services may include:

- Speech/language therapy
- Audiology (hearing loss)
- Psychological
- Physical/Occupational therapies
- Counseling
- Rehabilitative counseling
- School health services
- Transportation

So if you are comfortable with your school district’s physical therapist, for instance, the physical therapy (PT) could be included on your child’s ADA/504 plan, and they could receive PT during the school day. (Parents should plan on providing the therapist with additional information on physical therapy for the individual with hemophilia, as well as contact information from the ordering physician to ensure the therapist proceeds slowly.) Reasonable accommodations can also be provided under these provisions to remove barriers to access. These accommodations might include:

- Walkie-talkies for nurse and recess/duty aids
- Extended travel time around building
- Permanent passes to the school nurse
- Permanent passes for school elevator
- Medications, needles, and supplies maintained and locked in the nurse’s office
- Scheduling of physical education activities several days in advance
- Field trips to include nurse or parent
- Extra sets of books at home
- Extended time for homework/make-up work
- Regular email contact from teachers
- Medically-related absences may be excused with no loss of credit
- Lecture notes or presentations available electronically
- Tutoring due to absence
- Staff in-service.