

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide features several green elements: a large light green circle at the top left, a smaller dark green circle at the top center, a large dark green leaf with prominent veins in the center, a smaller dark green leaf with a white diagonal cutout at the bottom left, and a bright lime green circle at the bottom left. The background is white.

# School Advocacy for Kids with SM: Navigating 504 and IEP Plans

Desiree Camarda, M.Ed, ET  
Christy Tadros, LPCC



This webinar was made possible thanks to a generous grant from the Gordon and Marilyn Macklin Foundation.



**sma**

SELECTIVE MUTISM  
2 ASSOCIATION



# Objectives:

- Understand what specialized services are available within your school district: IEPs and 504s
- How to access IEPs and 504s
- Specific support within those services for children and teens with SM

# IEPs and 504 Plans in a nutshell:

**Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** Legal document designed to outline direct services, supports and progress toward meeting measurable goals.

**504 Plan:** Plan for how the school will provide support (accommodations and modifications) for optimal access to curriculum and instruction.





# Request an IEP or 504 Plan when:

- **A child's anxiety or other impairments are hindering their ability to engage in their education**
- The school is not willing/able to provide counseling or support services outside the classroom
- The child has other learning, cognitive, psychological, physical or health impairments that hinder their ability to engage in their education
- Teacher or school is resistant to supporting the student or collaborating with parents



# How do I know what to ask for?

## 504 Plan

Accommodations in the classroom that will be provided by the teacher.

For example, 1:1 time to fade in with the teacher or or a positive reinforcement for talking.



## Counseling Services

Counseling Services can sometimes fall under a 504 plan depending on the school and district.

In some schools, an IEP is necessary to receive any type of counseling/support outside the classroom.



## Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

- Specialized services with school professionals (school psychologist, occupational therapist, speech and language pathologist)
- Academic and resource support
- Measurable Goals

# IEP or 504 Plan?

## How do they compare?

### IEP:

- Function of special education
- 13 areas of Eligibility
- Families are able to request IEEs
- Must include specific components
- Parents must be notified of changes and provide consent
- Clear pathway for mediation

### 504 Plan:


- Function of general education
- Any condition that impacts school performance and access to education
- Does not allow for IEEs
- Parents must be notified of changes and provide consent
- Clear pathway for mediation



Getting Started:

Acquiring  
Appropriate  
Services...



A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide. It features a large, detailed green leaf with visible veins in the center. To its left is a smaller, solid green leaf. Above and below the leaves are light blue circles of varying sizes. The text on the right is in a bold, green, sans-serif font.

The process for getting an IEP, special education services, or a 504 Plan can seem complicated and overwhelming, but it's easier if you know what steps to follow.



# STEP ONE: WRITTEN REQUEST

- Include child's name, school of attendance, and birthdate.

- Private school assessments are completed by the district where the school is located.

- The district team has 15 days to respond to your request:

  - Assessment Plan

  - Scheduled SST Meeting

  - Prior Written Notice Letter



# SST

(Student Study Team)

The purpose of an SST is to collect information, determine areas of need/concern and build a plan of support. It may include:

- ❖ Present Levels
- ❖ Review of progress
- ❖ Recommended interventions
- ❖ Recommendation for assessment






# Assessment Plans:

The Assessment Plan begins the IEP process. It provides written consent and outlines specific areas of assessment.

# IEPs

## What to Expect at the Meeting



- 
- Who Attends/Members of the IEP Team
  - The Agenda  
What is the process/purpose of the meeting?
  - Options
    - Record the meeting
    - Advocacy/Private support
    - Outside assessments
    - **Notes Page**



# Essential Components of IEPs

- ◆ Present Levels
- ◆ Parent Input/Concerns
- ◆ Eligibility/Areas of Service
- ◆ Accommodations and Modifications
- ◆ Direct Services
- ◆ Goals
- ◆ State and District Assessments
- ◆ Offer of FAPE
- ◆ Notes Page

# Preparing for the meeting



- Request reports/Proposed IEP goals or draft of the 504 Plan to review before the meeting
- Record the meeting
- Bring a list of questions
- Additional documentation can be added to the IEP
- **Procedural Safeguards**
- Review Everything.





# What else do I need to know?

- **Important Timelines:**
  - 15 days to respond to request for assessment
  - 60 days to complete assessment & hold IEP meeting
  - 30 days to schedule/hold an IEP following team member request
  
- **Signatures and Agreements:**
  - Parents are not required to sign the IEP at the meeting.





504 Plans

# 504 Plans

- Provides accommodations and modifications in the general education setting typically for students who do not qualify for an IEP
- Typically does not include direct services
- Should be reviewed at least yearly
- 504 Plans are a function of general education and not special education
- Components of a 504 Plan are not dictated by Federal/State. They county/district agreements.

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide features several green leaves of varying sizes and shades, some with detailed vein patterns. Interspersed among the leaves are four light blue circles of different diameters. The overall aesthetic is clean and modern, with a focus on natural elements.

# IEP and 504 Plans: Concrete Examples



# Sample Accommodations

- Fade in Sessions with all staff that child interacts with on a regular basis (led by parents, outside therapist or school counselor)
- Behavioral reinforcement system in the classroom focused on talking and communication goals
- School personnel will work together with family (and outside therapist) to scaffold support, i.e. a weekly phone call, shared tracking document etc.
- Coaching school staff in behavioral techniques aimed at reinforcing (student) for their brave talking at school
  - Use of specific types/styles of questions (Forced choice and open ended)
  - CDI and VDI Skills





# Sample Accommodations

- Daily warm up time before students arrive
- Seating that assists in comfort level, i.e. in the front of the room, next to a familiar peer
- Provide clear and predictable plans and advanced notice of irregularities in the schedule
- Adapt school presentations and reading assessments to child's current ability, i.e. record presentation at home and share with class; allow for warm up time or a familiar adult present during reading assessments.





# IEP Services

- Counseling services (written in)
- Specialized Academic Instruction
  - Small group instruction
  - Scaffolding instruction
  - Small group for test taking
- Speech and Language Services






# Sample Goals for IEP

**Primary Goal:** BLANK will increase her skills for verbally communicating with teachers, school staff, and peers in a variety of settings as measured by the following objectives:

## Objectives:

- Audibly verbally respond to prompts for verbalization from her classroom teacher in her classroom.
  - Raise her hand to respond to teacher questions and offer audible verbal responses.
  - Audibly verbally respond to prompts for verbalization from resource teachers (e.g., gifted classes teachers) in their classrooms that are audible to the teachers.
  - Verbally respond to prompts for verbalization from at least 5 classmates.
  - Verbally request assistance when communicating with peers and adults.
  - Initiate verbal interactions with at least 5 peers each week.
  - Verbally request permission (e.g., to use the restroom, visit nurse, borrow materials) when communicating with peers and adults.
  - Verbally respond to prompts for verbalization from school staff (e.g., nurses, security guards, etc.).
  - Provide one verbal presentation to a group of 3 peers.
- 



A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide. It features three green leaves of varying sizes and shades of green, arranged in a cluster. The largest leaf is at the top left, showing detailed vein patterns. Below it are two smaller, simpler leaves. Surrounding the leaves are four light blue circles of different sizes, some partially cut off by the edges of the slide.

Questions?



# Additional Resources

- [Parents Helping Parents](#)
- [Understood.org](#)
- [WrightsLaw.com](#)
- [Supportforfamilies.org](#)
- [State Laws and Regulations cde.ca.gov](#)
- [Selective Mutism Association](#)





# Contact Us!

**Desiree Camarda**

[Innovations4learning.com](http://Innovations4learning.com)

[desiree@innovations4learning.com](mailto:desiree@innovations4learning.com)

510-301-5641

**Christy Tadros**

WestCoast Therapy and Wellness

[www.TherapyandWellness.com](http://www.TherapyandWellness.com)

[Info@therapyandwellness.com](mailto:Info@therapyandwellness.com)

415-844-9343

