

# Developing Minds

Fall 2008

## A Primer on 504 Plans and IEPs

Supporting your child's success in school is one of the many tasks involved in responsible and caring parenting. Having a child with any kind of disability can make this task even more challenging. Within the public school system, parents must become their child's advocate. At many schools, administrators and teachers are excellent at informally implementing necessary accommodations for students to be successful. At times, it becomes necessary to enlist official documentation, such as an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a 504 Accommodation Plan. Having one of these plans in place ensures peace of mind, as teachers and schools are then legally obligated to implement necessary adaptations for your child. There are also inherent legal protections for students within such plans. Parent participation in the drafting of IEPs and 504s is crucial for assuring educational and social success for children with disabilities.

Team members for both IEP and 504 Plan meetings should consist of the parent(s), the child's regular education teacher, special education teacher, an administrator (e.g. the principal or school psychologist), and the student (when appropriate). The level of disability, and the extent to which it impacts their educational progress, is what determines whether or not a student needs an IEP or a 504 Plan. Frequently, many children with Attention Deficit Disorder/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/HD) are placed on 504 Plans so that they can receive specified accommodations in the classroom. In contrast, students with disabilities that require specially designed instruction are grouped under various federal categories, such as Specific Learning Disability, and placed on an IEP.

### Differences Between an IEP and a 504 Plan

An IEP is a legal document that describes a student's instructional needs and specifies the special education services the school will provide to meet those needs. It is much more detailed and comprehensive than a 504 Plan. Goals are included in the IEP that state what the student will be able to independently accomplish by the end of the school year (i.e. "Joe will improve in math computation skills."). Each long-term goal should incorporate the following criteria: stating exactly what the child should do ("Joe will answer 25 double-digit addition and subtraction problems with borrowing and carrying"), stating under what conditions he should do it ("when given a test"), at what level of proficiency ("with 80% accuracy"), and how often that level mastery will be achieved ("on four consecutive days"). It is very important that the goals and objectives are detailed, and not subject to analysis.

The IEP should specify specially designed instruction (i.e. "small group instruction in math calculation skills") and special education placement (i.e. "instruction in resource room"). Related services are also identified, when

Continued on page 2.

## Child Development Chats

The Center for Developing Minds hosts an informal and interactive session each month where topics including child behavior, development concerns and parenting questions will be discussed. Periodically, a session will focus on a specific area of interest. **Free of charge.**

### Being a Friend: How to Help Kids Foster Friendships

12:30 – 1:30 pm  
Tues., September 30, 2008

### The Impact of Attention on Learning

12:30 – 1:30 pm  
Tuesday, October 28, 2008

### Why Visit a Behavioral-Developmental Pediatrician?

12:00 – 1:00 pm  
Thurs., November 13, 2008

## Lectures to Note

Upcoming presentations by CDM staff include:

### "Infant/Toddler Traits: Why They Do the Things They Do – From Biting to Tantrums"

September 12, 2008, 8:30am  
Dr. Korb to present at AIM Early Intervention Program.

### "LDD/ADD Lecture Series"

December 9, 2008 7:30pm  
Dr. Rojas to be a panelist at PHP, Santa Clara.

Please see our website for the complete schedule, as well as more details on each of these events.



Pediatric expertise in child behavior, development & learning  
[www.devminds.com](http://www.devminds.com) 408.358.1853

## 504 Plans and IEPs

Continued from page 1.

necessary, such as transportation, speech/language therapy, occupational therapy or adaptive physical education. IEPs also must designate what modifications or accommodations are needed in the regular education or special education classrooms, such as assistive technology when your child needs to do writing on a computer. Classroom accommodations should also be listed, including things like providing the child with copies of the teacher's notes, extra time allowed on tests, or a reduced amount of work. The IEP is written for one year, but can be reviewed and revised earlier at the request of either the parent or the school if, for instance, the student is not making sufficient progress toward goals or if goals have been met before the IEP is due to be updated.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a civil rights law designed to protect people with disabilities from discrimination while they are working or participating in federally funded programs, such as public schools. A 504 Accommodation Plan is written for students who have an impairment or disability that "substantially limits one or more major life activities" (i.e. learning) as they either have record of an impairment or are regarded as having such an impairment. In this situation, it becomes helpful to already have an established diagnosis from your child's pediatrician or specialist. Accommodations listed on the 504 Plan are usually grouped into four categories: presentation, response, setting, and timing or scheduling. Examples of accommodations include having directions repeated, use of reference aids, opportunity to work in a separate room, and extended time.

The process of implementing either an IEP or a 504 Plan is best initiated with a letter stating the problem and requesting the student be evaluated by school specialists for a 504 or an IEP. A formal assessment plan is then distributed to the parents, along with a special education parents' rights booklet within 15 days of the written request for an evaluation. Once that consent is reviewed and signed by the parents, the school evaluation should be completed, and, if indicated, an IEP drafted, with a family meeting held within 60 days to review results. Each county varies slightly in terms of specifics, but more information can be obtained via consultation with staff at Center for Developing Minds or these helpful websites: <http://wrightslaw.com/> or <http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/lr/>.

The IEP and 504 processes should fully involve parents as team members. Final consent and all options should be agreed upon before deciding on services, goals, and/or accommodations. While most disagreements can be handled within the IEP team meetings, there are detailed processes to procedural disputes, such as due process hearings and mediations with attorneys. Whether your child needs a 504, IEP, or simply some adaptations to the current teaching style he or she is receiving, it is important to remember that all children are capable of learning and thriving in their classrooms and learning should not be a "one size fits all" approach.

~ Primer Contributed by Lara Zawacki, LEP, NCSP  
CDM Psychologist

## MARBLES: Markers for Autism Risk in Babies— Learning Early Signs

UC Davis is enrolling women to participate in the MARBLES study. To be eligible, you must have a biological child diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, be pregnant or planning a pregnancy, and live within two hours of Davis/Sacramento. Biological, environmental, and behavioral information will be collected during pregnancy and through the infant's 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday in an effort to determine risk factors that may be associated with the development of autism. Stipends will be given.

To learn more, call 866-550-5027 or email: [marbles@ucdavis.edu](mailto:marbles@ucdavis.edu).

## Do you wish a "SuperNanny" would visit your home?



Almost all parents will occasionally struggle with the use of consistent, appropriate discipline strategies for their family. It also happens that parents can become "stuck" in a negative cycle of interaction with their child/children that can be hard to change. In addition, many busy parents today are simply overwhelmed with the activity schedule they must manage for their family. **If you are a parent frustrated with your current behavior and discipline strategies, it is always helpful and healthy to get some advice.**

To get your family working in a more positive direction, the clinicians at the CDM recommend having an expert visit your home to help design and implement your family's action plan. Janel Astor, Child Development Specialist at the CDM, has extensive experience assisting families with identifying problem areas, designing interventions and establishing plans to maximize their child's abilities and improve their behavior.

Our development specialist can provide assistance in a variety of domains, such as:

- Providing techniques and offering observational feedback to parents, and caretakers, so that they can continue to recognize and improve their behavioral training skills.
- Creating a program that includes organizing your child's home environment to reduce distractions and problem areas, and promote exploration and play.
- Giving your family a better understanding of practical tools and strategies that can be implemented in your home to provide more positive family interactions in a constructive environment.

The in-home behavioral support is a program designed for families with young children (i.e. toddlers to pre-teens). The assistance is tailored specifically to each family, and may involve multiple sessions, or just one or two, depending on the personalized plan. If you are interested in learning more about this service, please contact the CDM at 408.358.1853 or [info@devminds.com](mailto:info@devminds.com).

## Current Classes at the CDM

### *Manners Matter*

Group that Teaches Practical Etiquette Tips for Teens

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:00-5:00pm

Meeting dates: October 21, 23, 28, 30, Nov. 4, 6, 11, 13, 18, 20

Parent orientation: Monday, October 20, 6:00-7:00 pm

Open to students in grades 9-12

Instructor: Cassandra Harms, Child and Adolescent Therapist

Manners Matter is a real-life etiquette training course for teenagers. The program is designed to help teens recognize the many skills that are necessary to create a great first impression. The participants will learn how to exhibit self-confidence, the importance of a good attitude, and practice active listening with their peers.

The class sessions will also focus on practical applications for good manners, including:

- Appropriate interview conduct – learn proper skills to help compete for part-time jobs or college placements,
- Dating decorum,
- Phone and cell phone courtesies,
- Party behavior,
- Eating conduct,
- Email and texting etiquette.

### **LET'S GET ORGANIZED**

Support Group for Kids Who Struggle to Stay Organized in their Life

Thursdays, 4:00-5:00pm

Meeting dates: September 4, 11, 18, 25 and October 2, 9

Parent orientation: Wednesday, September 3, 6:00-7:00 pm

Open to students in grades 5-8

Instructor: Cassandra Harms, Child and Adolescent Therapist

Organization problems are common among students whose performance in school is disappointing. Even the most motivated of these children may find it hard to change their patterns of disorganization. This fun and encouraging group will help students build new skills essential for good organization, while improving self-esteem in a supportive environment among students that struggle with similar issues.

This support group will focus on your child's skills in attending, planning, time management, performance anxiety and memory.

As a part of the sessions, the participants will collaboratively plan an "End of Group, Beginning of Success" party as a concrete and enjoyable way to utilize their new organization skills.

*All classes are held at the CDM. Class sizes are limited to provide participants with personal attention. To register, or for more information regarding these classes, please contact 408-358-1853.*

## Anger Management Support Group for Teens

Adolescents are prone to fluctuations in their emotions, but some teens fall into a pattern of enraged, disruptive behavior. During this program, students will be taught cognitive approaches to using their logical brain, instead of their emotional side. The group will use role-playing exercises to learn new social, behavioral and conflict-resolution skills for better management of their anger. By working within a group, and reflecting on the skills of the other members, students will develop more self-control by gaining insight into their own strengths and weaknesses.

The fall group will meet on Mondays at 4:00-5:00pm, from November 3 through December 22, at the Center for Developing Minds. The group is open to students in grades 7-12. Course fee is \$450 for the eight class sessions and the parent introductory session to be held on October 27 at 6:00pm.

## Welcome New CDM Staff

### **Eileen Graham**

Office Coordinator

Eileen is your initial point of contact with the Center for Developing Minds. She will assist you in selecting the appropriate service for your child, as well as make the appointments and follow-up meetings with the staff. In addition to working at the CDM, Eileen is an artist and painter.

### **Kimberly Noll, Ed.S., LEP**

Educational Psychologist  
School Psychologist

Kim works at the Center for Developing Minds assessing learning and development in children of all ages. She conducts psycho-educational and neuropsychological evaluations to determine children's strengths and weaknesses to best direct effective interventions. In addition to working at the Center for Developing Minds, Kim continues to serve as a school psychologist in the San Jose area, where she is an integral part of interdisciplinary teams that meet for Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), Student Study Teams (SSTs), and 504 General Education Accommodation and Modification Plans.

### **Kate Burke**

Office Receptionist

Kate works with the office staff at the Center for Developing Minds, helping to greet patients and their families, answer phones, and schedule appointments. Ms. Burke holds a B.A. in art studio from UCSB.

For more biographical information about CDM staff, please visit our website, [www.dev Minds.com](http://www.dev Minds.com).



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**NEW**

## **ADD/HD Teen Support Group**

Many teenagers with attention differences feel overwhelmed and isolated. It is important for children to see the many faces of Attention Deficit Disorder/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADD/HD), and be able to talk with their peers about how the diagnosis impacts their lives. This new informative and supportive group held at the Center for Developing Minds will help teenagers learn about how they can create an ADD/HD-friendly environment for themselves. Each week the group will discuss a topic specific to attention dysfunctions that helps stimulate conversation between the group members. The goals for the group are to provide a safe place for teens to talk about their feelings, build friendships among the participants, and teach strategies to help make each teenager's life less chaotic.

In addition, the group will offer students:

- Tools to handle problem ADD/HD patterns like impulsivity, boredom and disorganization,
- Strategies on how to get-along better at home,
- Advice on how to navigate social and dating situations.

The fall group will meet on Wednesdays at 4:00-5:00pm, from September 24 through November 12, at the Center for Developing Minds. The group is open to students in grades 7-12. Course fee is \$450 for the eight class sessions and the parent introductory session to be held on Sept. 23, 6:00pm.

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