



Schools Supports Available for Your Child and How to Request Them

Hello Parents!

Whether you are a biological Parent or have responsibility as a Parent in your child's education such as a relative, kin, or Education Decision Maker (all known under education law as the Parent for the child), thank you for all you do for your child. Studies show that having an adult that supports them in their life can make a huge difference in a child's life success. As Parents and advocates ourselves, we know it is a lot of work so we appreciate you and are here to help make sure your work on your child's behalf is as productive as possible!

School is very difficult for many students these days and so different than when many of us went to school. What is being taught in the classroom may not be what you were taught. Did you know there are more than 3 methods that can be used to add two numbers together nowadays? It is mind boggling!

We are here to help you get the services your child may need and deserve. There are several levels of support we can help you advocate for your child. By knowing the different levels of support available, we can work together to see which one might work best for your child.

Some levels of support require schools to work with your child and provide services under the law so supports become a more formal partnership between you and your child's school staff.

To help you understand level of supports available at school, we categorized them as **Beginning**, **Intermediate**, or **High** Levels of School Support (Levels of Support)

Below are a description of the Levels of Support that you can request for your child. You can read each level to determine what Level of Support your child might needs or jump to a highlighted level you already think your child might need. If you are unsure of what support your child needs, you may want to start with requesting the **Beginning Level of Support** which are good for all children. If your child is really struggling in school, you can also start with the **Intermediate Level of Support**. You can also move up a Level of Support if your child needs more support than what you have asked for after a period of time.

Even if you aren't sure about the Level of Supports your child needs, by asking for any of them for your child, it begins a dialogue with the schools to get your child supports they didn't have before and put your child on the school's radar screen for help!

Beginning Level/Tier 1 School Support

After School/In Classroom Support

Provided in Classrooms and on School Campuses

Created and Taught by Teachers/School Staff

Supports All Students and Students Who Just Need a Little Bit of Extra Help

The first level of support available in school is Beginning Level School Support which takes place in the classroom and on school campuses. This support is for students who are struggling a little bit in school and just need some extra help that a classroom teacher or school staff can provide within their classes/school campus. The Beginning Level of Support is more easily made available by schools than other Levels of Support. Parents just must take advantage of them by asking about them or by asking to have their child placed in them. Most teachers and staff members are trained in these types of support. **Beginning Level of Support and specific supports are called and known in education by school staff as Tier 1 Supports so you may hear the term Tier 1 Supports used for these supports in school.**

Beginning Level/Tier 1 School Supports for students who struggle with Reading, Writing, and Math include:

- Teaching students in small groups within the classroom based on ability level to help children at similar levels get important skills in Reading/Writing/Math
- Teaching extra or alternative curriculum or strategies in Reading/Writing/Math for students who need information presented in a different way or at slower pace
- Electives/Classes students can be placed in such as Study Skills classes that provide classwork and homework support at the Middle/High School Level and allow students get more homework help at school during the school day (then they have more time at home to chill – Yay!)
- Before/After school homework or classwork help opportunities provided by the classroom teacher or school staff (Sometimes called Opportunity Periods)

Beginning Level/Tier 1 School Supports for Behavior* such as struggles with making friends/anxiety/disliking school include:

- After school clubs/programs or electives in a child's strengths/interests or skills like Gaming Clubs, Friendship Social Skill Clubs, Yearbook class, etc.
- Electives such as Leadership or Life Strategies classes that teach life skills or behavior skills at the Middle/High School Level
- Having students use an elective or have before/after school opportunities to become Student Aides/Class Helpers in the office, in a class that the student likes/succeeds in, or to help a teacher the student likes
- Placing a student into other unique programs the school might offer that involves behavior support on school campuses

** The word "Behavior" in education known as struggles not related to academics but for any other reason/reasons like social emotional, anxiety, peer issues, and/or attention struggles.*

Beginning Level School Supports are great for all students as they can help a child keep up with the general curriculum and feel good about themselves in their areas of strengths and interests. They can also help a child feel more connected and engaged in school.

You can request Beginning Level School Supports by [clicking here](#) and using our Form or you can ask your child's teacher/school counselor (if your child is in Elementary School) or your child's counselor (if your child is in Middle/High School) about any or all the specific supports above.

Intermediate Level/Tier 2 School Support

Small Group/Informal Plan/Intervention Support

Available Outside of the Classroom and on School Campuses

Created and Taught by Specialized Staff

Supports Students Who Need Help More Help than the Classroom Teacher can Provide

The second level of support is Intermediate Level School Support which is support that takes place outside of the classroom and is created by and taught by trained staff. This support is for students who are struggling more than a little bit (like 1-2 years behind their peers) and need extra help beyond what is available in the classroom or beyond what the classroom teachers/general school staff can provide. **Intermediate Level of Support and specific supports are called and known in education by school staff as Tier 2 Supports so you may hear the term Tier 2 Supports used.**

Intermediate Supports must be specifically requested by Parents or schools may put students into these supports based on their own guidelines for grades, progress in school, or specific struggles. Intermediate Level School Supports are often delivered with or without informal plans, in small groups, and on school campuses outside of the classrooms. They are taught by specialized school staff such as counselors, social workers, learning strategists, and interventionists.

Intermediate Level/Tier 2 School Supports for Reading/Writing/Math include:

- Small group/individualized work in Reading/Writing/Math offered outside of the classroom (these supports are often called Intervention Groups/Programs or called a Response to Intervention Program). A student is often pulled from a class (hopefully never during instruction) into the Intervention. Interventions may be taught using specialized curriculum approved by the school district that is taught in person or via computer with a teacher supporting the online work.
- Reading/math/science/social studies classes with extra support pushing into them or sections of these classes specifically targeted for struggling students; and/or
- After/Before school tutoring in Reading/Writing/Math Skills

Intermediate Level/Tier 2 School Support for Behavior* includes:

- Special skills groups or classes schools offer such as social skills, friendship groups, or coping skills groups that reach specific skills in an area that a child may be pulled out of class for or taught after school
- Referrals to specialized school staff like counselors or social workers for counseling or mental health check ins or sessions either in small groups or individually
- Informal incentive/behavior plans or a Behavior Intervention Plan (See **High Level School Support Option: Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)** below) where students get rewarded for working through school struggles such as not going to school or anger/frustration issues
- A Crisis/Safety/Transition Plan for children moving schools or who need support due to trauma/mental health issues
- Referrals to the School's Intervention Team (a team of professionals who review a child's struggles and determine what supports are needed to provide)
- Other unique programs the school might offer – some schools partner with community agencies and other experts in areas their students struggle in for programs or consulting (i.e. CCSD partners with Boys Town and Communities in School for student/family supports on their campuses) * The word "Behavior" in education known as struggles not related to academics but for any other reason/reasons like social emotional, anxiety, peer issues, and/or attention struggles.

Your can request Intermediate Level School Supports by [clicking here](#) and using our Form or you can ask your child's teacher/counselor/social worker (if your child is in Elementary School) or your child's school counselor and social worker (if your child is in Middle/High School) about any of these specific supports/Tier 2 Supports for your child.

Intermediate Level School Support Option: Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is a formalized plan that has interventions, supports, and strategies designed to assist students whose behavior impedes their happiness, home lives, school lives, and self-esteem. A BIP is a systematic approach to changing challenging behaviors and teaching students more positive behaviors to replace them.

A BIP shows not only what school is going to do to help the student to turn around challenging behaviors but *how* schools will be working with the student so that there is a uniform approach for everyone working with the student (teachers, specialists, administration, Parents) to follow.

BIPs include: an explanation of any behavioral triggers; why the student might engage in negative behaviors; steps for teaching of better new behaviors; incentives when a student uses the better behaviors; the crisis plan for when the student exhibits challenging behavior; and how the BIP will be monitored and adjusted to make sure it is helping the student.

An example of a BIP could be that a student who is having meltdowns in the classroom or shuts down due to anxiety is taught to use a pressure pass to go to a quiet place in the classroom or on campus to cool down and relax. A BIP for this behavior might include what a meltdown or anxiety looks like for that child so staff can know a meltdown might happen, how using the pressure pass would be taught to the student, having the student practice going to designated cool down areas, how to handle the student when a meltdown or anxiety occurs, and rewards for the student when using the pressure pass instead of melting down or shutting down. BIPs can also be created for work avoidance/missing work, attentional issues, school avoidance/refusal, and/or any behavior getting in the way of the child doing well in school.

It is best practice that when a student shows a pattern of behavior and/or needs behavioral support, a BIP is put into place if a school uses BIPs. As a BIP is a school record, it can travel from school to school with a child so that all staff working with a child use the same methods/strategies with the child. If a BIP is written into a 504 Plan or IEP, a student is legally entitled to it.

A BIP can be put into place without a formal evaluation if the Parent and school have identified why, when, and how the behavior occurs or schools/Parents may request or want to do a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) which is a data collection plan that takes place over several weeks that will collect data on any specific behavior to help create the BIP based on what is observably happening when the student's behavior occurs.

BIPs are in place indefinitely and reviewed/changed as identified within them. Best practices are that BIPs should be reviewed every quarter by someone on the school staff and the Parent to make sure they are working to change the student's behavior or to see if the Plan need to be tweaked for effectiveness.

If your child does not have a 504 Plan or IEP, a BIP should be requested through your child's teacher or school staff such as the counselor/social worker (if their child is in Elementary School) or your child's assigned counselor or school social worker (Middle or High School). If your child has a 504 Plan, a BIP can be requested through the School 504 Liaison or child's counselor. If your child has an IEP, a BIP can be requested via your child's special education teacher or case manager. You can [click here](#) to use our Behavior Intervention Plan First Request Form to request a BIP as well.

High Level/Tier 3 School Supports

Individualized, Specialized, and Formal Support Via Behavior Incentive Plans, 504 Accommodations Plans, and/or Individualized Education Plans

Provided in the Regular or Special Education Classroom and School Campus as Needed

Created and/or Taught by Specialized Staff and/or Special Education Teachers

Supports Students with Suspected/Diagnosed Disabilities who need Individualized Support

The third level of support is High Support which is individualized support written into a formal plan by specialized school staff. High Support is provided in the general education classroom, in a special education classroom, and/or on the school campus based on the student's needs and plan created by the school and parent. High Support is for students who may be more than one or two grade levels behind, struggle with making relationships with peers/staff, struggle with controlling their emotions, and/or have a documented or suspected disability/diagnosis. **High Level of Support and specific supports are called and known in education by school staff as Tier 3 Supports so you may hear the term Tier 3 Supports used for these supports in school.**

High Level Support must be specifically requested by Parents or school staff and a formalized plan will be put into place if the child qualifies for the plan based on school rules or the law. A student may need to be evaluated for the plan or a meeting may be needed to determine if the child needs a plan or High Support.

There are 3 Formal High Support Plans a child might qualify for that provide more intense academic and/or behavior support:

- **A 504 Accommodations Plan (504 Plan)**
- **An Individualized Education Plan (IEP Plan)**
- **A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP or Behavior Plan) as a part of a 504/IEP Plan**

A 504 Accommodations Plan (504 Plan) may be needed for students with documented disabilities or impairments and need tweaks in/wi/with: the general education classroom; a teacher's teaching style; modified schoolwork/homework at their ability level; navigating how to find and turn in assignments; and/or other adjustments to anything education related to remove any barriers that the disability or impairment causes in school. A 504 Plan is generally helpful for a student who just needs a general education teacher or school staff to modify or change some things to help them in school.

An Individualized Education Plan (IEP Plan) may be needed for students with suspected or documented disabilities that need more than a 504 Accommodations Plan. An IEP is the only plan that involves a student: be taught skills in areas the disability affects; have goals in areas of struggles; get education provided by a trained special education teacher and other special staff; an/or may need to be pulled out of the general education classroom to smaller classrooms or school locations for specialized teaching.

A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is helpful for students who struggle with challenging behaviors that impede their education and need a formalized plan for all school staff to follow that teaches new improved behaviors and addresses the old ones while the improved behaviors are being worked on.

High Level School Support Option Added to a 504 or IEP Plan: Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

A Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) is a formalized plan that has interventions, supports, and strategies designed to assist students whose behavior impedes their happiness, home lives, school lives, and self-esteem. A BIP is a systematic approach to changing challenging behaviors and teaching students more positive behaviors to replace them.

A BIP shows not only what school is going to do to help the student to turn around challenging behaviors but *how* schools will be working with the student so that there is a uniform approach for everyone working with the student (teachers, specialists, administration, Parents) to follow.

BIPs include: an explanation of any behavioral triggers; why the student might engage in negative behaviors/what they get out of the behaviors; steps for teaching of better new behaviors; incentives when a student uses the better behaviors; the crisis plan for when the student exhibits challenging behavior; and how the BIP will be monitored and adjusted to make sure it is helping the student.

An example of a BIP could be that a student who is having meltdowns in the classroom or shuts down due to anxiety is taught to use a pressure pass to go to a quiet place in the classroom or on campus to cool down and relax. A BIP for this behavior might include what a meltdown or anxiety looks like for that child so staff can know a meltdown might happen, how using the pressure pass would be taught to the student, having the student practice going to designated cool down areas, how to handle the student when a meltdown or anxiety occurs, and rewards for the student when using the pressure pass instead of melting down or shutting down. BIPs can also be created for work avoidance/missing work, attentional issues, school avoidance/refusal, and/or any behavior getting in the way of the child doing well in school.

BIPs can be provided at the request of a Parent as part of a 504 Plan or IEP if the child has one or on its own as standalone support plan for a child. It is best practice that when a student shows a pattern of behavior and/or needs behavioral support that a BIP is put into place. As a BIP is a school record, it can travel from school to school with a child so that all staff working with a child use the same methods/strategies with the child. If a BIP is written into a 504 Plan or IEP, a student is legally entitled to it.

A BIP can be put into place without a formal evaluation if the Parent and school have identified why, when, and how the behavior occurs or schools/Parents may request or need to do a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) which is a data collection plan that takes place over several weeks that will collect data on any specific behavior to help create the BIP based on what is observably happening when the student's behavior occurs.

BIPs are in place indefinitely and reviewed/changed as identified within them. Best practices are that BIPs should be reviewed every quarter by someone on the school staff and the Parent to make sure they are working to change the student's behavior or to see if the Plan need to be tweaked for effectiveness.

If your child does not have a 504 Plan or IEP, a BIP should be requested through the counselor/social worker (if their child is in Elementary School) or your child's assigned counselor or school social worker (Middle or High School). If your child has a 504 Plan, a BIP can be requested through the School 504 Liaison. If your child has an IEP, a BIP can be requested via your child's special education teacher/case manager. You can [click here](#) to use our Behavior Intervention Plan Request Form to request a BIP as well.

High Level School Support Option: 504 Accommodations Plan (504 Plan)

A 504 Accommodations Plan (504 Plan) is a legal plan provided to a student with at least one documented disability/impairment from a licensed professional that can provide adjustments or changes to any school/general education classroom rule or policy, to the classroom teaching method, or to the school environment to remove any disability/impairment struggle the student has in accessing their education. These adjustments/changes are called Accommodations and Modifications in a 504 Plan. To qualify for a 504 Plan, a Parent must provide written documentation from a licensed professional that their child has a disability (called an impairment under 504 Law) and per the Parent and school, the disability/impairment must affect a major life activity at school such as the child's learning, access to their education, and/or access to school campus. Disabilities/Impairments could be physical or mental. Diagnoses from a licensed psychologist, medical doctor, or psychiatrist count as disabilities/impairments for a 504 Plan.

For example, supports in a 504 Plan for a student with a diagnosis of ADHD who has ADHD related issues manifesting in the classroom may include: seating the student close to the source of instruction and away from distractions; private reminders to stay on task and turn in work; prompts for short movement breaks at designated times; or when showing signs of inattention, breaking long assignments into smaller parts to complete; and/or shortening assignments for attention span and just enough to show the student can complete work on the assignment.

Another example of supports in a 504 Plan for a student with learning struggles due to a diagnosed learning disability/impairment may include: being provided with copies of notes/class materials; shortening assignments in half or just to show the student can do the work; extra time on assignments; retaking tests if the student fails a test; having the teacher check to make sure the student understands instructions/can do the work; the ability to use a calculator on most math work; the use of speech to text for longer writing assignments; and/or having directions or hard to read materials read to the student/provided using text to speech technology.

A 504 Plan is legal document and any supports provided in it must be upheld by all school staff working with the child.

Students may have to be evaluated for a 504 Plan or a school may determine the child needs a 504 Plan if the child's disability/impairments is affecting their participation in school/education. A 504 Plan stays in place until the child no longer qualifies for it and can be modified as needed by school staff.

Parents are provided with a 504 Plan and can make recommendations to the school on what should go into their child's 504 Plan. There is no legal requirement to have Parents' input in a 504 Plan but it is best practice. Parents must be given notice of the 504 Plan being created and be provided a copy of it. A 504 Plan might include some Intermediate Level School Supports like counseling or limited small group support but does not include support/teaching by a special education trained teacher and often does not provide support in a specialized or smaller classroom.

If you think your child needs a 504 Plan, you will need to request it through your child's principal. It is best practice if you also request it through or cc the school's 504 Liaison/your child's counselor. If a 504 Plan will not or is currently not providing the level of support your child needs, your child needs more services than just tweaks of school rules/teaching, and/or your child needs support and services with a very different curriculum and in a smaller classroom, you may want to request an IEP for more support as discussed below. You can also [click here](#) to use our 504 Plan: First Request Form to request a BIP as well.

High Level School Support Option: Individualized Education Plan (IEP)

A child who a Parent or school staff suspects has a disability or who has a documented disability and possibly needs High Level School Supports may qualify to get an IEP. An IEP is a comprehensive education plan that involves goals in areas of a student's struggles, teaching of the goals by a special education teacher or trained professional in those areas, adjustments and changes to anything school related to remove any disability-related barriers (similar to a 504 Plan), and possible placement in a smaller specialized class for instruction based on the unique needs of the child. An IEP also may include related services such as speech, physical therapy, occupational therapy, adapted PE, specialized transportation, and counseling to support the child in areas of struggles.

An IEP is a legal document and any supports provided in it must be upheld by all school staff working with the child. It offers the highest level of support for a child and is the only plan that involves services to the child, instruction from a special education teacher, and the possibility of being pulled out into smaller, more specialized classes to work on particular skills.

For example, an IEP for a student with a learning disability may include: learning goals in the areas of struggle (Reading, Writing, and/or Math) to make growth in these areas; a teacher pushing in to a general education classes or the student put into smaller resource classes with a special education teacher to teach the subject related goals in area of struggle; supports for learning in classes such as shorter assignments, technological aids, and class notes provided to the student; and extended school year for classes during the summer to continue working on academic goals.

An IEP for a student with behavioral struggles may include: goals in the areas of frustration/anxiety management, work completion, and/or dealing with peer issues by learning how to communicate effectively and/or organization techniques; a teacher pushing into a general education class or a teacher pulling the student into a smaller class for specialized support and teaching in behavior management; supports for behaviors such as reminder of the student to use calming techniques, se areas or staff to go to when using calming techniques, have extra time to turn in assignments with no late penalties for assignments; specific organizational support used with the student to help ensure work is turned in and complete; a Behavior Intervention Plan for the child (*see above BIP section*); and some occupational therapy for cool down or anxiety techniques support and devices.

A student must be evaluated for an IEP (called a special education evaluation) which may take up to 45-60 school days depending on your state's laws (in Nevada, it is 45 school days). While the special education evaluation is taking place for a possible IEP, Parents can ask for Intermediate Level School Support, a Behavior Intervention Plan, and/or a 504 Plan (if the child has a documented disability/impairment) for some support.

If the student qualifies for an IEP, an initial IEP must be created within 30 calendar days of the day the student qualifies for it. The IEP is revised annually at minimum and the student gets IEP services for 3 years after they qualify initially. The student is re-evaluated to determine if an IEP is still needed every three years.

Parents are part of the decision-making team who create each yearly IEP (called the IEP Team) and have special rights to meaningfully participate in the creation of the IEP and to be invited to attend the annual IEP meeting.

If you think your child needs an IEP, you will need to request a special education evaluation through your child's principal. It is also best practice to let the school psychologist know of your request and cc them on the request as the school psychologist will lead the evaluation and evaluation process that you will be involved in. You can request an IEP/Special Education Evaluation by [clicking here](#) to use our Form.