

TIPS FROM A SOCIAL WORKER

School Accommodation Request Letter

An important part of getting accommodations for your student is having a letter from your child's doctor. The letter will explain the medical condition and physical limitations and outline possible modifications or accommodations to help promote educational success. Depending on the doctor's office or clinic, the letter might be written by a nurse, a physical or occupational therapist, a social worker or a doctor. The letter will be useful whether you choose a 504 Plan, the IEP process or a more informal approach. As you work with the doctor's office it's important to:

1. Plan ahead

- If you need a school letter, inform the office when you schedule your spring or early summer appointment. Also, if you plan to discuss any concerns or new developments related to school issues, inform the appointment scheduler so additional time can be accommodated in your regular appointment.

2. Keep the letter current

- Ask for a new letter at the beginning of the school year, as your child's needs may change from one year to the next.
- The school will respond best to a letter that is current. Having a letter that is more than one year old may send the wrong message.

Changes in the school experience

- As children get older, their needs may change and additional supports may be required. Older children typically have multiple teachers, multiple classrooms and more books, homework and tests.
- Standardized testing usually requires special accommodations for children with JA. However, your child's school must make the request.
- An informal method of working with the school may have worked well when your student was in younger grades but maybe less effective as he or she advances in elementary school and beyond.

Working with a College or University

- The appropriate office to arrange for accommodations may be the school's Disability Services Office.
- Some offices will provide a form for your health care provider to complete.
- If a form is unavailable, your health care provider can provide a letter to explain the medical condition and physical limitations, and outline possible modifications or accommodations to help promote educational success.