

***Everyone is Welcome:
Making your PTA More Inclusive
for Those with Special Needs***

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How many children with special needs Are enrolled in public schools?



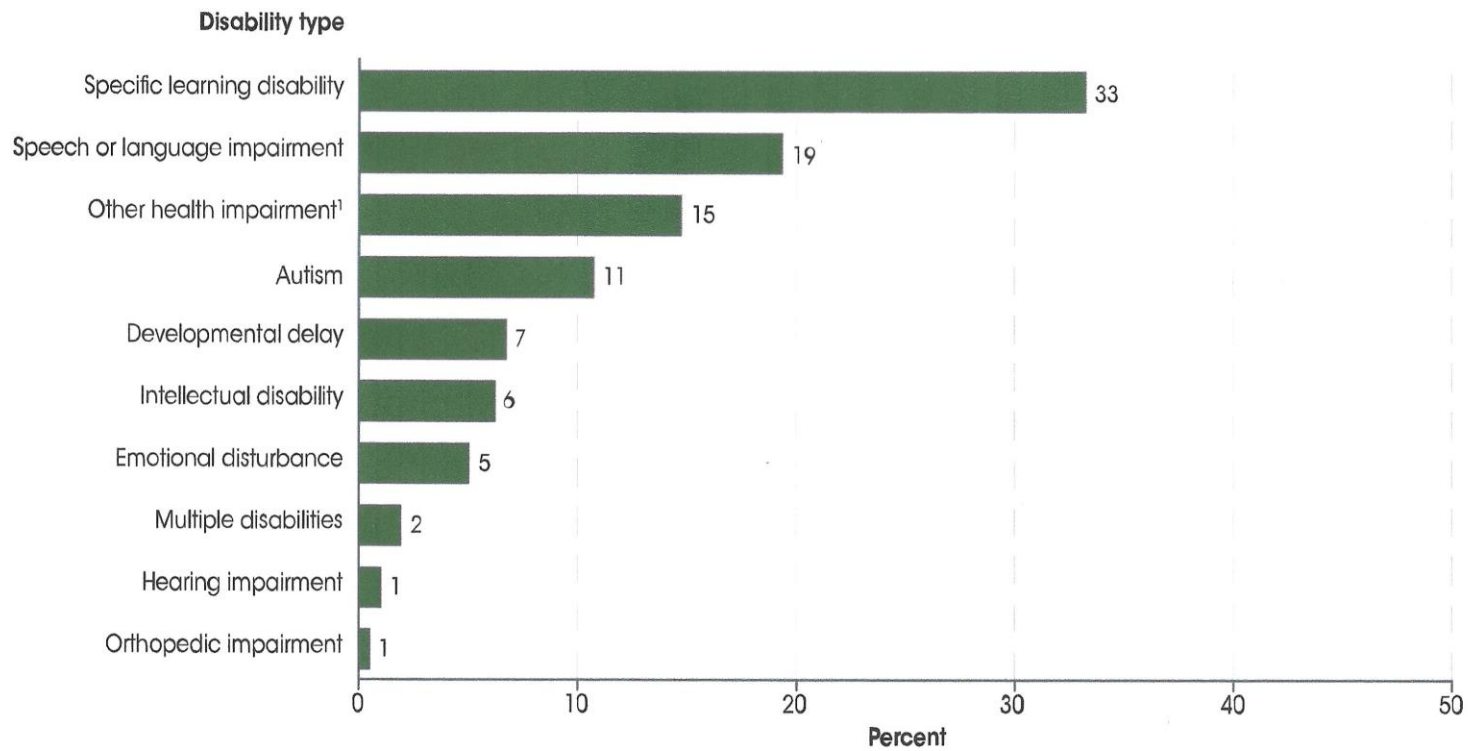
In 2018-19 there were **652,621** students in Utah's public school system (district & charter schools)

12% of those children received special education services

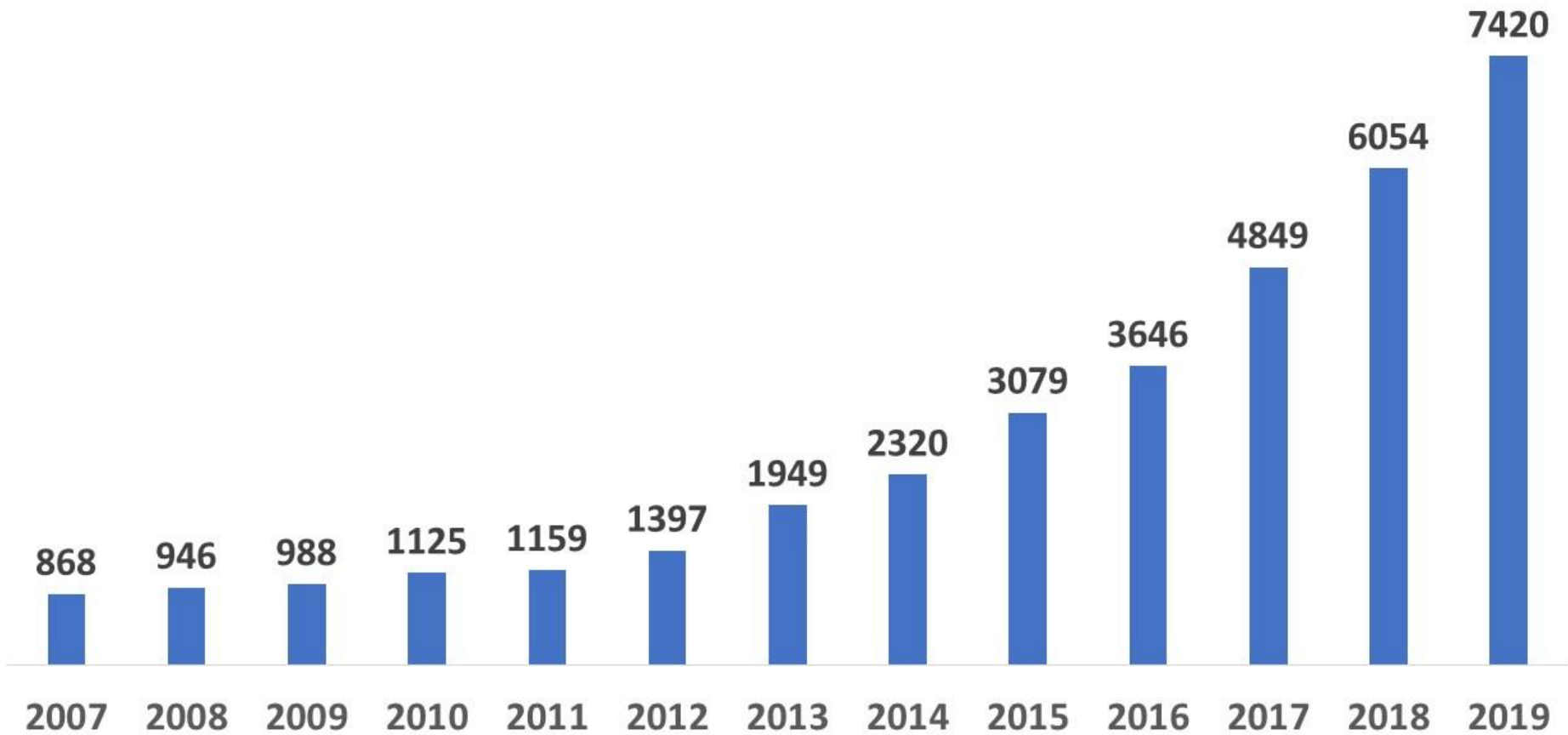
This translates to roughly **79,000** kids

Another **7,400** students received accommodations through 504 plans

Percentage distribution of students In the United States ages 3-21 Served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by disability type: School year 2018-19



Number of students ages 14-22 with 504 Plans



Food Allergies

an often overlooked disability

- ▶ Food allergy is a serious and potentially life-threatening medical condition affecting 32 million Americans.

One in every 13 children has a food allergy

that's about 2 in every classroom!

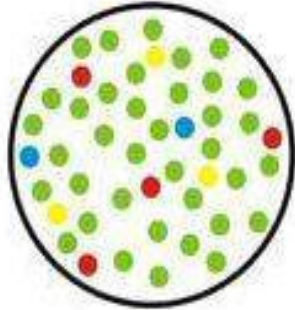
- ▶ Nearly 40% of these children have already experienced a severe allergic reaction. Many of these reactions happen at school.

More than 80% of students who qualify for services under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in Utah, have disabilities that are **classified as mild to moderate.**

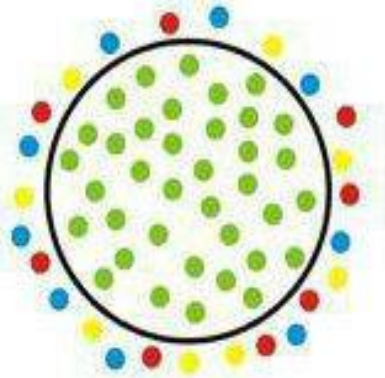
There are students with disabilities in practically **every classroom** in Utah.

Inclusion

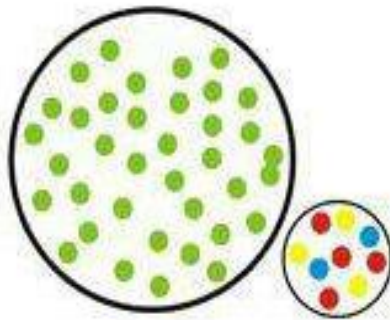




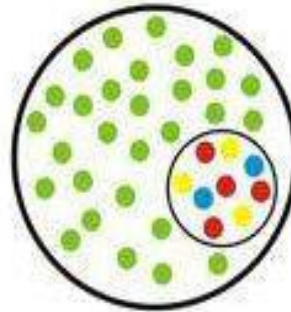
Inclusion



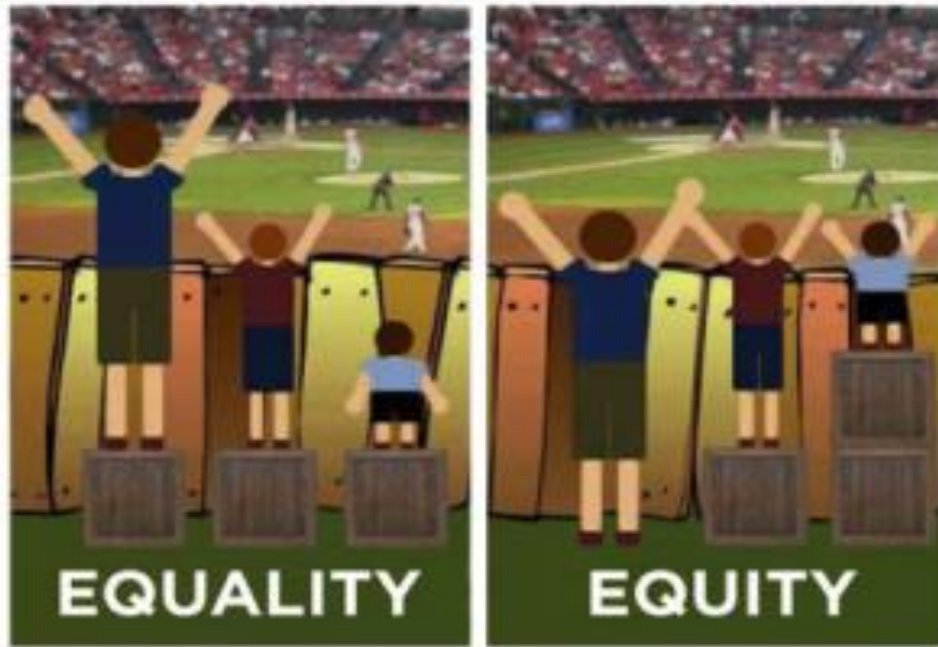
Exclusion



Segregation



Integration



Equality – It is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated **equally**.

Equity – Individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated **equitably**.

How can a Special Needs Rep help your school community?

- ▶ A Special Needs Representative can be a great asset and resource to your local PTA board as well as to students with disabilities and their families.
- ▶ This is a great way to help families be more connected, informed, and involved in the school community and with your PTA.
- ▶ A Special Needs Rep could help in planning and carrying out PTA activities to enable all students to participate.



- ▶ PTA Boards can designate a Special Needs Rep or someone could volunteer to serve in the position.
- ▶ This Rep would work with the board and be a go-between who works with the PTA and the teachers and staff as activities and events are being planned.
- ▶ A Special Needs Rep could consult with the teachers and school nurse to see what accommodations are needed.
- ▶ The Rep would work with the board to provide adaptations and assistance so that all students can participate in and enjoy the activity.

What the job of Special Needs Rep is NOT:

- ▶ A Special Needs Rep does not need to be an expert on disabilities or IEPs (Individual Education Programs) and 504 plans.
- ▶ A Special Needs Rep does not attend IEP meetings for or with other parents.
- ▶ A Special Needs Rep should not share personal information about children or families.

What the job of Special Needs Rep IS:

- ▶ Be a friendly and approachable person.
- ▶ Build connections between students and between adults in your school community.
- ▶ Become familiar with available resources and help connect people to resources, if needed.
- ▶ Encourage inclusion.
- ▶ Be sensitive when working with these children and their families.
- ▶ Communicate and help others to communicate.

Things to know:

- ▶ Schools will not be giving the Special Needs Rep a list of special needs students due to privacy laws.
- ▶ This position could look different at different schools
- ▶ Special Needs Rep can be a person with or without a child with special needs
- ▶ What is appropriate for one person with a special need may not be appropriate for another.

Focus on what accommodations are needed instead of what the disability is.

An Important Note on Privacy & Respect

- ▶ Special Needs Reps need to be careful with any confidential information about students and their disabilities. It's very important to keep this information private and not share it with others. Even if families share information with the Rep, it needs to be kept confidential.
- ▶ **It is illegal** to share this type of information without written permission.
- ▶ ****When sending group emails, use BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) so the list of recipients is kept private**

How to get started as the Special Needs Rep

▶ Publicize the position

Contact information in the front office or school FB page

Article in the school newsletter

Speak at Back to School Night, etc.

▶ Ask special ed team to pass out flyers at Parent-Teacher Conferences and IEP meetings with information about the Special Needs Rep.

▶ Let people know the PTA and the Special Needs Rep are there to help.

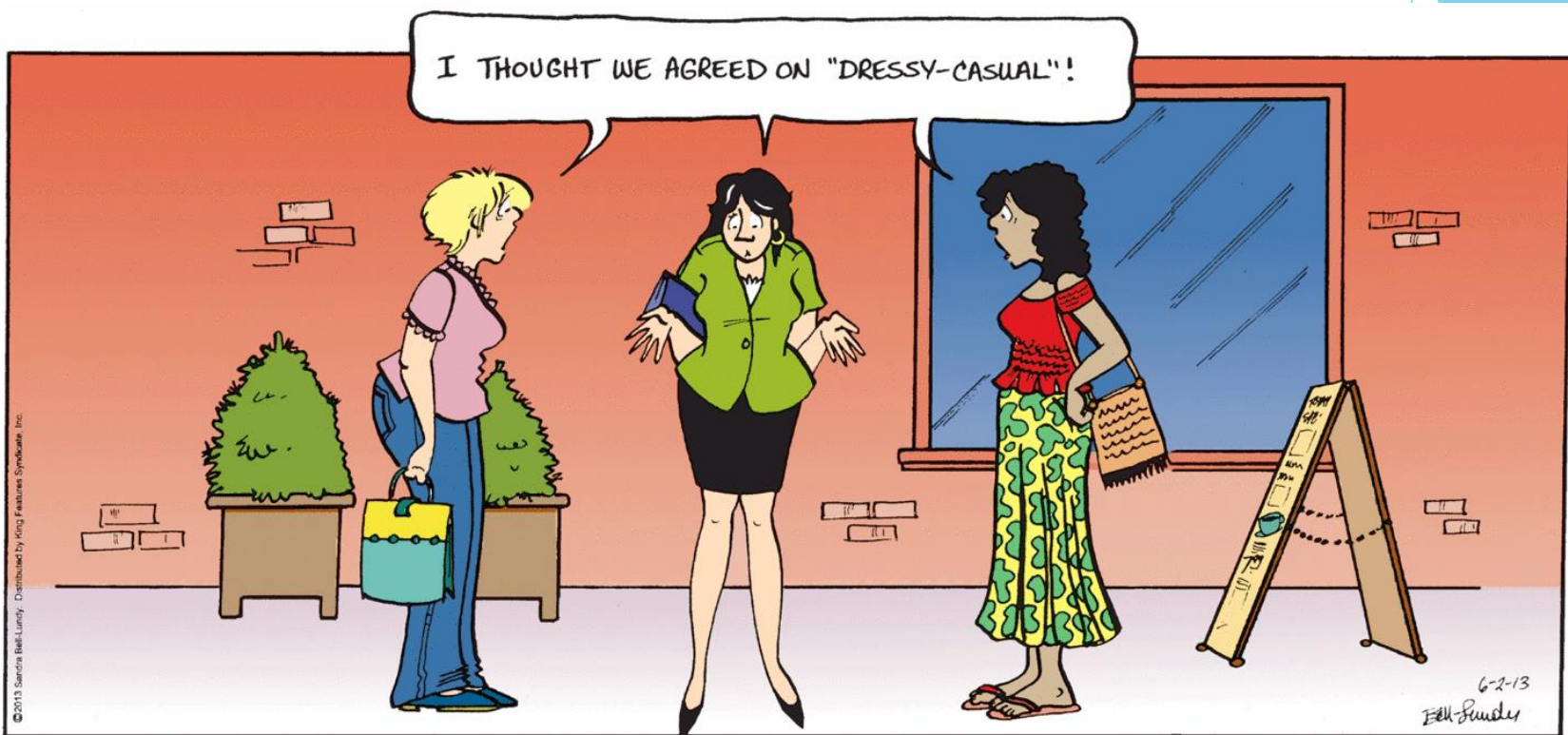
Communication



Lack of communication is one of the biggest problems in the world.



I THOUGHT WE AGREED ON "DRESSY-CASUAL"!





- ▶ Figure out the best way to communicate with your students and families – email, paper flyers, posters, etc.
- ▶ Don't just assume everyone will hear about activities and know all the details.
- ▶ **Let people know who to contact with questions**
remember communication goes two ways.

Get information to these families
as **early** as possible.

Students with disabilities **often need more time** than others
to prepare for a change in schedule or a special activity and they
often end up being told at the last minute.

Food Allergies:

an important way PTA can help





PTA is in a prime position to help make school a safe place for students with food allergies during activities.

The Special Needs Rep can work with the school nurse and teachers to find out which allergens are a problem and discuss suggestions for other options. The Rep can work with the PTA to provide a safe food alternative or a non-food treat which could be given to the teacher to give to the student.

Examples of adaptations the Special Needs Rep could help facilitate

- ▶ Non-food treats as prizes for a fun run
- ▶ Some less noisy activities at a school carnival like a quiet sensory room, so students who are getting overwhelmed can decompress
- ▶ Allergen-free foods for a class party
- ▶ A buddy or extra help during field day
- ▶ An ASL (American Sign Language) interpreter for a student or their family member
- ▶ Letting teachers, students, and parents know what will happen and what they will be expected to do at an activity
- ▶ Help publicize the Reflections Special Artist category

Resources

(See a more complete list of resources in the attached handout)

Utah Parent Center

Provides information, resources, support, advocacy and training for families of people with disabilities, including IEP & 504 training and support. Services are free of charge.

The mission of the UPC is to help parents help their children, youth and young adults with all disabilities to live included, productive lives as members of the community.

They accomplish this mission by providing accurate information, empathetic peer support, valuable training and effective advocacy based on the concept of parents helping parents.

<http://www.utahparentcenter.org/>

Also on Facebook – Utah Parent Center

Resolutions - HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- ▶ **Utah PTA Resolution:**

High Expectations for Students with Disabilities (2017)

<http://www.utahpta.org/files/docs/UT%20High%20Expectations%20%20Updated%20Feb%202018.pdf>

- ▶ **National PTA Resolution:**

High Expectations for Students with Disabilities (2018)

<https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/advocacy/2018-approved-convention-resolutions/high-expectations-for-students-with-disabilities-r.pdf>

- ▶ **Utah Legislative Resolution**

HCR14 – Concurrent Resolution Encouraging High Expectations for Students with Disabilities (2019)

<https://le.utah.gov/~2019/bills/static/HCR014.html>



Utah PTA <http://www.utahpta.org/>

Reflections: Special Artist Category

Check the Utah PTA website www.utahpta.org for **Special Artist** information, rules, guidelines, judging process, and guidelines for judges.

National PTA



▶ Special Needs Toolkit

<https://www.pta.org/home/family-resources/Special-Education-Toolkit>

Includes information for getting needed services, dictionary of terms, resources, etc.

▶ Ideas to Support Children with Special Needs

<http://www.pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=4275>

Day of Encouragement

Day of Pairing

Special Needs Task Force

▶ Resolution:

Inclusive Communities Make Better Schools

<https://www.pta.org/home/advocacy/ptas-positions/Individual-PTA-Resolutions/resolution-on-inclusive-schools-build-stronger-communities>



UFAN - Utah Food Allergy Network

Email: support@utahfoodallergy.org

Facebook group: Utah Food Allergy Network

FARE - Food Allergy Resource & Education

<https://www.foodallergy.org/>

Resources, information and support for the entire food allergy community.

Law Enforcement

CIT Crisis Intervention Teams

Crisis Intervention Teams include specially trained law enforcement officers. These officers are trained in tactics to effectively deal with a situation involving a person experiencing a mental health crisis. A CIT Officer has received training in preventing psychiatric crises and de-escalating a crisis when it occurs, without the unnecessary use of physical force. These officers are certified by the State of Utah Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health.

CIT Utah <http://www.cit-utah.com/>

(801) 535-4653 CITUtah@CIT-Utah.com



Disability Awareness Activity Packet: Activities & Resources for Teaching Students About Disabilities

By Bev Adcock & Michael L. Remus

Deer Valley Unified School District (used with permission)

<http://www.dvUSD.org/cms/lib011/AZ01901092/Centricity/Domain/1318/Disability%20Awareness%20Packet%202.pdf>

Have the class read the COLOR the word is written in, not the word itself. (learning disability example)

YELLOW **BLUE** **ORANGE**

BLACK **RED** **GREEN**

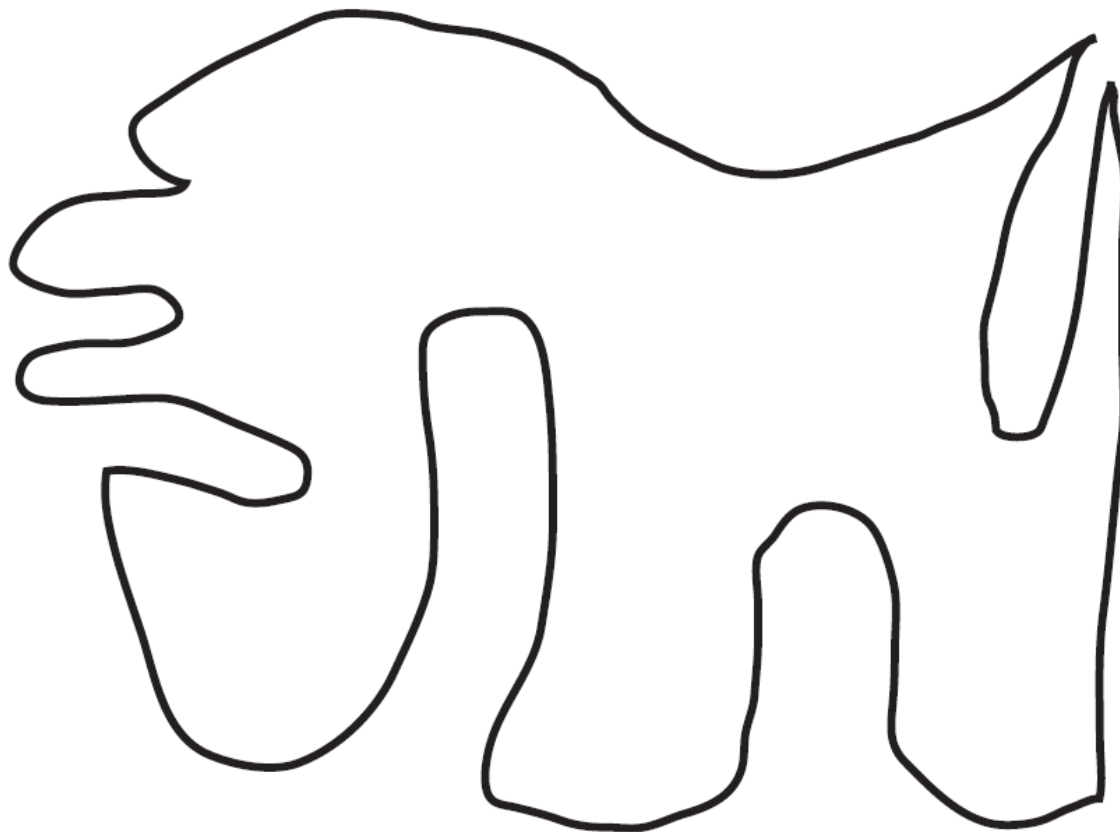
PURPLE **YELLOW** **RED**

ORANGE **GREEN** **BLACK**

BLUE **RED** **PURPLE**

GREEN **BLUE** **ORANGE**

Have 2 students sit back to back. Give one student a paper with an abstract shape on it (like this one) and give the other student a pencil and piece of paper. The first student explains to the second student how to draw the picture. (intellectual disability example)



“There is no greater disability in society, than the inability to see a person as more.”

- Robert M. Hensel

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