

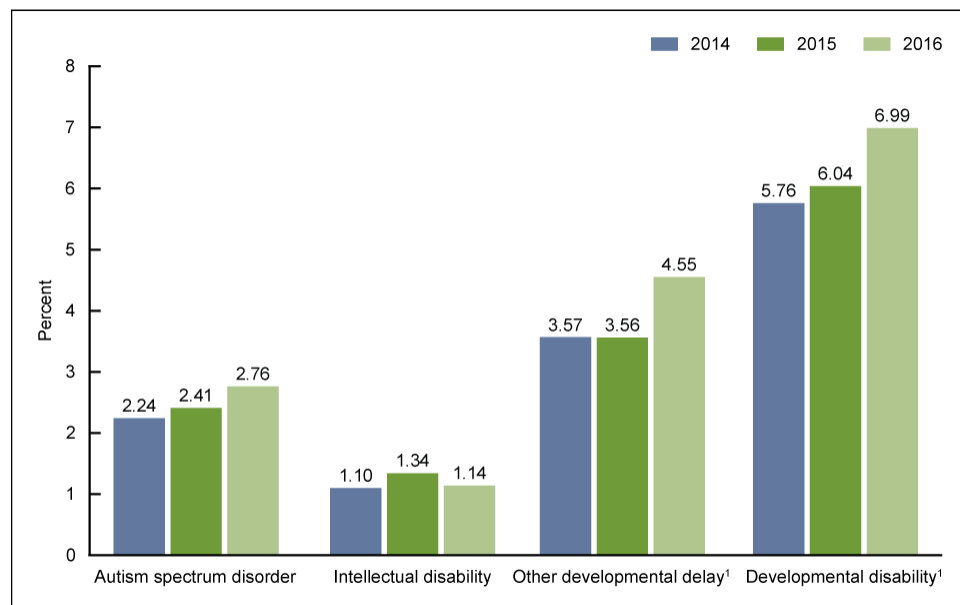
DISABILITIES

The information and suggestions here have in mind accessibility to learning disabilities while still being able to be used for everyone in the program. It's important to know that materials used within the classroom can have characteristics that trigger certain disabilities, especially those who have sensory issues. Vice versa, it can also be beneficial to increase use of sensory materials to engage students in multiple sensory levels.

The research gathered from the information below was pulled from various studies and research journals. Understanding associability on its own is enough to understand the procedures that should follow or even the approaches used throughout the program. This is light research but insight would extremely benefit as more ideas could come to light.

Below is a prevalence of disabilities chart (CDC.GOV) for reference on where to allocate accessibility efforts:

Figure 1. Prevalence of children aged 3–17 years ever diagnosed with selected developmental disabilities, by year: United States, 2014–2016



¹Linear increase from 2014 to 2016 is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

NOTES: Developmental disability includes autism spectrum disorder, intellectual disability, and any other developmental delay. Access data table for Figure 1 at: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db291_table.pdf#1.

SOURCE: NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2014–2016.

MATERIALS

The use of physical materials and tools that will be used throughout the program should be able to accommodate all sides of the spectrum.

Drawing tools especially sometimes need to be adapted for special use. Note that there are many other tools that are not traditionally made for art, that can be used such as sponges.

Here are some materials to consider:

- Nonslip materials
- Slant-boards
- Adaptive scissors (spring open, double loop, platform)
- Adapted implements (large handles, rounded)

The use of clay and traditional painting/drawing materials have many alternatives. These alternatives can allow ease through clean-up and could possibly allow for a better understanding of concepts.

- The use of tools rather than using hands
- Cut-out pictures
- Stamps
- Computer programs/software (drawing)
- A basic salt, flour and water dough, also known as Baker's Clay, is safe and non-toxic.

VISUAL

Symbols, specifically symbol making, can help assist and build on language skills. For example, the use of images can lead to general understanding of what the task at hand is (Group listen, Get supplies, Draw, Share, Cleanup). It's also good to understand that some disabilities have inclined advantages to certain mediums. Ex: Student with autism have several strengths, including visual-spatial skills and sustained attention (Quill, 1997).

- Schedule's communicate the sequence of upcoming activities or events using objects, photographs, icons, words, or a combination

Vision impairment adaptations:

- Color (ex: black text on yellow backgrounds) (florescent colors)
- Enlarged texts
- Light box (or bright light)

Graphic symbols have migrated to other settings and are now widely used in mainstream schools, with young children and with those for whom English is an additional language.

The use of specific visuals in terms of color and symbols can also correlate with emotions. Keeping positive emotional state in mind generally should be rule of thumb. Use color psychology as reference.

COMMUNICATION

Understanding different levels of communication that can be applied to the classroom will exercise more accessibility. Communication can be seen through verbal, hand/body gestures, or tangible text.

Strategies:

- The use of boards as part of lessons or activities for both communication and expressing the task at hand.
- Another opportunity to use shapes and images that correlate to specific actions or meanings.
- The use of signing can also help to make performances more accessible for children with learning difficulties as well as those who are deaf. Integrating this into a lesson plan can benefit the entire spectrum.

More resources:

Published through the NAEA, collaboratively written by art teachers and special education teachers for adaptive art classes: *Reaching and Teaching Art to Students with Special Needs* (Gerber & Guay, 2006) highlights specific categories of disabilities and unique issues of art with students with disabilities. *Understanding Students with Autism through Art* (Gerber & Kellman, 2010) focuses on successful strategies from art teachers who are leaders in the field of art making for students with autism.

References

http://web.utk.edu/~mbc/TAAT_2013.pdf

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