

# Providing Extracurricular Activities to Students with Disabilities: What We Are Doing, What We Should be Doing

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# Personal Experience

How Many of You Were  
Involved in Some Kind of  
Extracurricular Activity in  
High School?

What Was it?

What Did you Think  
About it?

Any Students with  
Disabilities Involved?



# Agenda

- Discuss participation (or lack of) of students with disabilities—particularly, those with intellectual or developmental disabilities--in school sponsored extracurricular activities.
- Benefits of extracurricular activities
- How many students with disabilities actually participate?
- What are the facilitators and barriers to participation?
- How can we encourage participation?

Have Any of You Been  
Involved or Helped  
with a School  
Sponsored  
Extracurricular Activity  
Involving Students with  
Disabilities?



# Mandates

- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: Schools must provide access to extracurricular activities and, as necessary, appropriate accommodations and modifications.
- IDEA mandates that students need to make progress in the general curriculum and "...to participate in extracurricular ... activities."

- Although school districts are required to provide all students with extracurricular and nonacademic activities, it remains unclear as to what extent students with disabilities are indeed participating and the reasons for their participation or non-participation.
- Because students with intellectual or emotional disabilities are socially isolated with limited social networks, one would think participation in extracurricular activities would be a much extolled practice.

# Benefits of Extracurricular Activities

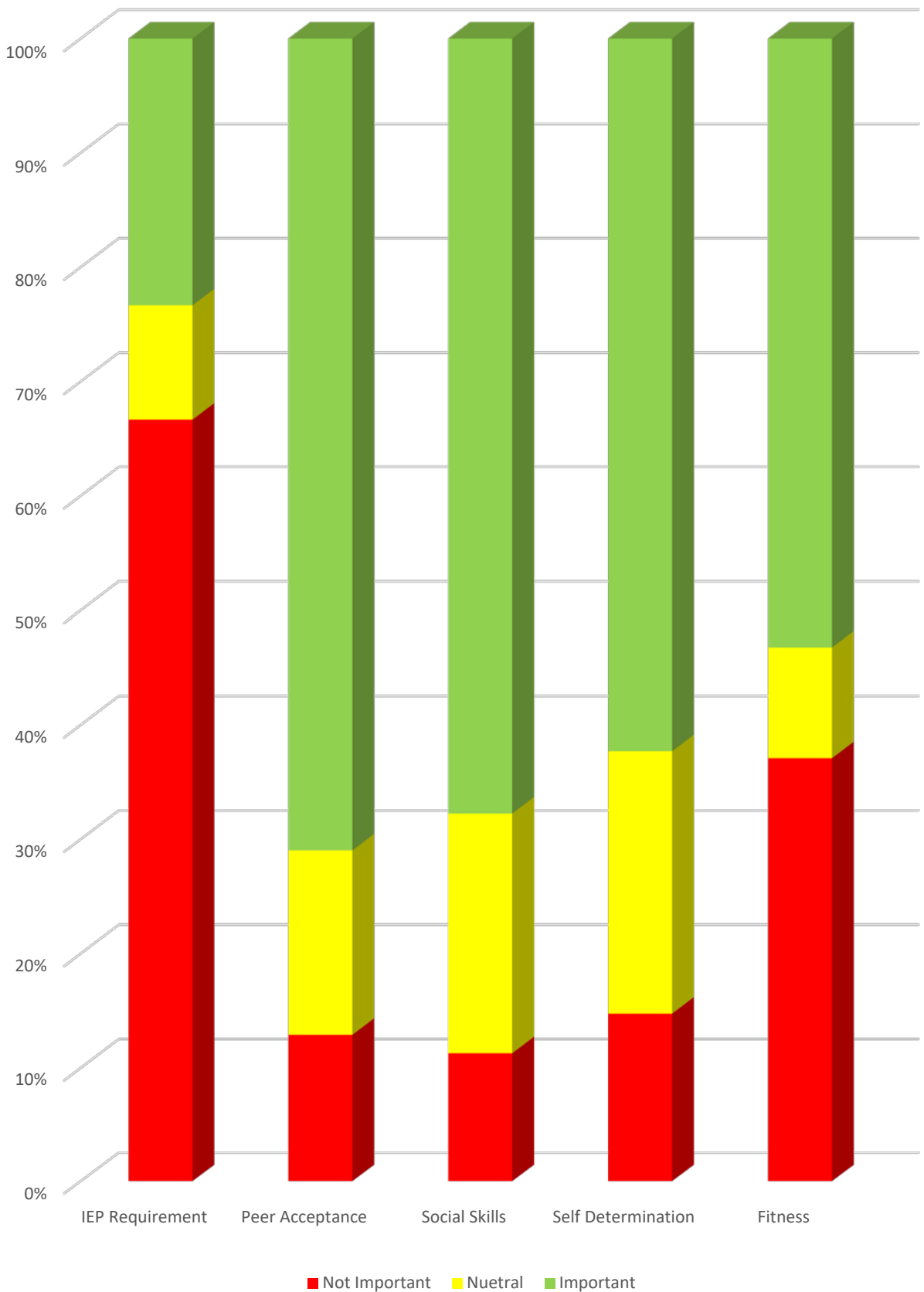
- Involvement in extracurricular activities typical part of adolescent experience (Carter, Swedeen, Moss, & Pesko, 2010)
- Provide health benefits (e.g., increased muscle mass, stabilize blood sugar and blood pressure) (Melville, 2009; Taliaferro & Hammond, 2016)
- Sense of belonging (Pence & Dymond, 2016)

- Reduce problem behaviors, develop social relationships (Bambara, Koger, & Bartholomew, 2011; Modell & Valdez, 2002)
- Enhances choice making and self-determination (Vinoski, Graybill, & Roach, 2016)
- Opportunity to practice IEP skills (Pence & Dymond, 2015)
- Most importantly, ECA yields meaningful measures of inclusiveness and acceptance (community building)





# Reasons to Promote SWD Extracurricular Participation



# Limited Participation

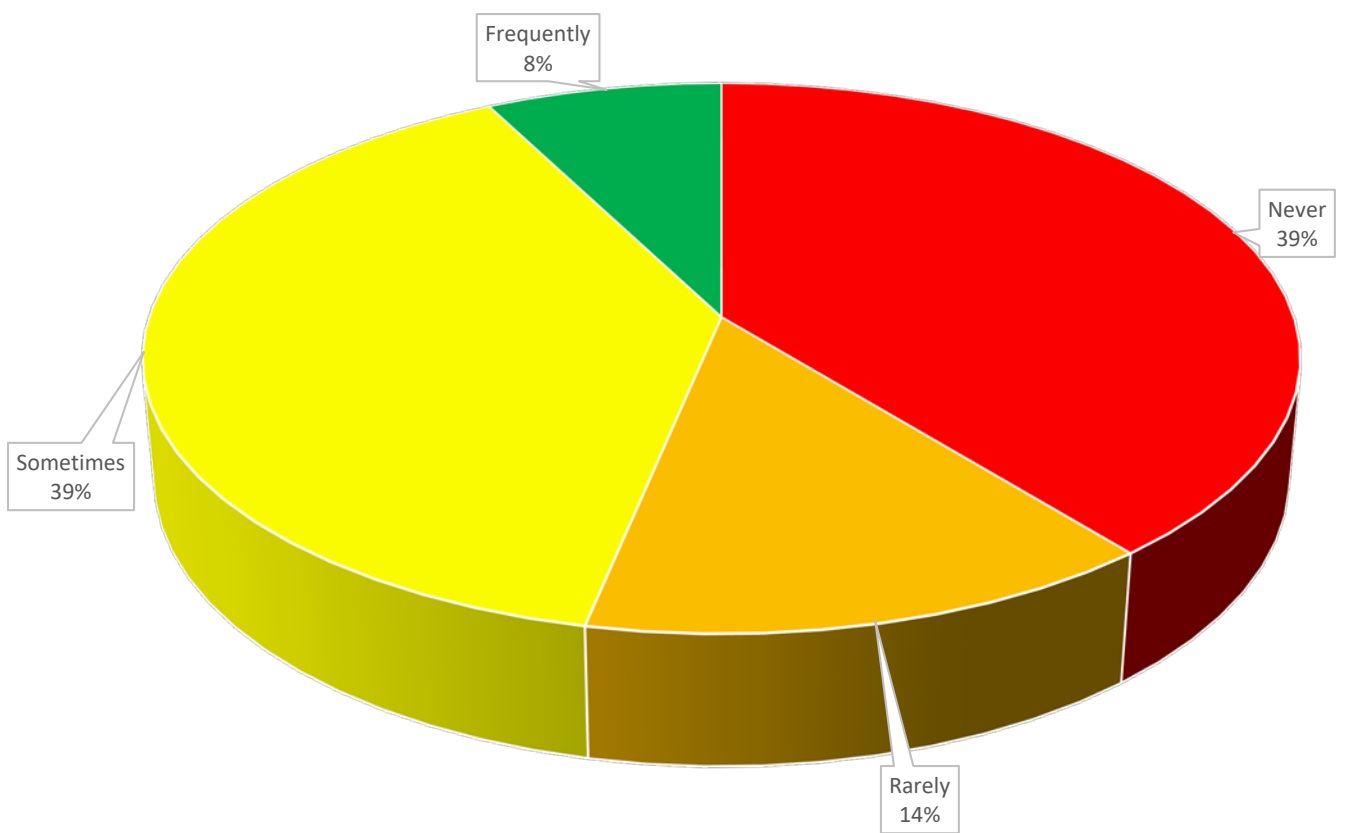
- Given the numerous benefits, it would be reasonable to assume that many students with intellectual and developmental disabilities would be involved:
- Actual levels of participation:
  - 62% of teachers reported no participation of students; ECA rarely discussed at IEP meetings; peers rarely invite students with IDD or vice-versa (Agran et al., 2017)
  - As reported in NLTS, only 33% of students participated (Wagner, Cadwallader, Garza, & Cameto, 2004) compared to 75% of typical students Cadwallader, Wagner, & Garza, 2003)
  - Only 11% of sample of IEPs report participation (Powers et al., 2005)

# Participation by Disability

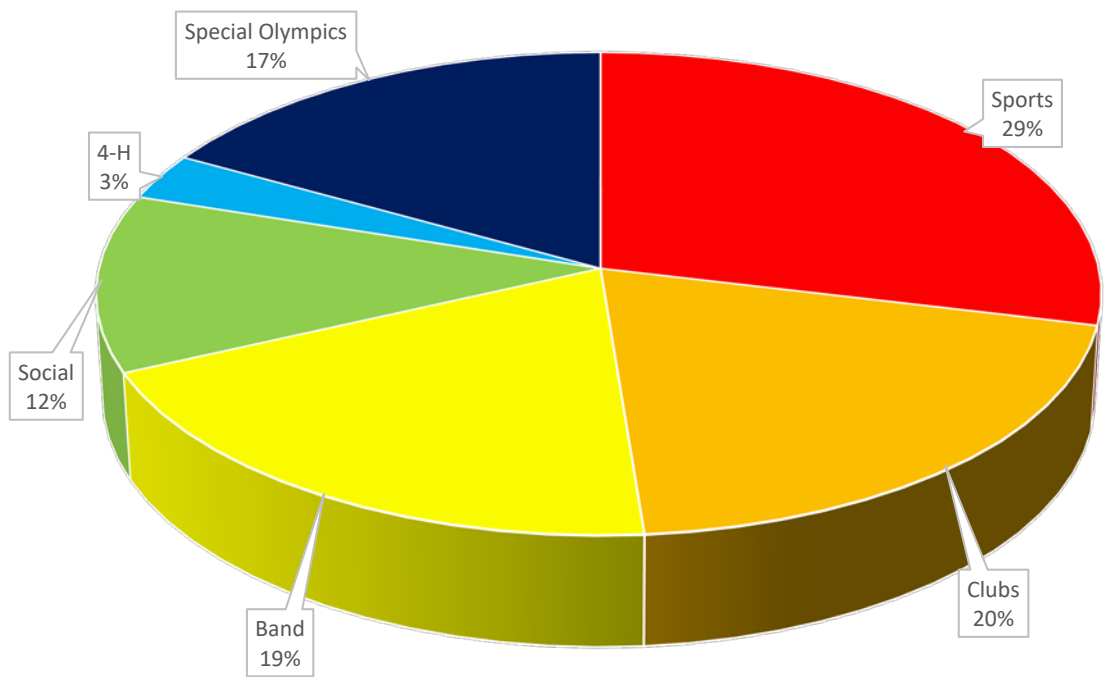
- Speech impairment—60%
- Learning disability—49%
- Emotional disorder—35%
- Intellectual disability—33%

(Wagner, Cadwallader, Garza, & Cameto, 2004)

# Percentage of Students Participating in Extracurricular Activities



# Participation By Activities



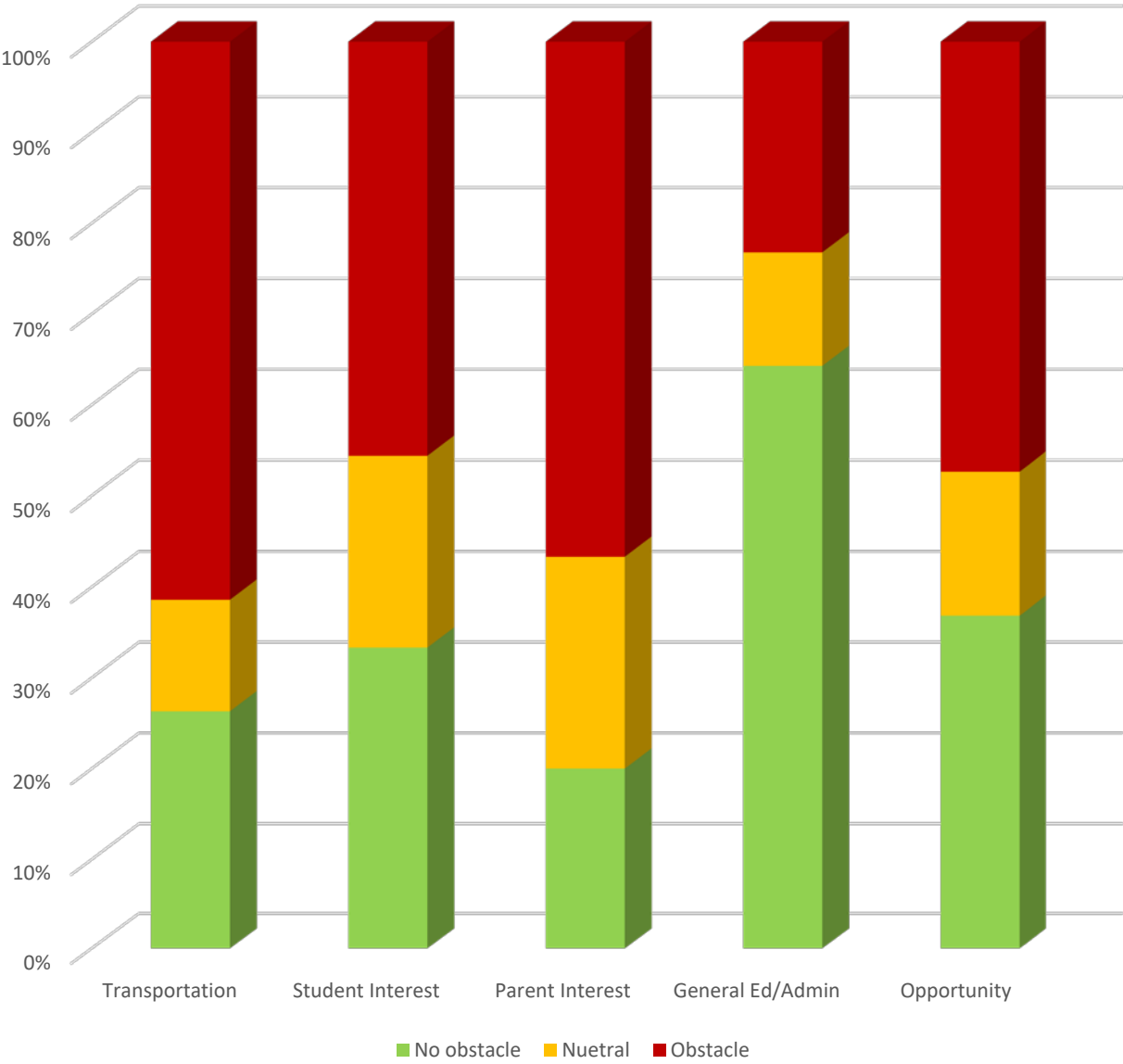
■ Sports ■ Clubs ■ Band ■ Social ■ 4-H ■ Special Olympics

# Barriers

- Few teachers are actively involved in planning, organizing, or mentoring extracurricular activities; lack of activities; majority of parents do not discuss extracurricular activities in any detail at IEP meetings (Agran et al., 2017) .
- Students receive limited support when participating—limited data on what kind of support is provided (Pence & Dymond, 2016).
- Teachers either don't see or know that extracurricular activities have potential instructional relevance or curricular value.
- Lack of parent/student interest.
- Transportation.

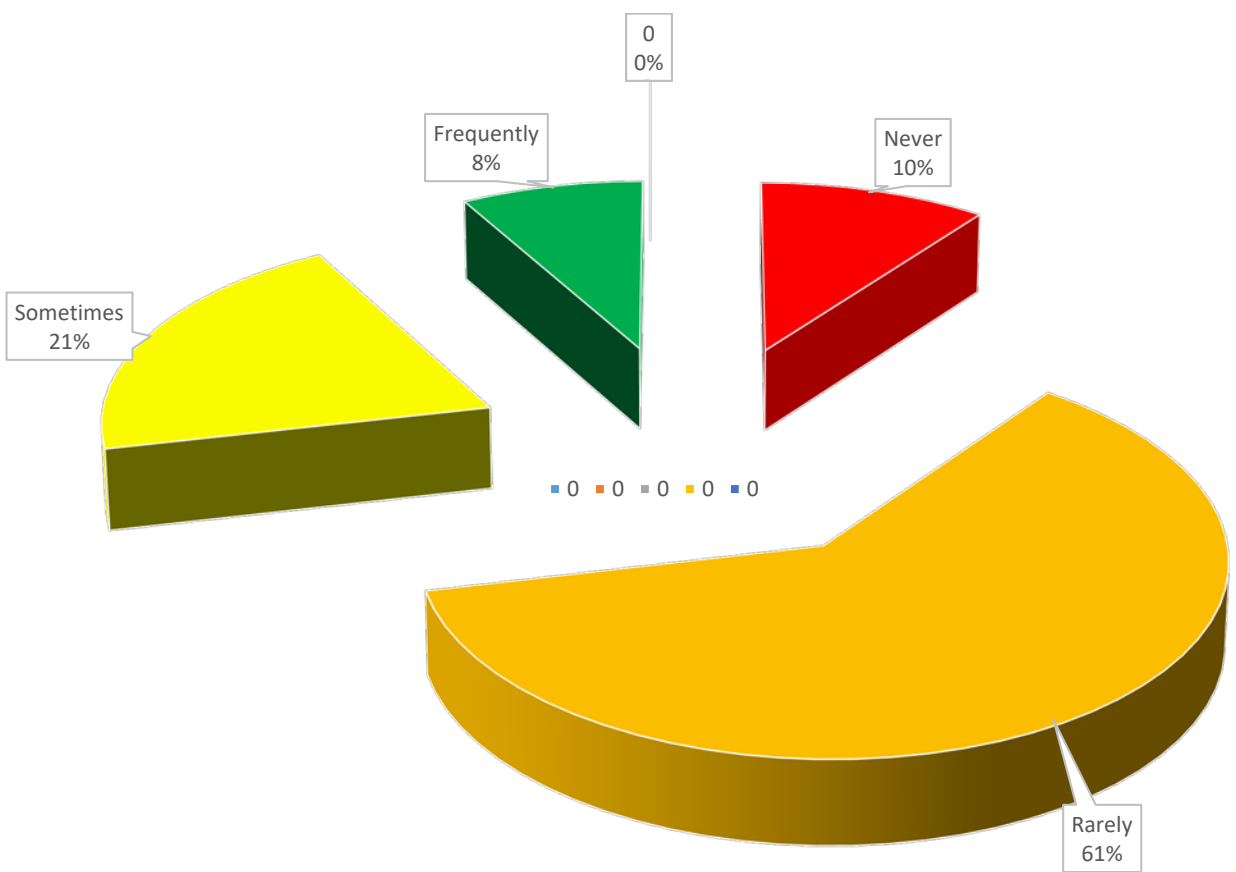
- Extracurricular activities are voluntary (27.5%).
- Student does not need IEP support for participation (26.3%).
- Support is not available (20.6%).
- Did not think to include it on the IEP (20.6%)

# Obstacles to Activities

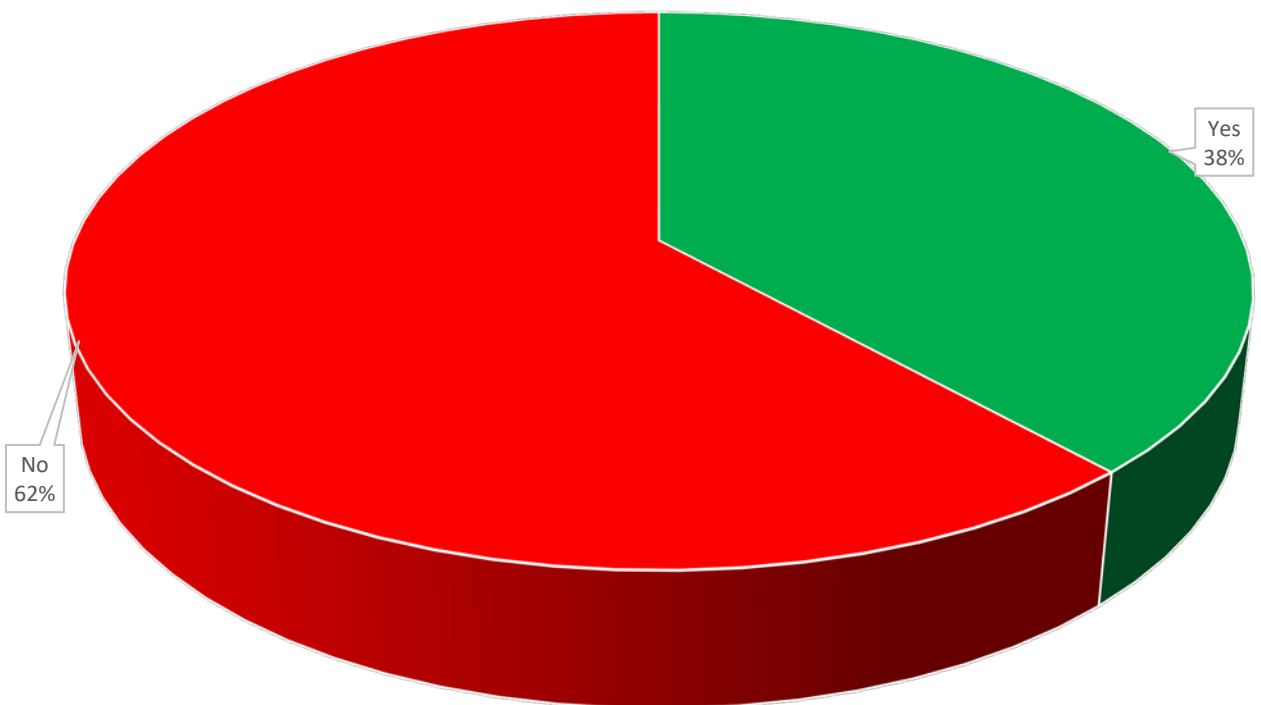




# How Often Do Parents Request Extracurricular Services from IEP Teams?



# Do Teachers Think Extracurricular Planning for IDD Part of Their Job?



# Involve Stakeholders

- Teachers (Special and General Education)
  - Passive role
  - Missed opportunities
  - Unidentified barriers from other school personnel
  - Lack of interest
  - Lack of knowledge
- Parents are responsible for initiating the participation of their son/daughter in extracurricular activities in the schools
  - Information about options for participation
  - Information about options for support
  - Information about links to goals, instruction
  - Highlight IEP connection
- Student interest/choice
  - Informed choice about options
  - Informed choice about supports
  - Informed choice about friendships?

# Recommendations

- Inventory school/community clubs and extracurricular activities: what's available, are students with disabilities participating, what may be the obstacles?
- Conduct ecological assessment, align activities w/ IEP goals.
- Set reasonable goals for student participation.
- Get administrator buy-in.
- Secure peer support.
- Support, reinforce, advocate.

# Participant or Observer?



# References

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