

TIP FOR CLINICIANS: Use this full-sized Bell Curve to make IEPs flow more efficiently. As IEP team members speak, point to the student's current skill level in each area tested. You can also make a copy and suggest parents take notes directly on the curve to help them to see a student's strengths and weaknesses.

EXAMPLE WITH SAMPLE SCRIPT: TO PARENTS OF STUDENT "John Doe"

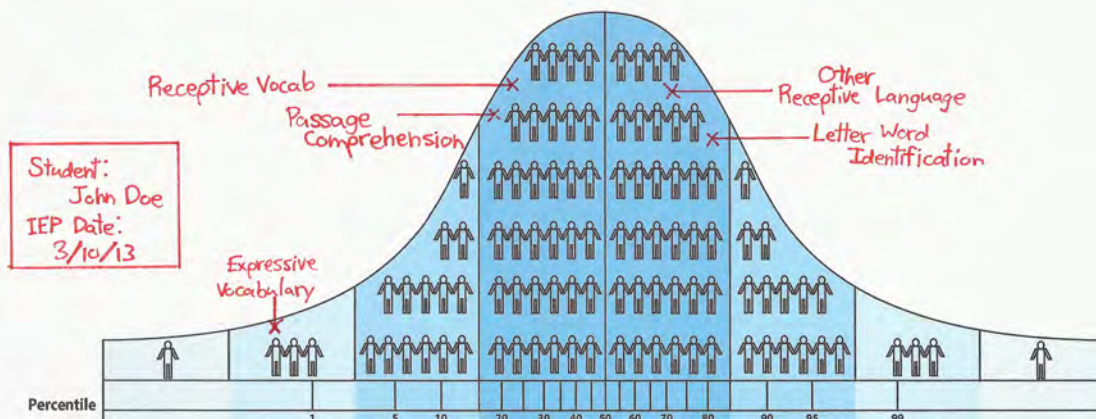
1. This is a bell curve. Bell curves are used to compare one person's abilities in a specific area, like reading or running, to the abilities of a large sample group. Bell curves are always designed the same way, with two-thirds of the people falling in the middle, or average range, and an even number falling at each end.

2. A simple example of something that could be measured this way is women's shoe sizes. The average shoe size range is 6 to 8, with others falling below or above average.

3. Classroom teaching is directed primarily toward those in the average range. Support for students at the ends is offered through either additional review or enrichment. If a student appears to be struggling in the classroom, teachers will suggest that a team of educators and the student's parents look closely at his skills to determine ways to encourage progress.

4. With your permission, we gave John a series of tests in different skill areas. These test results compare John's skills to other students of the same age/grade. We also used teacher observation, parent input, and informal evaluations to examine his current abilities. We can outline John's academic strengths and weaknesses using these results.

Results are presented by the team, with frequent references to the bell curve. Example for John shown here.



5. As you can see, John is in the average range in most areas. His strengths are other receptive language and letter word identification. His weakest area is his vocabulary, both in understanding and expression. This is most likely affecting his reading comprehension, as well as complex writing assignments. Is this consistent with what you see in the classroom and home environments? Do you know of other learning challenges that we have not addressed? To support John at home, you could review vocabulary used in school assignments and discuss unfamiliar words with him. Within the classroom, John's teacher might consider using a study buddy and enriching vocabulary review activities.

6. We would also like to propose that John work with a speech therapist twice a week to improve his expressive vocabulary. Our goals might be (1) to review and enrich instruction on vocabulary critical to classroom learning, and (2) to teach John to identify unfamiliar words and to develop strategies to increase his vocabulary knowledge for academic needs.

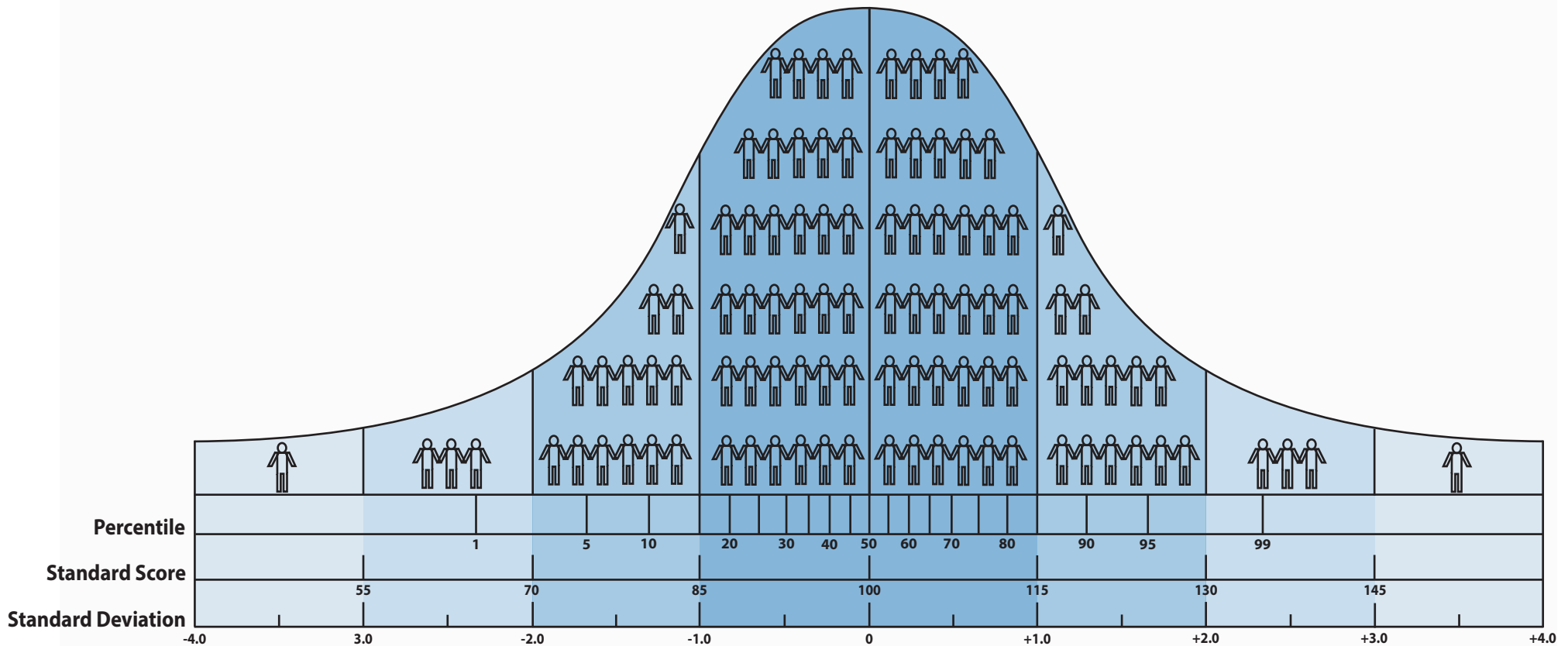
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Bell Curve of Student Skills



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EXTREMELY BELOW AVERAGE	SIGNIFICANTLY BELOW AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAGE	ABOVE AVERAGE	SIGNIFICANTLY ABOVE AVERAGE	EXTREMELY ABOVE AVERAGE
Skills in this area are substantially below most at the same age/grade level	Skills in this area are significantly lower than most at the same age/grade level	Skills in this area are lower than many others at the same age/grade level	Skills in this area are similar to others in the same age/grade level Approximately 68% fall into this range	Skills in this area are higher than many others at the same age/grade level	Skills in this area are significantly higher than most at the same age/grade level	Skills in this area are substantially above most at the same age/grade level

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