



SPECIAL EDUCATION AWARENESS WEEK

.... Brought to you by OHES PTA and Pupil Services

“Special Needs, Special Kids: Reaching for a brighter future together”

Please support us as we take this week to promote the awareness of children with special needs of all kinds. Learn what makes them special. Learn what makes them kids!

Wednesday, May 16, 2007

Dear Parents,

Orchard Hill Elementary School PTA, Pupil Services and our Special Education Teachers would like to take this opportunity to help the parents and children of our community learn more about the special needs of some of the children in our school.

We will be reading wonderful stories and doing activities in each classroom through out the week. The activities are aimed to help the children *understand the Special Needs of some of their fellow classmates while learning how to show respect, empathy and friendship.*

We would also like to share with you this information packet to help you and your family learn more about these special needs and the different qualities of these children.

You will see that, like you, people with special needs have their own special skills and challenges. And just like you, they want to be accepted and understood.

People with special needs may not always act the exact ways that you expect, but if you take time to understand them, you will get to learn new things and make new friends!

Please take a few minutes to sit with your children this week to learn more about the special children in your community.

Sincerely,

Principal

PTA President

Pupil Services Director

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Understanding Differences

What do all your friends, family, teachers and the people in your community have in common?

We are all different from one another. Everyone you know and everyone you will ever meet is special and different in some way. The world would be a boring place if people were all the same. Often, the hard part is accepting others because they are different and *knowing how they might want to be treated.*

Here are some helpful tips to review with your child:

- Think about how everyone is different from each other and how nice it feels when people accept and include each other.
- Learn more about that person. Learn what makes them different. Learn what makes them the same as you. For example, when you know a child with Autism – try to learn what you can about Autism and how it might affect that child (see pg 7 for information on Autism).
- Explore how and why that child may act differently than you do. You can even try to imagine some of the things that are hard for them and how things might feel to them. For example, the child you know with Autism might be very quiet or repeat the same things over and over again. It might be hard for that child to always know the right words to say, so they may stay quiet or repeat what is familiar. Imagine how hard it might be to play with your friends if you could not always tell them what you are thinking or how you are feeling? They might not know that you are still interested in playing together.
- Think about how other people talk to children who are different and how they treat them. Now imagine how it would feel if people acted in those ways toward you.
- Once you understand how that person may feel, you can think about ways to be thoughtful and supportive of them. Remember the child you know with Autism who had a hard time expressing himself? Maybe next time you can try to keep the conversation going by suggesting some words for him to use. Remember that if he is repeating what you say, he is not teasing you or mimicking you – he is just stuck.

How can people be different from one another?

- **Looks:**

People look differently from each other in all sorts of ways: some are tall while others are short; some have dark skin and others have light skin; some have long hair while others have no hair.

Did you know that children with special needs like Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy and Learning Disabilities often look just like you and me?

- **Skills:**

People have different skills and talents. Some people are good at spelling or science, while others might be great singers or good at sports.

Did you know that children with special needs like Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy and Learning Disabilities can play sports, be good at music, spelling and math?

- **Challenges:**

People also have different challenges, or things they find hard to do. Some people find that learning math takes them longer than it takes others. Others have a hard time riding a bike or playing soccer.

Did you know that children with special needs like Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy and Learning Disabilities might have the same challenges as you and me?

- **Fears:**

Everyone feels scared sometimes. Some people don't like the dark and sleep with a night light. Others get upset when they see a spider or hear loud noises. Things that scare one person can be different from things that scare someone else.

Did you know that children with special needs like Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy and Learning Disabilities might have the same fears as you and me?

- **Personality:**

Some people like to play with their friends all the time. Others like to be alone or play with just a few friends. Some people love to talk and share lots of stories with their friends while others might be more shy or quiet.

Did you know that children with special needs like Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy and Learning Disabilities have different personalities, just like you and me?

Activities

Help your child understand what it means to be different and the importance of accepting difference by filling out the following:

How are you Different?

There are many things that I think are fun and that I am really good at doing. One of the things I'm really good at is _____.

There are also some things that are hard for me to learn. Some of my friends are good at these things and I wish I were too. One thing that I think is hard is _____.

When I can't do that well, I sometimes feel _____.

I know that everyone looks different from each other and this is how I think I look different – I am _____.

I get scared of some things that might not make other people scared. One thing that sometimes makes me feel scared is _____.

I notice that people act differently when they are upset. Some people like to be quiet and alone; others want to be around friends. Some people cry and some people might get mad and yell. When I'm upset, I usually _____.

How do YOU like to be treated?

When I feel different, I hope that people will: (circle all that apply)

Treat me nicely	Lend a hand
Be my friend	Be patient
Not laugh at me	Help me feel better
Understand me	Be kind

You probably circled all of them! That means you hope others will take time to understand you and be kind to you!

Common Questions Kids ask about Kids with Special Needs

- **How did that person get that way?**
- **Can I catch what he or she has?**
- **Why doesn't that person's body work right?**
- **Why does that person look funny?**
- **Why does that person act funny?**
- **Why doesn't that person talk?**
- **Why does that person cry and scream so much?**
- **How come he or she has to miss so much school?**
- **Will he or she die?**

Guidelines for Responding

- Be sure you understand the question
- Always correct misinformation or incorrect assumptions
- Don't ignore children's' fears; address them.
- Respond immediately to a question, fear or inaccurate information
- Examine your own behavior and language.

Remember: Teachable moments are life's serendipity! Be prepared!

Teachable moments are unplanned, spontaneous events for parents and teachers to anticipate with zest. These moments are powerful teaching tools. Enjoy, value, and savor each one.

Example

Situation:

A mother and her daughters are having fun at a neighborhood picnic. The girls see a little boy just sitting there. The boy looks withdrawn and is not speaking. The girls begin to giggle.

Response:

Ask the girls why they are giggling. Explain to them there might be several reasons why the boy is not speaking. Maybe he can't, maybe he can not speak very well and is shy about this, maybe the boy has trouble understanding words, or maybe he is just shy around girls. Help the girls understand how the boy might be feeling because they laughed at him. Ask the girls to think about a way to be thoughtful and supportive of the boy.

Special Needs Defined

Autism

What is Autism?

Autism is a complex neurobiological disorder that typically lasts throughout a person's lifetime. It is part of a group of disorders known as Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD). Today, 1 in 166 individuals is diagnosed with autism, making it more common than pediatric cancer, diabetes, and AIDS combined. It occurs in all racial, ethnic, and social groups and is four times more likely to strike boys than girls. Autism impairs a person's ability to communicate and relate to others. It is also associated with rigid routines and repetitive behaviors, such as obsessively arranging objects or following very specific routines. Symptoms can range from very mild to quite severe. The cause is unknown. Currently, researchers are investigating areas such as neurological damage and biochemical imbalance of the brain. Autism is not caused by psychological factors.

How do you treat Autism?

There is no single treatment protocol for all children with autism, but most individuals with ASD respond best to highly structure educational programs. Some of the most common interventions are Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), Floortime Therapy, Speech Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Sensory Integration Therapy, Relationship Development Intervention, Verbal Behavior Intervention, and the school-based TEAACH method.

How does Autism affect a child?

Children with autism vary greatly in ability, intelligence, and behavior. Some do not speak; others have limited language that often includes repeated phrases or conversations. Those with more advanced language skills tend to stick to a few topics and have difficulty with abstract concepts. Repetitive play skills, a limited range of interests, and impaired social skills are common. Unusual responses to sensory information – for example, loud noises, lights, or certain textures of food or fabrics are also common.

What are the educational implications?

Educational programs focus on improving communication and social, academic, behavioral, and daily living skills. Behavior and communication problems that interfere with learning require the assistance of a knowledgeable professional trained in autism-specific teaching strategies. The classroom environment should be structured so that the program is consistent and predictable. Students with Autism learn better and are less confused when information is presented visually as well as verbally. Interaction with non-disabled peers is also important, for these students provide models of appropriate language and social behavioral skills.

Autism Awareness Activity

Communicate Through Pictures

You have learned that some children with Autism sometimes have trouble talking. They sometimes might use pictures to express what they want to say. Here is an activity where you can practice communicating in a new way.

Without talking try to tell someone what you did last weekend by drawing a picture. Then ask someone to tell you what he or she understood from looking at your picture.

Draw your weekend story here:



ADD / ADHD

What is ADD / ADHD?

Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), also called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), is a developmental disability characterized by three predominate features: inattention, impulsiveness, and in many but not all cases, restlessness or hyperactivity. The disorder is most prevalent in children and is generally thought of as a childhood disorder. Current estimates suggest that approximately 50 to 65 percent of children with ADD will have symptoms of the disorder as adolescents and adults.

What are the characteristics of ADD?

The signs of ADD are inattention, impulsiveness, hyperactivity, poor motor control, disorganization and social skill deficits. From time to time, all children can display inattention and impulsiveness and can exhibit high energy levels. With the ADD child, these behaviors are the rule, not the exception. Keeping in mind that some degree of difficulty exists with every child.

What are the educational implications?

The classroom environment needs to be structured and predictable, with rules, schedules and assignments posted and clearly spelled out. Proper seating is needed keeping the child away from minimal distractions. Directions need to be clear and simple and should be given a few at a time. The curriculum will need to be modified in accordance with the child's organizational skills and his ability to pay attention and concentrate. Behavior management is critical. Behavior charts, used in combination with other educational interventions, often produce positive results.

Self-esteem is vital!

Most undiagnosed and untreated children with ADD/ADHD suffer from low self-esteem. Many also show signs of being mildly depressed. These feelings stem from the child's sense of personal failure. For the child with ADD, the world is often an unkind place.

Downs Syndrome

What is Downs Syndrome?

Down syndrome is the most common and readily identifiable chromosomal condition associated with developmental impairment. It is caused by a chromosomal abnormality. Cell development occurs with forty-seven instead of the usual forty-six chromosomes.

Down syndrome occurs in one out of every 733 live births, and more than 350,000 people in the U.S. have this genetic condition. Down syndrome affects people of all ages, races and economic levels. Today, individuals with Down syndrome are active participants in the educational, vocational, social and recreational aspects of our communities. In fact, there are more opportunities than ever before for individuals with Down syndrome to develop their abilities, discover their talents and realize their dreams. For example, more teens and adults with Down syndrome each year are graduating from high school, going to college, finding employment and living independently.

How does Down syndrome affect a child's appearance?

Youngsters with Down syndrome are usually smaller than their non disabled peers, and their physical as well as intellectual development is slower . More than fifty clinical characteristics have been identified with the syndrome, but it's rare to find all or even most of them in one person.

What are the educational implications?

Research has shown that stimulation during early developmental stages improves the child's chances of developing to his or her fullest potential. Continuing education, positive public attitudes, and a stimulating home environment have also been found to promote the child's overall development. The level of mental impairment, behavior, and developmental progress in individuals with this syndrome varies widely.

Because of the range of ability in children with Down syndrome, it is important for families and members of the school's educational team to place few limitations on potential capabilities. It may be effective to emphasize concrete concepts rather than abstract ideas. Teaching tasks in a step-by step manner with frequent reinforcement and consistent feedback has proven successful. Independent living centers, group-shared and supervised apartments and support services in the community are important resources for persons with Down syndrome.

Epilepsy

What is Epilepsy

Epilepsy is a neurological condition, which affects the nervous system. Epilepsy is also known as a seizure disorder. It is usually diagnosed after a person has had at least two seizures that were not caused by some known medical condition like alcohol withdrawal or extremely low blood sugar. These seizures can happen any time during the day or night.

What is a Seizure?

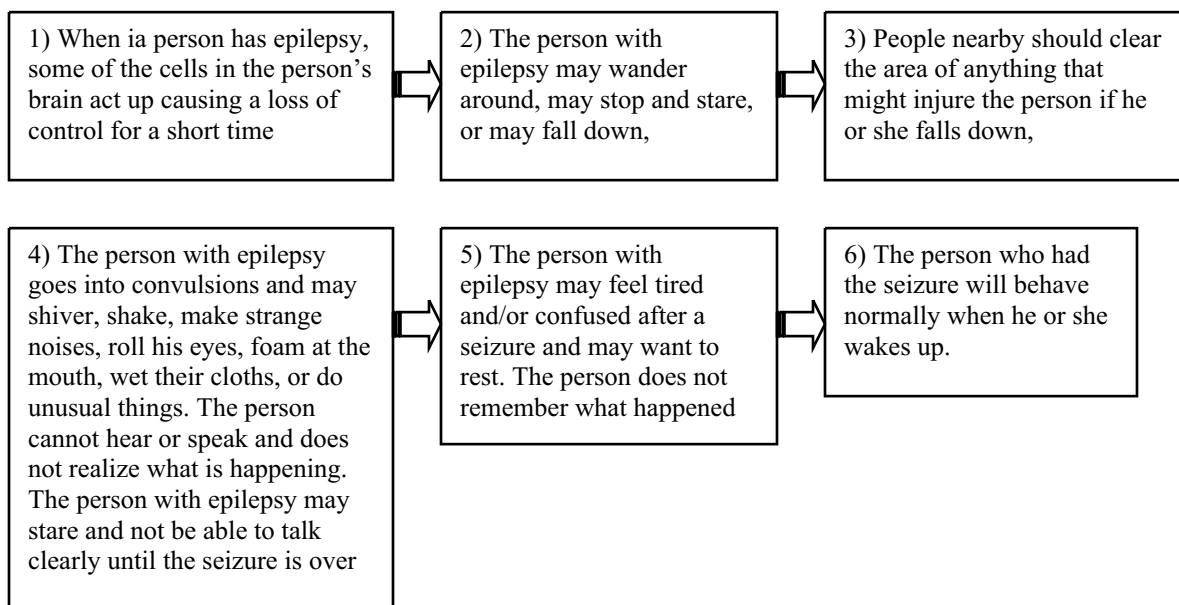
A seizure is a sudden surge of electrical activity in the brain that usually causes a child's body to move and jerk suddenly. People with epilepsy can't control their movements during a seizure. Sometimes they won't know what is happening when a seizure occurs and may lose awareness of where they are and what they are doing.

What are the medical considerations?

Most children with epilepsy take medication. Teachers can help by reminding the child to take medicine on schedule. Explaining the seizure process to the students is also important.

Seizure Time-Line Activity

Children observing an epileptic seizure will be less frightened if they are aware that epileptic behavior follows a predictable pattern, or sequence, and they know what to expect. This time line is a health and safety learning activity.



Learning Disabilities

What is a Learning Disability?

Learning Disability is a disorder that affects people's ability to either interpret what they see and hear or to link information from different parts of the brain. These limitations can show up in many ways—as specific difficulties with spoken and written language, coordination, self-control, or attention. Such difficulties extend to schoolwork and can impede learning to read or write, or to do math.

Learning disabilities can be lifelong conditions that, in some cases, affect many parts of a person's life: school or work, daily routines, family life, and sometimes even friendships and play. In some people, many overlapping learning disabilities may be apparent. Other people may have a single, isolated learning problem that has little impact on other areas of their lives.

Not all learning problems are necessarily learning disabilities. Many children are simply slower in developing certain skills. Because children show natural differences in their rate of development, sometimes what seems to be a learning disability may simply be a delay in maturation.

Learning Disability Activity

KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

SQUIGGLES AND LINES DO MAKE AN ALPHABET

Learning to read is like breaking a code. Each squiggle or letter stands for a sound. Children who are learning disabled have trouble remembering what sounds go with what letters. Some children are confused about whether to read the white spaces or the black lines. Think about it. How did you learn to read?

The following is a new alphabet. It's made up of different squiggles and lines.

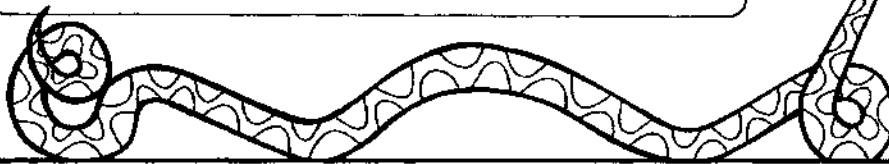
Aa	Bb	Cc	Dd	Ee	Ff	Gg	Hh	Ii	Jj	Kk	Ll	Mm
Nn	Oo	Pp	Qq	Rr	Ss	Tt	Uu	Vv	Ww	Xx	Yy	Zz

Message:

[illegible]

* ^ x Δ C ⊖ Δ Δ □ C ?

→ 𐀀𐀁𐀂𐀃𐀄𐀅𐀆𐀇𐀈𐀉𐀊𐀋𐀌𐀍𐀎𐀏𐀐𐀑𐀒𐀓𐀔𐀕𐀖𐀗𐀘𐀙𐀚𐀛𐀜𐀝𐀞𐀟𐀠𐀡𐀢𐀣𐀤𐀥𐀦𐀧𐀨𐀩𐀪𐀫𐀬𐀭𐀮𐀯𐀰𐀱𐀲𐀳𐀴𐀵𐀶𐀷𐀸𐀹𐀺𐀻𐀼𐀽𐀾𐀿𐁀𐁁𐁂𐁃𐁄𐁅𐁆𐁇𐁈𐁉𐁊𐁋𐁌𐁍𐁎𐁏𐁐𐁑𐁒𐁓𐁔𐁕𐁖𐁗𐁘𐁙𐁚𐁛𐁜𐁝𐁞𐁟𐁠𐁡𐁢𐁣𐁤𐁥𐁦𐁧𐁨𐁩𐁪𐁫𐁬𐁭𐁮𐁯𐁰𐁱𐁲𐁳𐁴𐁵𐁶𐁷𐁸𐁹𐁺𐁻𐁼𐁽𐁾𐁿𐂀𐂁𐂂𐂃𐂄𐂅𐂆𐂇𐂈𐂉𐂊𐂋𐂌𐂍𐂎𐂏𐂐𐂑𐂒𐂓𐂔𐂕𐂖𐂗𐂘𐂙𐂚𐂛𐂜𐂝𐂞𐂟𐂠𐂡𐂢𐂣𐂤𐂥𐂦𐂧𐂨𐂩𐂪𐂫𐂬𐂭𐂮𐂯𐂰𐂱𐂲𐂳𐂴𐂵𐂶𐂷𐂸𐂹𐂺𐂻𐂼𐂽𐂾𐂿𐃀𐃁𐃂𐃃𐃄𐃅𐃆𐃇𐃈𐃉𐃊𐃋𐃌𐃍𐃎𐃏𐃐𐃑𐃒𐃓𐃔𐃕𐃖𐃗𐃘𐃙𐃚𐃛𐃜𐃝𐃞𐃟𐃠𐃡𐃢𐃣𐃤𐃥𐃦𐃧𐃨𐃩𐃪𐃫𐃬𐃭𐃮𐃯𐃰𐃱𐃲𐃳𐃴𐃵𐃶𐃷𐃸𐃹𐃺𐃻𐃼𐃽𐃾𐃿𐄀𐄁𐄂𐄃𐄄𐄅𐄆𐄇𐄈𐄉𐄊𐄋𐄌𐄍𐄎𐄏𐄐𐄑𐄒𐄓𐄔𐄕𐄖𐄗𐄘𐄙𐄚𐄛𐄜𐄝𐄞𐄟𐄠𐄡𐄢𐄣𐄤𐄥𐄦𐄧𐄨𐄩𐄪𐄫𐄬𐄭𐄮𐄯𐄰𐄱𐄲𐄳𐄴𐄵𐄶𐄷𐄸𐄹𐄺𐄻𐄼𐄽𐄾𐄿𐅀𐅁𐅂𐅃𐅄𐅅𐅆𐅇𐅈𐅉𐅊𐅋𐅌𐅍𐅎𐅏𐅐𐅑𐅒𐅓𐅔𐅕𐅖𐅗𐅘𐅙𐅚𐅛𐅜𐅝𐅞𐅟𐅠𐅡𐅢𐅣𐅤𐅥𐅦𐅧𐅨𐅩𐅪𐅫𐅬𐅭𐅮𐅯𐅰𐅱𐅲𐅳𐅴𐅵𐅶𐅷𐅸𐅹𐅺𐅻𐅼𐅽𐅾𐅿𐆀𐆁𐆂𐆃𐆄𐆅𐆆𐆇𐆈𐆉𐆊𐆋𐆌𐆍𐆎𐆏𐆐𐆑𐆒𐆓𐆔𐆕𐆖𐆗𐆘𐆙𐆚𐆛𐆜𐆝𐆞𐆟𐆠𐆡𐆢𐆣𐆤𐆥𐆦𐆧𐆨𐆩𐆪𐆫𐆬𐆭𐆮𐆯𐆰𐆱𐆲𐆳𐆴𐆵𐆶𐆷𐆸𐆹𐆺𐆻𐆼𐆽𐆾𐆿𐇀𐇁𐇂𐇃𐇄𐇅𐇆𐇇𐇈𐇉𐇊𐇋𐇌𐇍𐇎𐇏𐇐𐇑𐇒𐇓𐇔𐇕𐇖𐇗𐇘𐇙𐇚𐇛𐇜𐇝𐇞𐇟𐇠𐇡𐇢𐇣𐇤𐇥𐇦𐇧𐇨𐇩𐇪𐇫𐇬𐇭𐇮𐇯𐇰𐇱𐇲𐇳𐇴𐇵𐇶𐇷𐇸𐇹𐇺𐇻𐇼𐇽𐇾𐇿𐈀𐈁𐈂𐈃𐈄𐈅𐈆𐈇𐈈𐈉𐈊𐈋𐈌𐈍𐈎𐈏𐈐𐈑𐈒𐈓𐈔𐈕𐈖𐈗𐈘𐈙𐈚𐈛𐈜𐈝𐈞𐈟𐈠𐈡𐈢𐈣𐈤𐈥𐈦𐈧𐈨𐈩𐈪𐈫𐈬𐈭𐈮𐈯𐈰𐈱𐈲𐈳𐈴𐈵𐈶𐈷𐈸𐈹𐈺𐈻𐈼𐈽𐈾𐈿𐉀𐉁𐉂𐉃𐉄𐉅𐉆𐉇𐉈𐉉𐉊𐉋𐉌𐉍𐉎𐉏𐉐𐉑𐉒𐉓𐉔𐉕𐉖𐉗𐉘𐉙𐉚𐉛𐉜𐉝𐉞𐉟𐉠𐉡𐉢𐉣𐉤𐉥𐉦𐉧𐉨𐉩𐉪𐉫𐉬𐉭𐉮𐉯𐉰𐉱𐉲𐉳𐉴𐉵𐉶𐉷𐉸𐉹𐉺𐉻𐉼𐉽𐉾𐉿𐊀𐊁𐊂𐊃𐊄𐊅𐊆𐊇𐊈𐊉𐊊𐊋𐊌𐊍𐊎𐊏𐊐𐊑𐊒𐊓𐊔𐊕𐊖𐊗𐊘𐊙𐊚𐊛𐊜𐊝𐊞𐊟𐊠𐊡𐊢𐊣𐊤𐊥𐊦𐊧𐊨𐊩𐊪𐊫𐊬𐊭𐊮𐊯𐊰𐊱𐊲𐊳𐊴𐊵𐊶𐊷𐊸𐊹𐊺𐊻𐊼𐊽𐊾𐊿𐋀𐋁𐋂𐋃𐋄𐋅𐋆𐋇𐋈𐋉𐋊𐋋𐋌𐋍𐋎𐋏𐋐𐋑𐋒𐋓𐋔𐋕𐋖𐋗𐋘𐋙𐋚𐋛𐋜𐋝𐋞𐋟𐋠𐋡𐋢𐋣𐋤𐋥𐋦𐋧𐋨𐋩𐋪𐋫𐋬𐋭𐋮𐋯𐋰𐋱𐋲𐋳𐋴𐋵𐋶𐋷𐋸𐋹𐋺𐋻𐋼𐋽𐋾𐋿𐌀𐌁𐌂𐌃𐌄𐌅𐌆𐌇𐌈𐌉𐌊𐌋𐌌𐌍𐌎𐌏𐌐𐌑𐌒𐌓𐌔𐌕𐌖𐌗𐌘𐌙𐌚𐌛𐌜𐌝𐌞𐌟𐌠𐌡𐌢𐌣𐌤𐌥𐌦𐌧𐌨𐌩𐌪𐌫𐌬𐌭𐌮𐌯𐌰𐌱𐌲𐌳𐌴𐌵𐌶𐌷𐌸𐌹𐌺𐌻𐌼𐌽𐌾𐌿𐍀𐍁𐍂𐍃𐍄𐍅𐍆𐍇𐍈𐍉𐍊𐍋𐍌𐍍𐍎𐍏𐍐𐍑𐍒𐍓𐍔𐍕𐍖𐍗𐍘𐍙𐍚𐍛𐍜𐍝𐍞𐍟𐍠𐍡𐍢𐍣𐍤𐍥𐍦𐍧𐍨𐍩𐍪𐍫𐍬𐍭𐍮𐍯𐍰𐍱𐍲𐍳𐍴𐍵𐍶𐍷𐍸𐍹𐍺𐍻𐍼𐍽𐍾𐍿𐎀𐎁𐎂𐎃𐎄𐎅𐎆𐎇𐎈𐎉𐎊𐎋𐎌𐎍𐎎𐎏𐎐𐎑𐎒𐎓𐎔𐎕𐎖𐎗𐎘𐎙𐎚𐎛𐎜𐎝𐎞𐎟𐎠𐎡𐎢𐎣𐎤𐎥𐎦𐎧𐎨𐎩𐎪𐎫𐎬𐎭𐎮𐎯𐎰𐎱𐎲𐎳𐎴𐎵𐎶𐎷𐎸𐎹𐎺𐎻𐎼𐎽𐎾𐎿𐏀𐏁𐏂𐏃𐏄𐏅𐏆𐏇𐏈𐏉𐏊𐏋𐏌𐏍𐏎𐏏𐏐𐏑𐏒𐏓𐏔𐏕𐏖𐏗𐏘𐏙𐏚𐏛𐏜𐏝𐏞𐏟𐏠𐏡𐏢𐏣𐏤𐏥𐏦𐏧𐏨𐏩𐏪𐏫𐏬𐏭𐏮𐏯𐏰𐏱𐏲𐏳𐏴𐏵𐏶𐏷𐏸𐏹𐏺𐏻𐏼𐏽



Answer: Every person is wrapped in a different package. What is yours?