



## People First Language

Language is a reflection of how people see each other. The words we use can hurt. To reflect the dignity of people with disabilities, responsible communicators choose language/words that put the person first, rather than the disability. The following are examples and suggestions on how to communicate using "people first language".

Say, "a student who has a learning disability" rather than "a learning disabled student."

Say, "a child who has an intellectual disability" rather than "a mentally retarded child." The term intellectual disability replaces the term mental retardation (M.R.)

Avoid terms with obvious negative or judgmental connotations, such as "crippled," "deaf and dumb," "lame," "unfortunate," "afflicted," and "victim."

Never refer to a person as "confined to a wheelchair." Wheelchairs enable people to escape confinement.

If you are not sure how to refer to a person's condition, ask. And, if the disability is not relevant to your conversation, why mention it at all?

### Examples to Use and to Share

Outdated	Preferred
The handicapped or the disabled	People with disabilities
My child is autistic	My child has autism
She's in Special Education	She is a student with a disability