

PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

Everyone deserves dignity and respect. Yet historically, our words have contributed to negative attitudes and misrepresentations about the value of people with disabilities in our society. To end discrimination — at work, at school, and in our communities — it's important to stop using language that denies a person's value, individuality, and capability. As its name implies, People First Language puts the individual first and the disability second. It's an objective way to refer to people with disabilities. By focusing on the person rather than the disability, it aims to end harmful generalizations, assumptions, and stereotypes.

When referring to people with disabilities, be considerate with your words. Don't use terms that disrespect or devalue. Some people will want you to use People First Language. Some will prefer you use Identity First Language, which embraces a person's disability as an identity and puts the identifying word first ("autistic person" instead of "person with autism"). Others may not want you to mention their disability at all. **Always ask.** The following chart includes examples of People First Language. Find more examples at www.tcdd.texas.gov.

Use this:

Instead of this:

people with disabilities

the handicapped, the disabled

people without disabilities

normal, healthy, whole, or typical people

person who has a congenital disability

person with a birth defect

person who has Down syndrome

Downs person, mongoloid, mongol

person with quadriplegia, person with paraplegia, person diagnosed with a physical disability

a quadriplegic, a paraplegic

person of short stature, little person

a dwarf, a midget

person who is unable to speak,
person who uses a communication device

dumb, mute

person with a learning disability

learning disabled

person diagnosed with a
mental health condition

crazy, insane, psycho, mentally ill, emotionally disturbed

person diagnosed with an intellectual and
developmental disability

mentally retarded, retarded, slow, idiot, moron

person who uses a wheelchair or
a mobility chair

confined to a wheelchair; wheelchair bound