

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 with a congenital disability	person with a birth defect
person with Down syndrome	Downs person, mongoloid, mongol
person with quadriplegia, person with paraplegia, person with a physical disability	a quadriplegic, a paraplegic
person of short stature, little person	a dwarf, a midget
person who communicates without speech, person who uses a communication device	dumb, mute
person with a learning disability	learning disabled
person with a mental health condition	crazy, insane, psycho, mentally ill, emotionally disturbed
person with an intellectual or developmental disability	mentally retarded, retarded, slow, idiot, moron
person who uses a wheelchair	confined to a wheelchair, wheelchair-bound