

Disability Etiquette & People First Language



What do you see when looking at these pictures?



Part One:
Talking About Disabilities



**The difference between the
right word and the almost right
word is the difference between
lightning
and the lightning bug.**

Mark Twain



Why Use Appropriate Language?



Why use appropriate language?

People with disabilities are our largest minority group, most inclusive – all ages, genders, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientations and socioeconomic levels.



Source: *A Few Words about Person First Language*, Kathy Snow, 2008

Why use appropriate language?

- **Shape attitudes and perceptions**
- **Avoid perpetuating old stereotypes**
- **Model appropriate language**

Do's & Don'ts: Guidelines to Using Person First Language



What is Person First Language?

- Puts the person **before** the disability, and describes what a person has, not who a person is

Person First Language: Guidelines



He's autistic
She's confined
to a wheelchair



He has autism
She uses a
wheelchair



The disabled
He's retarded



People with
disabilities
He has an intellectual
disability

Examples of People First Language

Instead of...

- he's Downs
- she's learning disabled
- normal or healthy kids
- birth defect
- brain damage
- she has a problem with...

Say...

- he has Down Syndrome
- she has a learning disability
- typical kids / kids without disabilities
- congenital disability
- brain injury
- she needs... / she uses...

Out with the Old...In with the New



Out with the Old...In with the New



Intellectual Disability

**Division of Intellectual
Disabilities Services**

**American Association on
Intellectual and
Developmental Disabilities**




Part Two: Communicating With People With Disabilities




Communicating with People with Disabilities

- Recognize people with disabilities as having skills and talents just as people without disabilities have

Communicating with People with *Intellectual Disabilities*



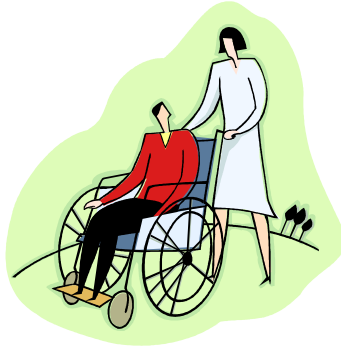
Assume people with intellectual disabilities are legally competent. They can often sign documents, vote, consent to medical care and sign contracts.



Adults who have intellectual disabilities are adults. Assume their life experiences are similar to other adults and speak with them from that perspective.

Communicating with People with *Physical Disabilities*

- Offer assistance before providing assistance



- Sit down at an eye level position whenever possible



Communicating with People with *Visual Disabilities*



- Identify yourself by name and introduce anyone else present



- Guide a person by offering the use of your arm (at or about the elbow), walking normally



- Not all people with visual disabilities use Braille

Communicating with People who are *Deaf or Hard of Hearing*



- Make direct eye contact and use natural facial expressions and gestures



- Interpreters should not be included in the conversation

Communicating with People who have *Speech Disabilities*



- Do not make assumptions based on facial expressions or vocal inflections



- Exercise patience rather than attempting to speak for a person



- Repeat what you understand, or incorporate the person's statements into what you are saying

Accommodations for People with Disabilities



- Consider building accessibility



- Offer alternative forms of communication
 - Interpreters
 - TTY / Relay Services



- Consider presenting information in alternative formats



Disability Etiquette: Friendly Reminders



- Presume **competence**



- Try to anticipate specific accommodations a person with a disability might need



- Relax...Keep a sense of humor and a willingness to communicate



Tennessee Disability Pathfinder

800-640-4636 (English, Español, Kurdish)

615-322-8529 (English, Español, Kurdish)

www.familypathfinder.org

www.caminoseguro.org

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FOR EXCELLENCE IN DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES