EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE
BY KATHIE SNOW; VISIT WWW.DISABILITYISNATURAL.COM TO SEE THE COMPLETE ARTICLE

Remember: a disability descriptor is simply a medical diagnosis.
People First Language respectfully puts the person before the disability.
A person with a disability is more like people without disabilities than different.

**Say:**
- People with disabilities.
- He has a cognitive disability/diagnosis.
- She has autism (or a diagnosis of...).
- He has Down syndrome (or a diagnosis of...).
- She has a learning disability (diagnosis).
- He has a physical disability (diagnosis).
- She’s of short stature/she’s a little person.
- He has a mental health condition/diagnosis.
- She uses a wheelchair/mobility chair.
- He receives special ed services.
- She has a developmental delay.
- Children without disabilities.
- Communicates with her eyes/device/etc.
- People we serve
- Congenital disability
- Brain injury
- Accessible parking, hotel room, etc.
- She needs... or she uses...

**Instead of:**
- The handicapped or disabled.
- He’s mentally retarded.
- She’s autistic.
- He’s Down’s; a mongoloid.
- She’s learning disabled.
- He’s a quadriplegic/is crippled.
- She’s a dwarf/midget.
- He’s emotionally disturbed/mentally ill.
- She’s confined to/is wheelchair bound.
- He’s in special ed.
- She’s developmentally delayed.
- Normal or healthy kids.
- Is non-verbal.
- Client, consumer, recipient, etc.
- Birth defect
- Brain damaged
- Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc.
- She has problems with/has special needs.

*Keep thinking—there are many other descriptors we need to change!*

Excerpted from Kathie’s People First Language article, available at www.disabilityisnatural.com.

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