

# EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

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Remember: a disability descriptor is simply a medical diagnosis;  
People First Language respectfully puts the person before the disability;  
and 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.

Customer

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](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com).

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