

# EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

BY KATHIE SNOW; VISIT [WWW.DISABILITYISNATURAL.COM](http://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 has a mental health condition/diagnosis.  
He uses a wheelchair/mobility chair.  
She receives special ed services.  
He 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 emotionally disturbed/mentally ill.  
He's confined to/is wheelchair bound.  
She's in special ed; a SPED kid.  
He'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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