

scientist, politician.

People First

What do you call people

with Disabilities? Friends, neighbors, coworkers, dad, grandma, Joe's sister, big brother, George,

Who are People with Disabilities?

People with disabilities are first and foremost *People*. They are people who have individual abilities interests and needs. For the most part, they are ordinary individuals seeking to live ordinary lives. People with Disabilities are moms, dads, sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, friends, neighbors, coworkers, students, and teachers. About 49 million Americans (one out of every five individuals) have a disability. Their contributions Enrich our communities and society as they live and share their lives.



discussing disability issues. It eliminates generalizations, assumptions and stereotypes by focusing on the person rather discussing disability issues. It eliminates generalizations, assumptions an stereotypes by focusing on the person rather than the disability.

As the term implies People First Language refers to the individual first and disability second. It's the difference in saying "autistic child" and "a child *with* autism". While some people may not use People First Language, it's important you don't repeat negative terms that stereotype, devalue or discriminate, just as you would avoid racial slurs. Most of the time the disability isn't even relevant to the conversation you may be having.

Changing Images

Historically, people with disabilities have been regarded as individuals to be pitied, feared or ignored.

People with disabilities continue to seek accurate portrayals that present a respectful, positive view of individuals as active participants of society, in regular social, work and home environments.

Eliminating Stereotypes

Every individual regardless of sex, age, race or ability deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. As part of the effort to end discrimination and segregation in employment education and our communities, it is important to eliminate prejudicial language. Like other minorities, the people with disabilities developed preferred terminology called *PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE*. More then a fad or political correctness, People First Language is an objective way of



What should I say?

Be sensitive when choosing words you use. Here are a few guidelines on appropriate language.

- Recognize that people with disabilities are ordinary people with common goals for a home, a job and a family. Talk about people in ordinary terms.
- Never equate a person with a disability such as referring to someone as retarded or epileptic. These labels are simply medical diagnoses. Use People First Language to tell what a person HAS, not what a person IS.
- Emphasize abilities not limitations. Say, for example, "a man walks with crutches" instead of, "he is crippled."
- Avoid negative words that imply tragedy such as afflicted with, suffers, victim, prisoner and unfortunate.

Mrs. Robbins, husband, wife, colleague, employee, reporter, boss,

driver, dancer, mechanic, lawyer, judge, student, educator, home owner, renter, man, woman,