



nssra
Northern Suburban Special
Recreation Association

SERVING PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES:
**PEOPLE FIRST
LANGUAGE**

Examples of People First Language

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 that need to be changed!
Excerpted from Kathie's People First Language article, available at www.disabilityisnatural.com.