

Including Everyone in the Fun

Person First Language

Carmel Clay Parks and Recreation encourages all to embrace person first language. When you put the person first, then you are focusing on the individual instead of the disability. Words are powerful. Old, inaccurate descriptors and the inappropriate use of medical diagnoses causes negative stereotypes and reinforces a significant social barrier. Person first language puts the person before the disability and describes what a person has, not who a person is. If possible do not mention the disability, describe the person and their strengths. In communication with people with disabilities be careful not to imply that people with disabilities are to be pitied, feared, or ignored, or that they are somehow more heroic, courageous, patient, or 'special' than others. Always remember that people with disabilities are people.

INSTEAD OF

SAY...

Handicapped or disabled person	Person with a disability
Mentally retarded person	Person with an intellectual or developmental disability
Autistic person	Person with Autism
Downs person	Person with Down syndrome
Learning disabled	Person with a learning disability
Quadriplegic/crippled person	Person with a physical disability
Dwarf/midget	He/she has short stature or is a little person
Confined to/is wheelchair bound	Person uses a wheelchair
Normal or healthy person	Person without a disability
Non-verbal person	Person who communicates with her eyes/device/etc.
Blind person	Person with a visual impairment
Birth defect	Person with a congenital disability
Brain damaged	Person with a brain injury
Handicapped parking, hotel, etc.	Accessible parking, hotel room, etc
He/she has problems with...He/she has special needs	He/she needs... or uses

LEARN MORE

The Arc- <http://www.thearc.org/who-we-are/media-center/people-first-language>

Indiana Institute on Disability and Community- <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/index.php?pageId=2500>

Disability is Natural- <http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/explore/people-first-language>