

People First Language

*Eliminating labels
for people with disabilities*

Resources Referenced for People First Language

www.kencrest.org/people_first_language.htm

www.wvddc.org/people_first.html

www.disabilitiesnetwork.org

www.familytofamilynetwork.org

www.kidstogether.org/pep-1st02.htm

www.arcde.org/programsservices/programs.asp

www.disabilityisnatural.com

www.udel.edu/cds/index_resources.html

KenCrest's mission is to provide services to individuals who have or are at risk of having mental retardation or developmental disabilities in a manner that respects individual rights, enhances potential, and enables people to have control over their own lives.

KenCrest, a non-profit agency, is the largest provider of community-based services in the Delaware Valley for people with developmental disabilities. We serve over 7,300 children and adults and their families ranging in age from infants to senior adults in over 300 locations.

KenCrest has served the Delaware Valley for over 100 years.

*"The difference between
the right word and the
almost right word is the
difference between lightning
and the lightning bug."*

Mark Twain

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What is People First Language?

People with disabilities are present in every aspect of society. They are people with goals for education, a home, a job and family. People with disabilities are moms and dads...employees and employers...students and teachers... friends and neighbors...scientists and movie stars. Most importantly, they are people first.

People First Language communicates that people with disabilities are valued as people first. The guiding principle is to refer to the person first, not the disability. A disability is only one adjective that describes a person. The disability may not even be relevant to the conversation or situation.

People First Language eliminates generalizations, stereotypes and labels. The only label a person with a disability needs is his/her name.



How do you use People First Language?

People First Language emphasizes WHO people are—first and foremost—rather than focusing on their limitations. People First Language makes the “politically correct” reference to a disability much less important. Always refer to the person as a person first—that never goes out of style.

Say:

People with disabilities
People with mental retardation
A person who has autism
A child with a developmental delay
She uses a wheelchair.
He has a physical disability.
A student who receives special ed services
He has a need for
Accessible parking or bathrooms
People with brain injuries
Kids without disabilities
A person who uses a communication device
People with epilepsy

Instead of:

Handicapped or disabled people
The mentally retarded
The autistic
A developmentally delayed child
She is wheelchair bound.
He is a physically disabled or crippled person.
Special education student
He has a problem with...
Handicapped parking or bathrooms
The brain injured
Normal kids
Non-verbal person
Epileptics