People First Language puts the **PERSON** before the disability, and describes what the person **has**, not who a person is.

### Examples of People First Language

**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  
People without disabilities  
Communicates with her eyes/device/etc  
Customer  
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 crippled  
She’s a dwarf/midget  
He's emotionally disturbed/mentally ill  
She’s confined to a wheelchair/ wheelchair bound  
He's in special ed  
She’s developmentally delayed  
Normal or healthy people  
Is non-verbal  
Client, consumer, recipient, etc  
Birth defect  
Brain Damaged  
Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc  
She has a problem with... or has special needs

Excerpted from Katie Snow’s People First Language article available at www.disabilityisnatural.com