



Appendix F

People-first Checklist

Writing for People with Disabilities

Easy modifications to your writing style will ensure you communicate effectively with people with disabilities



EXAMPLES OF PEOPLE FIRST LANGUAGE

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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.

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 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 a problem with . . .

She has special needs.

Keep thinking—there are many other descriptors we need to change!

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