

People First Etiquette

Best Buddies believes that all people have individual abilities and deserve respect.

Remember that a person who has a disability is a person — like anyone else.

Relax. If you don't know what to do or say, allow the person who has a disability to help put you at ease.

Your relationship with a person with a disability should be, like any other relationship, a reciprocal one. If there is time and opportunity, explore your mutual interests in a friendly way. The person probably has many interests besides those connected with the disability and the job. Talk about the disability if it comes up naturally, without prying. Be guided by the wishes of the person with the disability.

Examples of People First Language	
<p>Say: People with disabilities. He has an intellectual disability. She has autism (or an autism diagnosis). He has a diagnosis of Down syndrome. 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 diagnosis. She uses a wheelchair/mobility chair. He receives special education services. She has a developmental delay. Kids without disabilities. Communicates with her eyes/device/etc. Congenital disability Brain injury Accessible parking, hotel room, etc. She needs . . . or she uses . . .</p>	<p>Instead of: The handicapped or disabled. He's mentally retarded. She's autistic. He's Down's. She's learning disabled. He's a quadriplegic/crippled. She's a dwarf/midget. He's emotionally disturbed/mentally ill. She's confined/wheelchair bound. He's in special ed. She's developmentally delayed. Normal or healthy kids. Is non-verbal. Birth defect Brain damaged Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc. She has problems/special needs.</p>