

# The Language of Disabilities

## “Person First”

As greater numbers of individuals with disabilities take advantage of the opportunities open to them in business, industry and travel, it becomes increasingly important to promote an environment that is positive for persons with disabilities. One of the best and easiest ways is appropriate language use. The recommended manner is known as “person first” language. This means that the person is emphasized first, the disability second.

<b><u>Positive Phrases</u></b>	<b><u>Negative Phrases</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• person with a disability</li><li>• person without a disability</li><li>• individual who is unable to speak</li><li>• woman who is blind or has a visual disability</li><li>• person who uses a wheelchair</li><li>• person who is deaf; person who is hard of hearing</li><li>• man with paraplegia</li><li>• individual with epilepsy</li><li>• person who has a learning disability</li><li>• person with a mental or cognitive disability</li><li>• person with a developmental disability</li><li>• person with a congenital disability</li><li>• person who has muscular dystrophy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• disabled, handicapped</li><li>• normal person</li><li>• mute, dumb</li><li>• blind woman or “the blind”</li><li>• confined or restricted to a wheelchair</li><li>• suffers a hearing loss, the deaf</li><li>• paraplegic</li><li>• slow learner, retarded, learning disabled</li><li>• crazy, demented, insane, nuts</li><li>• mentally retarded</li><li>• has a birth defect</li><li>• stricken by MD, physically disabled, crippled, lame, deformed</li></ul>