Do not try to fix me because I am not broken. Support me. I can make my contribution to the community in my way.

People First & Person-Centered

Respectful Language

Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee

Respect the person

Use my name, not my label

See my humanity

Never use the R-word

People with disabilities have a lot to offer-notice what we can do!

There’s no such thing as a ‘sped kid’

Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee

Colorado Department of Education
Office of Special Education
1560 Broadway, Suite 1175
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www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/CSEAC.asp
Respectful Language
People First & Person-Centered
Colorado Special Education Advisory Committee

Speak & Write with Respect!

**See the person, use their name**
People first language is about respect, about seeing the person. It is about valuing the person as an equal. It is about seeing the child/teen/adult as a person and realizing that labels really don’t matter when you get to know a child or a person with a disability.

“Do not admire me. A desire to live a full life does not warrant adoration. Respect me for respect presumes equity.” - Norm Kunc

**Language influences what we think**
The minute we put a label on a person, their future is changed. If the language is respectful, caring and empowering, it has a positive effect. If the language has a negative connotation, it can damage confidence and self-esteem. Labels can help us understand an individual’s needs but we have to be sure we see the person before the label and use the label to help, not hurt.

**Some people value their differences**
And prefer to be called an ‘autistic’ person. They feel that their brain differences are not separate from who they are and want to be seen as whole and not a person with a part of them that is ‘broken’.

**Spread the Word to End the Word**
When people use the r-word and other derogatory terms towards themselves or others they are displaying not only a lack of respect but intolerance. Take the pledge to end the use of the r-word (from www.r-word.org)

*I pledge and support the elimination of the derogatory use of the r-word from everyday speech and promote the acceptance and inclusion of people with intellectual disabilities.*

**Journalists and reporters**
Anytime you write, speak or refer to a person with a disability, please use person-first language:

⇒ He is a boy with Down syndrome.
⇒ She wears glasses and has a learning disability.
⇒ Her son is a four-year old with autism.
⇒ My child receives special education services.

**T here are no ‘sped kids’**
When we think and use respectful language, we see that saying things such as “the sped kids eat lunch together” or “that’s the sped class” or “those are my special ed students” or “that’s the autism room” we are not using person-first language. Teachers, staff, parents and students can support each other to use respectful language at all times, in all places.

**Talk to and with a person with a disability**
Don’t talk about them without them! In whatever way is appropriate for the person with a disability, include them in any discussion about them.

“Do not try to control me. I have a right to my power as a person. What you call non-compliance or manipulation may actually be the only way I can exert control over my life.” – Norm Kunc

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