

Characteristics of Disabilities



October 15, 2009

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THE MOST APPROPRIATE LABEL IS
USUALLY THE ONE PEOPLE'S PARENTS
HAVE GIVEN THEM.

People First

As the history of special education has unfolded, so has the vocabulary we use to refer to people with disabilities.

People First

Areas of Disability

Past Terminology

Cognitive Disabilities

Idiot, feebleminded, imbecile, moron, EMH, TMH

Learning Disabilities

Dyslexia, minimal cerebral dysfunction

Emotional
Disturbance

Unsocialized, dementia, acting out,
withdrawn

Head Injuries

Strephasymbolia, brain crippled children,
brain injured

Autism

Childhood schizophrenia, children w/
refrigerator parents

People First

Areas of Disability

Current Terminology

Cognitive Disability

Mild, moderate and severe retardation, developmental disabilities, intermittent, pervasive, extensive and limited retardation

Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities

Emotional Disturbance

Emotional/behavioral disorders

Head Injuries

Traumatic brain injury (TBI)

Autism

Autism (high or low functioning)

People First

Examples of people first language:

- Children with disabilities not disabled children
- Student receiving special education services not special ed. students
- Student with Down Syndrome not Down's student

Guidelines for Interacting with People with Disabilities

- Do unto others as you would have done unto you
- Dignify the individual by allowing them to perform tasks independently when possible



Guidelines for Interacting with People with Disabilities

- When assisting an individual with a physical/sensory disability, always make them aware of your intentions before taking action
- Make sure that your actions dignify the individual, do not humiliate or embarrass him/her and do not draw unnecessary attention

