

# EXTRA SPECIAL EDITION

Parent Newsletter

Fall 2022-23

Welcome to the **Fall Extra Special Edition Newsletter**. Each issue contains information for parents and caregivers of children in Exceptional Student Education (ESE) programs.

## People Are Not a Disability adapted from article by Kathie Snow

Research shows as many as one in five Americans have some type of disability. Disabilities are no respecters of persons. People from all walks of life, young and old, male and female, and people of every known race experience disabilities.

Some disabilities are obvious to others and some are well hidden, but all are a problem for the person who is living with the disability.

Everyone should be careful with their choice of words when speaking to or of a person with a disability. To quote Mark Twain, "The difference between the right word and the almost right word is the difference between lightning and the lightning bug." The old adage sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me is very wrong! Words do hurt and the hurt can last a lifetime! Words can also be very discouraging and prevent a person from reaching their potential in life. As George Orwell states, "If thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought."

All people should focus on each other's strengths and abilities rather than weaknesses and disabilities. Attitudes are also very important. A positive attitude can make a huge difference in life. William James says, "The greatest discovery of my generation is that human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitudes of mind."

Remember to always speak to and of persons with a disability in the same way you would speak to a person without one and as you would like to be spoken to if you had the same disability!

## In This Issue

- People Are Not a Disability
- People First Language
- Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) - Elements in an Inclusion Classroom
- Everyday Practices to Make Your Child Feel Loved



**"There will be obstacles. There will be doubters. There will be mistakes. But with hard work, there are no limits." Michael Phelps**



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## People First Language adapted from article by Kathie Snow

In her article *People First Language*, Kathie Snow offers the following examples of ways to and not to talk to people with disabilities:

<u>Say:</u>	<u>Instead of:</u>
People with disabilities	The handicapped or disabled
He has a cognitive disability or diagnosis	He's mentally retarded
She has autism (or a diagnosis of...)	She's autistic
He has Down syndrome (or a diagnosis of...)	He's Down's; a mongoloid
She has a learning disability (diagnosis)	She's learning disabled
He has a physical disability (diagnosis)	He's a quadriplegic; is crippled
She's of short stature; she's a little person	She's a dwarf; midget
He has a mental health condition or diagnosis	He's emotionally disturbed or mentally ill
She uses a wheelchair or mobility chair	She's confined to or is wheelchair bound
He receives special education services	He's in special ed
She has a developmental delay	She's developmentally delayed
Children without disabilities	Normal or healthy kids
Communicates with her eyes, device, etc.	Is non-verbal
Customer	Client, consumer, recipient, etc.
Congenital disability	Birth defect
Brain injury	Brain damaged
Accessible parking, hotel room, etc.	Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc.
She needs... or she uses...	She has problems with... has special needs

Kathie's article, *People First Language*, is available at [DisabilityIsNatural.com](http://DisabilityIsNatural.com). She states there are many other descriptors we need to change and challenges people to keep thinking of ways to use language that puts the person before the disability.

One never knows what life will throw at each of us and demand from us next. One day we could be a person with a specific disability. However, we will not *be* the disability!

## Florida Inclusion Network (FIN): Elements in an Inclusive Classroom

- ◆ **Person First Language** – This is the practice of using language that refers to the person before the disability or label. For example, it is more respectful and honors the person to say “The child has special needs” instead of “The special needs child.” Address the person first!
- ◆ **Presumed Competence** – Also known as “the least dangerous assumption,” presumed competence is about having high expectations for learning, thinking, and understanding. You can always make things simpler, but no one is harmed by aiming high to start with.
- ◆ **Universal Design for Learning (UDL)** – Like wheelchair ramps, curb cuts, and raised lettering in elevators, which everyone can use, UDL in the classroom is a way of designing lesson plans that account for learner variability and context, and eliminates barriers to learning for all students.
- ◆ **Differentiation** – Lessons can be changed, or differentiated, using their content, the process of teaching the content, or the product used to measure learning, based on frequent assessment of student learning.
- ◆ **Accommodations and Modifications** – Both of these are components that can be written in an IEP to meet a student’s needs, and they must be provided if they are included. Accommodations are changes to how something is taught or assessed and are often just part of good teaching for all students. Modifications change the content that is taught. Only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities can have modifications.
- ◆ **Co-Teaching or Support Facilitation** – Inclusive classrooms often have multiple adults as part of their schedule. When two teachers who meet certification requirements are teaching at the same time, every day, for the whole time, it is called co-teaching. Support facilitation is two certified teachers teaching on a regular schedule, but not every day for the whole instructional period.
- ◆ **Collaboration** – Many adults work together to meet the needs of students in inclusive classrooms. They must plan, implement, assess lessons, and decide what is needed for all students to learn.

Insert from [FIN F.A.C.T. Folio Volume 3](#)

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The Florida Inclusion Network offers many resources to assist parents. Visit [FloridaInclusionNetwork.com](http://FloridaInclusionNetwork.com) or contact your FIN Facilitators, Caren Prichard and Emily McCann, at 850-638-6131 x 2206 or email: [caren.prichard@paec.org](mailto:caren.prichard@paec.org) or [emily.mccann@paec.org](mailto:emily.mccann@paec.org).

Your children (young and old) need your love, time, and undivided attention. As a parent, you are likely to be the most significant influence in their lives — it's up to you to help them feel secure and build their confidence. Even on your busiest days, you can show your child that you care during your ordinary, everyday activities.

**Consider the following ideas to make your child feel loved and valued:**

- ◆ **Be attentive.** Actively listen when your child wants to talk to you. Show that you are listening by stopping what you are doing and maintaining eye contact. Share their enthusiasm about what they are discussing.
- ◆ **Show affection.** According to **Child Trends**, a non-profit research organization, studies show that higher self-esteem, better parent-child communication, and fewer psychological and behavior problems have been linked to warmth and affection between a parent and their child.
- ◆ **Provide genuine praise.** When it comes to praising your child, quality is more important than quantity. Let your child know that you're proud of them for making an effort, regardless of the outcome. The key is not to praise your child for everything they do, but to recognize when they do something out of the ordinary, or when they are working hard toward achieving a goal.
- ◆ **Enjoy family meals.** Research indicates that there are physical, mental, and emotional **benefits of having regular family meals**. Having dinner together is another chance to spend some uninterrupted, quality time as a family. Make it a rule that **mealtimes are device-free** so there are no distractions. Kids feel important and valued when their parents show sincere interest in their day, ask questions, and share, as appropriate, about their own day.
- ◆ **Ask for help.** Enlist your child's help with chores. Ask them to set the dinner table, take out the trash, or walk the dog. Tell your child that you appreciate the part they play in keeping your home running smoothly. Give them a chance to teach you how to do things.

Making your children feel loved and valued will help them to grow up to be happy and responsible adults. **Treasure your time together and create memories that you will both enjoy for years to come.**



Printed by **FDLRS-PAEC Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System**

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FDLRS is funded by the Florida Department of Education, Division of Public Schools, [Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services](#), through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B and State General Revenue funds.