

The Power of Words

In describing a person who lives with a disability, name the person first, not the disability. Using words that give dignity affirms our belief that all people are created in the Image of God.

Say	Instead of
People with disabilities	The handicapped or disabled
The child is blind or visually impaired	The blind or visually impaired child
The Council member is deaf or hard of hearing	The deaf or hard of hearing Council member
The person with cerebral palsy	-- palsied, or C.P., or spastic
The person who has	-- afflicted, suffers from, victim of
Mary uses a wheelchair	-- confined to a wheelchair or wheelchair bound
The person has a developmental delay	-- retarded, slow
Joseph has seizures	-- fits
The person with a cognitive disability	-- retarded
Sue has epilepsy	-- epileptic
The child with Down syndrome	-- mongoloid
The commissioner has a physical disability	-- crippled or lame
The commissioner has a learning disability	-- is learning disabled
Don needs an accessible room	-- a handicapped room
The commissioner has autism	-- autistic commissioner
Charlie lives with mental illness	-- crazy, insane, emotionally disturbed

