



*“Using antiquated, degrading terms to describe individuals with disabilities is an affront to the integrity of the person and their family, and below our common decency as a people.”*

– Governor Chris Christie, Bill Signing Ceremony, Trenton, NJ, August 16, 2010

In August 2010, Governor Chris Christie signed legislation that removes outdated, disrespectful language referring to individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities from all New Jersey statutes and regulations because **words matter**.

To assist the media and public in using appropriate terminology for individuals with disabilities, the NJ Departments of Human Services and Children and Families have compiled the following helpful tips.

**Three Things to Remember:**

- **Only reference** a person’s disability if it is relevant to the conversation.
- **Always use** *People First* language whenever referring to people’s disability.
- **Avoid using** *suffers with, a victim of, or afflicted with* when discussion someone’s disability.

Phrases Not to Use	People First Language
the handicapped or the disabled	people <b>with</b> disabilities
the mentally retarded or retarded	people <b>with</b> intellectual or developmental disabilities
birth defect	<b>has</b> a congenital disability
wheelchair bound or confined to a wheelchair	<b>uses</b> a wheelchair or a mobility device
crippled or lame	<b>has</b> a physical disability
s/he is brain injured	is a <b>survivor</b> of brain injury or sustained a brain injury
dwarf or midget	<b>has</b> short stature or is a little person
mute	<b>requires</b> or <b>needs</b> communication assistance
is learning disabled	<b>has</b> a learning disability
suffers from or victim of	person who <b>has</b> ...
emotionally disturbed, crazy or lunatic	<b>has</b> a mental illness
normal or healthy	a person without a disability
quadriplegic or paraplegic	<b>has</b> quadriplegia or paraplegia
s/he is in special ed	<b>receives</b> special ed services
handicapped parking or handicapped restroom	<b>accessible</b> parking or restroom
person is high or low functioning	<b>has</b> low or high support needs