



Providing support and information for families of children with disabilities, chronic illness and other special health care needs

People First Language

Jake Pinner, TxP2P Volunteer and son of Jeanine Pinner, TxP2P Staff

My name is Jake Pinner and I am a junior. One of the things that makes me slightly different is that I have an autism spectrum disorder.

I do believe that any person is capable of anything and if that person believes they can succeed, then they will achieve.

There are some people in this world who are alike in many ways, but there are also some people who are different in a way. One difference is that some people have disabilities. They are people just like us and they still contribute to society despite having some obstacles. There is a way to refer to people with disabilities as people first.

Sometimes people with disabilities are looked at for weaknesses rather than strengths. For example, a person with an autism spectrum disorder may be seen as someone whose membership on a staff or team may be stressful because of work constraints, but that person may have a good memory that helps him accomplish the given task. Or someone having perfect pitch, the ability to tell what note they just heard, or calendar calculation (telling what day of the week a certain date was) is one strength people with autism have. Sometimes these strengths and talents are overlooked and those people are seen just for the disabilities.

On occasion people are ridiculed behind their back and not given the same advantages anyone else has which is isolating.

Everyone has a role in society. There have also been several people who had disabilities that were really successful in society.

Current Usage

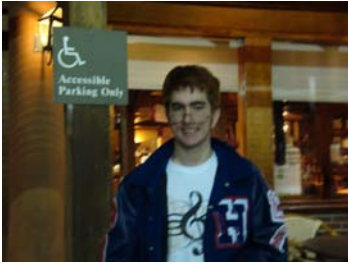
Normal/healthy/typical people
Handicapped/Crippled/Disabled
A mentally retarded girl
John is wheelchair bound/confined to a wheelchair
An autistic girl/boy
Roger suffers from Cerebral palsy
Fred is in special ed, is a sped kid
Brain damage
Birth defect
Julius is quadraplegic/paraplegic

Preferred

People without disabilities
Having a physical disability
A girl with mental retardation
John uses a wheelchair
A girl/boy with autism
Roger has cerebral palsy
Fred receives special education services
Brain injury
Congenital abnormality
Julius has quadraplegia/paraplegia

Texas Parent to Parent

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Editor's note: This article has been reprinted with permission from the Hays Rebellion (high school newspaper).

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