



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

Preferred

People without disabilities

Having a physical disability

A girl with mental retardation

John uses a wheelchair

Texas Parent to Parent

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An autistic girl/boy

A girl/boy with autism

Roger suffers from Cerebral palsy

Roger has cerebral palsy

Fred is in special ed, is a sped kid

Fred receives special education services

Brain damage

Brain injury

Birth defect

Congenital abnormality

Julius is quadraplegic/paraplegic

Julius has quadraplegia/parapalegia

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

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