



# LANGUAGE GUIDELINES

You can help others use responsible language which reflects the dignity of people with Down syndrome. Words can create barriers and reinforce stereotypes, therefore the DSAGSL believes in the importance of ensuring the correct language is used. A person is much more than a label or diagnosis. Help to educate others about the preferred way to refer to individuals with Down syndrome.

## People first language and Down syndrome

- The correct name of this diagnosis is Down syndrome. There is no apostrophe (Down). The "s" in syndrome is not capitalized (syndrome)
- An individual with Down syndrome is an individual first and foremost. The emphasis should be on the person, not the disability. A person with Down syndrome has many other qualities and attributes that can be used to describe them.
- Encourage people to use person first language. "The person with Down syndrome", not the "Down syndrome person."
- Recognize that a child is a "child with Down syndrome" and that an adult is "an adult with Down syndrome." Children with Down syndrome grow into adults and do not remain eternal children. Adults enjoy activities and companionship with other adults.
- A person "has" Down syndrome, rather than "suffers from, is a victim of, afflicted by" Down syndrome.

## Here are some basic guidelines for using People First Language

- Put people first, not their disability. "a person with Down syndrome"
- Use emotionally neutral expressions. "a person "with" not "afflicted with" or "suffers from"
- Emphasize abilities, not limitations. A person "uses a wheelchair" not "wheelchair-bound"
- Adopt preferred language. A "Typically developing" is preferred over "normal", "accessible" parking space is preferred over "handicapped"

## Have more questions?

Contact the DSAGSL at 314.961.2504 or [info@dsagsl.org](mailto:info@dsagsl.org)