People with disabilities are entitled to the same courtesies you would extend to anyone, including personal privacy. If you find it inappropriate to ask other people about certain information (wages, age, etc.), extend the courtesy to people with disabilities. Disability Etiquette is not always about being politically correct, it is about respecting everyone as an individual.

In conversation...

- When talking with someone who has a disability, speak directly to him or her, rather than through a companion who may be along.

- Treat adults as adults. Call a person by his or her first name only when you extend this familiarity to everyone present. Do not speak to adults in a baby-voice, as you would to small children.

- To get the attention of a person who has a hearing disability, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand. Look directly at the person and speak clearly, slowly and expressively to establish if the person can read your lips. Not everyone with hearing impairments can lip-read. Those who do will rely on facial expressions and other body language to help understand. Show consideration by facing a light source and keeping your hands and food away from your mouth when speaking. Keep mustaches well-trimmed. Shouting won't help, but written notes will.

- When talking with a person using a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, place yourself at the wheelchair user's eye level to spare both of you a stiff neck.

- Relax. Don't be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions, such as "See you later" or "I've got to run", that seem to relate to the person's disability.

- When greeting a person with a severe loss of vision, always identify yourself and others who may be with you. Say, for example, "On my right is Andy Clark". When conversing in a group, remember to say the name of the person to whom you are speaking to give vocal cue. Speak in a normal tone of voice, indicate when you move from one place to another, and let it be known when the conversation is at an end.

- Give whole, unhurried attention when you're talking to a person who has difficulty speaking. Keep your manner encouraging rather than correcting, and be patient rather than speak for the person. When necessary, ask questions that require short answers or a nod or shake of the head. Never pretend to understand if you are having difficulty doing so. Repeat what you understand. The person's reaction will guide you to understanding.

Common courtesies...

- If you would like to help someone with a disability, ask if he or she needs it before you act, and listen to any instructions the person may want to give.

- When giving directions to a person in a wheelchair, consider distance, weather conditions and physical obstacles such as stairs, curbs and steep hills.

- If you don't make a habit of leaning or hanging on people, don't lean or hang on someone's wheelchair. Wheelchairs are an extension of personal space. Don't patronize people who use wheelchairs by patting them on the head.
• When directing a person with a visual impairment, use specifics such as "left a hundred feet" or "right two yards".

• When you offer to assist someone with a vision impairment, allow the person to take your arm. This will help you to guide, rather than propel or lead, the person.

• Be considerate of the extra time it might take a person with a disability to get things done or said. Let the person set the pace in walking and talking.

• When planning events involving persons with disabilities, consider their needs ahead of time. If an insurmountable barrier exists, let them know about it prior to the event.

Helpful Facts

When Meeting Friends With Disabilities:

1. It's okay to offer your help to someone, but don't just go ahead. Ask first. Or wait for someone to ask you for your help.

2. It's okay to ask people about their disabilities and it's also okay for them not to talk about it.

3. Remember, just because people use wheelchairs, it doesn't mean they are sick. Lots of people who use wheelchairs are healthy and strong.

4. It's okay to use words like "see", "hear", "walk" and "run" when you're talking with friends who have disabilities.

5. It's okay to ask people who have speech problems to repeat what they said if you didn't understand the first time.

6. If an interpreter is helping you speak with a person who is deaf or hearing impaired, make sure you talk to the person, not the interpreter.

7. Don't speak loudly when talking to people who are blind. They hear as well as you do.

8. Never pet or play with Service Animals/Guide Dogs. They can't be distracted from the job they are doing.

9. Invite friends with disabilities to sleep over, come to your house to play, or to your birthday party. Think about ways to make sure that they can be included in the things that you do.

10. Don't park in places reserved for people with disabilities unless you have the appropriate tag --- EVER!

11. When you go to restaurants and shopping malls, see if a friend who has disabilities would be able to be accommodated there with you. If not, ask the manager to put in ramps, get raised numbers for the elevators, or have braille menus printed.

12. Treat a person with a disability the way you like to be treated and you'll have a friend for life.

These Helpful Hints are printed on bookmarks included in the Friends Who Care Teachers' Guide.
Yes, disability is natural, and it can be redefined as a “body part that works differently.” A person with a physical disability has legs or arms that work differently, a person with a cognitive disability learns differently, a person with autism has a brain that works differently, and so forth. And when we recognize that the body parts of people without disabilities are different, we’ll also recognize that it’s the “degree of difference”—the way these differences affect people and/or the need for services, entitlements, or legal protections—which creates the need for labels.

A disability, like gender and ethnicity, is simply one of many natural characteristics of being human. One in five Americans is a person with a disability! People with disabilities cannot be defined by this one characteristic, any more than others can be defined by their gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, hair color, or anything else!

People with disabilities constitute our nation’s largest minority group, which is simultaneously the most inclusive and the most diverse! Everyone’s represented: people of both genders and of all ages, as well as individuals from all religions, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic levels. Yet the only thing people with disabilities truly have in common with one another is dealing with societal misunderstanding, prejudice, and discrimination.

Furthermore, the “disability community” is the only minority group which anyone can join, at any time. Some join at birth. Others join in the split second of an accident, through illness, or by the aging process. If and when it happens to you, will you have more in common with others who have disabilities or with family, friends, and co-workers? And how will you want to be described? How will you want to be treated? Disability issues affect all Americans!

✦ Try to recognize that a child is “a child”, or that an adult is “an adult”. Children who have a developmental disability grow into adults who have a developmental disability. They do not remain eternal children. Adults enjoy age-appropriate activities and companionship with adults. An individual with a disability is an individual first and foremost. The emphasis should be on the person, not the disability.

✦ Words can create barriers. Encourage people to use people-first language (i.e. The person with paralysis - NOT the paralyzed person!) Identify individuals with disabilities as an individual, a friend, a student, or a family member.

✦ It is important to use the correct terminology. A person has an intellectual disability, rather than "suffers from", "is a victim of", "is diseased with" or "afflicted by". A person with Down syndrome is not a “Downs”.

✦ Each person has his/her own unique strengths, capabilities and talents. Try not to use the clichés that are so common when describing an individual with Down syndrome. To assume all people have the same characteristics or abilities is degrading. Also, it reinforces the stereotype that "all kids with Down syndrome are the same".

✦ Most important...look at the person as an individual - your child, your family member, your student, your friend. Proudly acknowledge their individuality and their accomplishments. Remember, persons with disabilities are more like us than different. They have feelings too, and are hurt by cruelty, stares and name calling. They want to be included in your groups...not excluded.
Many words and expressions have strong, negative connotations, and you should avoid using them and discourage use by others as much as possible: People First Language is all about the words you use and the order in which you use them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SAY:</th>
<th>INSTEAD OF:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People with disabilities</td>
<td>The handicapped or disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible parking, hotel room</td>
<td>Handicapped parking, hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She’s of short stature/she’s a little person</td>
<td>She’s a dwarf/midget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has a learning disability</td>
<td>She’s learning disabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He has an intellectual disability</td>
<td>He’s mentally retarded; retard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He receives special education services</td>
<td>He’s in special ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She uses a wheelchair</td>
<td>She’s wheelchair bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has autism</td>
<td>She’s autistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congenital disability</td>
<td>Birth defect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Think about the words you use, when you are walking down the hall, at the movies, playing sports, at your job, at home…. and promise not to use words that are hurtful or ugly.

Eliminating the bad words is as important as using the good words. The following words and phrases should be removed from your vocabulary.

- handicapped
- cripple
- crip
- deaf mute
- insane
- defective
- deaf and dumb
- retard/retarded
- gimp
- invalid
- lame
- epileptic
- poor unfortunate
- wheelchair-bound
- afflicted
- victim
- stricken
- spastic/spaz
- confined to a wheelchair
- deformed
People Who Use Wheelchairs

People who use wheelchairs can hold physically demanding jobs. They need not be confined to desk jobs. People who use wheelchairs can be very independent, not necessarily relying on others for assistance in daily activities. They may or may not do things differently or more slowly than others. There is no need to be overprotective of people who use wheelchairs.

1. Refer to this person as a "wheelchair user" rather than a "wheelchair victim" or "wheelchair bound."
2. Make sure all meetings and interviews are conducted at wheelchair accessible locations.
3. Don't automatically hold onto the person's wheelchair. It is part of their body space.
4. Assistance may be offered, but don't insist. If the person needs help, they will accept the offer and explain exactly what will be helpful.
5. Don't move a wheelchair or crutches out of reach of the person who uses them. Never start to push a person's wheelchair without first getting permission.
6. Speak directly to the person in the chair, not to someone nearby. For longer conversations, pull up a chair and sit at eye level with the person.
7. Don't be sensitive about using words like "running" or "walking."
8. Avoid classifying people who use wheelchairs as "sick." Wheelchairs are used for a variety of disabilities.
9. Don't be surprised if the person transfers from a wheelchair to a piece of furniture or gets out of the wheelchair to move about. Some people who use wheelchairs can walk, but they choose to use a wheelchair because of stamina or balance issues.
10. After the initial greeting, sit down so that a person who uses a wheelchair won't have to crane his/her neck to look up and make eye contact.

People Who Are Blind or Vision Impaired

A person's visual acuity may change under different light conditions. Do not confuse vision impairments or 'legal blindness' with total blindness. Many people who are considered to be legally blind have residual (or remaining) sight. In fact, many people who are legally blind walk without the use of a cane or dog guide and can read printed text with some accommodations (such as large print or a magnifier).

1. Do not automatically guide someone without asking them first. If they accept your assistance, offer the person the back of your arm or elbow and let the person follow the motion of your body. Walk at a normal pace. Guide their hand or arm to the back of a chair. When guiding, slow before a step, barrier or turn and describe the reason for the slowing. Avoid pointing or using abstract visual cues, i.e. over there, that one, up ahead, etc.
2. Speak directly to the individual who is blind or vision impaired. Do not shout. When you leave the room, say so.
3. Introduce other people in the room or have them introduce themselves. This will assist the person in orienting themselves to the room and its occupants. When conversing with a group of people, identify the person to whom you are speaking. If a person who is blind or visually impaired does not respond, it may be because he or she thinks you are talking to someone else.
4. Don't avoid using words like "look" and "see." There are no reasonable substitutes. For example: When giving directions, do not use references a person cannot see "over there" is not good way of describing a location. When using directional words, use them with the orientation of the person who is blind. Remember when you are facing someone, your left is that person's right.
5. Do not play with a dog guide while it is "on duty." It is up to the person using the dog guide to decide if play is appropriate, so be sure to ask before touching the animal. You do not want to distract the animal from its job.

6. When guiding a person into a new or strange surrounding, describe special features or physical characteristics of the area. When going into a room, describe where furniture is, where the door is, and where the person is in relation to these objects.

7. For people with vision impairments, provide a well lit area for the interview and avoid sharp contrasts of light and dark areas. A person's visual acuity may change under differing light conditions.

8. When handing the individual written materials, be prepared to read the information to the person, or ask if the person would like a reader. Offer assistance in filling out forms, most people with visual impairments can fill out forms and sign their names if the appropriate spaces are indicated to them.

9. When speaking to a person with impaired vision, position yourself so that the sun or any other bright lights are in front of you. Your face will be illuminated and, at the same time, glare or blinding light in the eyes of the other person will be eliminated.

10. Try not to be disconcerted if an individual with an obvious vision impairment does not make eye contact, and still continue to talk directly to the person.

**People Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing**

The goal of all communication is to obtain appropriate information from the person. Sometimes it is necessary to be versatile in finding an effective communication method with people who are deaf or hard of hearing. The main objective, though, is to communicate effectively.

1. When speaking with someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, face the person directly. Do not position yourself so that you are directly in front of a harsh light or window. Your face will be difficult to see as it is silhouetted in bright light.

2. Not all people who are deaf can lipread. Actually, only about 25% of what we say is visible on the lips. None-the-less, some people can lipread quite well.

3. When speaking to someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, use meaningful facial expressions and gestures to emphasize your intent and attitude. This substitutes for tone of voice. This is important even in the presence of a sign language interpreter or oral interpreter. Be sure not to use exaggerated mouth movements or wild gestures.

4. Do not change the subject without warning.

5. Not all people who are deaf know sign language. Do not assume that everyone needs an interpreter.

6. If using a sign language or oral interpreter, speak directly to the person who is deaf, not the interpreter. i.e. "When will you have the report ready?" instead of looking at the interpreter and saying "Ask him when he will have the report ready." The only reason for the presence of an interpreter is because participants in the communication process speak different languages. Do not try to involve the interpreter in the conversation.

7. Keep your hands from covering your mouth when talking. Remove objects from your mouth such as cigarettes, pipes, gum, or food.

8. Do not shout when speaking to the person. Use a normal tone of voice, and do not restrict yourself to monosyllabic words.

9. If you cannot understand the person, do not be afraid to ask them to repeat. When this does not work, try paper and pencil.

10. When working or meeting in a group, ask the deaf or hard of hearing individual for suggestions that work well for them (sign language interpreter, notetaker, seating arrangement, lighting, etc.) Have each person raise his or her hand before speaking so that those depending on lipreading will know where to look.

11. When a person who is deaf or hard of hearing chooses to have an interpreter voice for them, remember to respond directly to that person and not the interpreter.

12. Just because someone uses a sign language interpreter during the interview does not mean that they will require an interpreter at all times to do their work.

13. If a sign language interpreter is not present, ask the individual how he or she would prefer to communicate (paper and pencil, lip reading, computer terminal, etc.).

14. To get the attention of a person who is hearing impaired or deaf, vocalize a greeting, and if necessary, discreetly wave your hand or gently tap the person's shoulder.

15. Keep in mind that the ability to understand spoken English is not related to the person's intelligence.

16. Remember that the grammar of sign language is not directly related to English. Again, the lack of knowledge of English grammar is not a sign of lack of intelligence.
Individuals with Tourette Syndrome:

Tourette Syndrome affects a person's ability to control behavior. This syndrome produces a variety of symptoms such as motor tics, production of noises, or vocalization of socially unacceptable words. If you encounter someone with these symptoms, the best thing to do is to ignore the movements or outbursts.

Individuals with Epilepsy

If the person brings the condition to your attention, you may ask whether the condition might have an impact on their work and if there are any necessary accommodations. If applicants mention seizures, interviewers may ask whether seizures are under control, and if not, what people in the office need to know in the event of a seizure. This information, however, usually isn't needed until after a person with epilepsy is hired. Do not be over solicitous.

Individuals with Learning Disabilities

1. Since a learning disability is an invisible disability, it is rarely noticed without disclosure from the individual. Since learning disabilities vary so much from person to person, be sure to ask how the learning disability affects that person.
2. People with learning disabilities have average or above average intelligence. A possible indication that a person has a learning disability is when he or she does not perform in a way that is consistent with his or her intelligence.
3. Often, a person with a learning disability is very creative and develops unique and innovative methods of analyzing situations and issues.
4. Relate to a person on the basis of his or her strengths rather than weaknesses. Assign work that utilizes those strengths.
5. People who have a perceptual learning disability have difficulty receiving information through their senses. This includes auditory, tactile, and visual perception. Using multiple senses, such as reading and listening to what is being read out loud is often helpful.
6. People with academic-type learning disabilities may have trouble reading or writing and prefer to tape record information or directions. Talking devices, such as computers and calculators are also useful. This includes dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and dyslexia.
7. People with auditory learning disabilities may request that information be clarified or repeated. Written instructions or directions are helpful. Using short sentences, clear enunciation, demonstrations or both may be useful. People with this type of disability often need to work in quiet surroundings.
8. People with motor learning disabilities experience difficulty when their muscles react differently than expected to brain signals, resulting in a lack of coordination. Repetition helps to lessen coordination problems.
9. People with perceptual learning disabilities have difficulty with accuracy. They may reverse numbers and place words or numbers in the wrong spaces on a form. Therefore, people with this type of disability may need their material checked for grammar and word or number reversal.
10. People sensitive to tactile stimulation may not like being touched by others, including shaking hands. They also may have trouble judging the amount of pressure they exert in such actions as holding objects.
11. People with visual perceptual learning disabilities may have difficulty in finding objects; or they may lose them frequently. Sometimes people with this disability might color code files, etc., for easy identification.
12. People with learning disabilities must discover their own personal coping mechanisms to accommodate their specific learning disability. But be prepared to provide support wherever possible.
13. Be thorough, direct, and specific in communication.
14. If inappropriate behavior is observed or reported, it is important to tell the person what behavior is inappropriate and what changes need to be made.

Individuals with Physical Disabilities

1. When walking with a person who walks slower than you, walk with the person, not in front of them.
2. Provide the person with clear directions to a meeting site using the shortest and easiest route.
3. If a person falls or is off balance, simply offer assistance. A natural tendency is to overreact, but you need not be overprotective of a person with a mobility impairment.
4. Be aware of obstacles, including floor or ground surfaces, that might be present in a room or location that would inhibit the movements of people.
5. Be prepared to ‘shake’ what is offered to you. This could be a disabled right hand, a prosthetic, a stump, or even their left hand.
Little People

1. Use the term "little person" or "small stature" avoid the terms dwarf or midget.
2. Do not treat the person as a child. Size does not reflect age.
3. Do not be afraid to ask if the person needs assistance in reaching something.
4. Sit or bend to talk with the person; this eliminates the need for them to always look up.

People Who Are Mentally Restored

Mental illness can be successfully treated, and people who are mentally restored have skills, experiences, and abilities that are not affected by their illness. For the purposes of employment, a person who is mentally restored is one who has experienced a mental or emotional difficulty that currently is under control to the extent that the individual is able to function effectively and satisfactorily in a specific job. The qualifications of people who are mentally restored must be given the same consideration as those of other applicants.

1. Talk to the individual as you would to anyone else.
2. Through your demeanor, show that you trust the individual's ability to control their behavior.

Individuals with Cerebral Palsy (or other muscular or neurological limitations)

Cerebral palsy may affect motor ability and/or speech. It does not affect intelligence. Unless the person is very severely disabled, or has the involvement of other disabilities, no accommodation may be needed for the interview itself. On the job pathways need to be kept clear, and the person may require their desktop to be reorganized so items can be easily accessed. Depending on the needs of the individual, some minor adjustments (hardware &/or software) may be necessary.

Cerebral palsy may affect an individual's motor ability and/or speech, but it does not affect intelligence.

1. The severity and functional effects of the disability vary from person to person. Some involuntary or halting movement or limitation of movement in one or more than one appendage may be observed, as well as some lisping, indistinct speech or flatness of tone due to lack of fine motor control and lips.
2. If the applicant's speech is difficult to understand, do not hesitate to ask the applicant to repeat him or her self. It benefits no one to pretend you understand when you do not.
3. Some people who have severe cerebral palsy communicate more effectively by writing, typing, or using communication boards or electronic devices. If this is the case, the person with a disability may not mind having his or her sentences finished by you in order to save time and energy. It is very important, though, to confirm this before doing it.
4. Repeat the information provided by the person so that he or she can tell you whether you understood what was said and meant.

Individuals with Intellectual or Cognitive Disabilities

Many people with intellectual or cognitive disabilities (also called Developmentally Delayed Learners (DDL)) have average or superior abilities in some respects. While it is true that some people who are DDL may not be able to think, figure, or remember as well as other people, it is important to remember that they are proficient in some ways and deficient in others.

People who have intellectual or cognitive disabilities usually want to be independent and responsible for their own support. One of the largest obstacles to equal employment opportunity for these individuals is persistent lack of employer confidence in, and lowered expectations of, their capabilities.

1. Intellectual or cognitive disabilities should not be confused with mental illness or behavioral and emotional problems. The effect of the disability can be lessened, and skills and abilities increased, through rehabilitation, special education, and experience on the job.
2. Talk to the individual as you would to anyone else, but be very specific. Break down tasks into component parts.
3. Occasionally ask the person if they are understanding you. Have them relay the meaning of your words and ideas for confirmation.
Adapted from: The President’s Committee on Employment of People With Disabilities and People With and Without Disabilities: Interacting and Communicating: NASA/Goddard Space Flight Center

Myths and Facts About People with Disabilities

Everybody's fighting some kind of stereotype, and people with disabilities are no exception. The difference is that barriers people with disabilities face begin with people’s attitudes — attitudes often rooted in misinformation and misunderstandings about what it’s like to live with a disability.

**Myth 1:** People with disabilities are brave and courageous.
Fact: Adjusting to a disability requires adapting to a lifestyle, not bravery and courage.

**Myth 2:** All persons who use wheelchairs are chronically ill or sickly.
Fact: The association between wheelchair use and illness may have evolved through hospitals using wheelchairs to transport sick people. A person may use a wheelchair for a variety of reasons, none of which may have anything to do with lingering illness.

**Myth 3:** Wheelchair use is confining; people who use wheelchairs are "wheelchair-bound."
Fact: A wheelchair, like a bicycle or an automobile, is a personal assistive device that enables someone to get around.

**Myth 4:** All persons with hearing disabilities can read lips.
Fact: Lip-reading skills vary among people who use them and are never entirely reliable.

**Myth 5:** People who are blind acquire a "sixth sense."
Fact: Although most people who are blind develop their remaining senses more fully, they do not have a "sixth sense."

**Myth 6:** People with disabilities are more comfortable with "their own kind."
Fact: In the past, grouping people with disabilities in separate schools and institutions reinforced this misconception. Today, many people with disabilities take advantage of new opportunities to join mainstream society.

**Myth 7:** Non-disabled people are obligated to "take care of" people with disabilities.
Fact: Anyone may offer assistance, but most people with disabilities prefer to be responsible for themselves.

**Myth 8:** Curious children should never ask people about their disabilities.
Fact: Many children have a natural, uninhibited curiosity and may ask questions that some adults consider embarrassing. But scolding curious children may make them think having a disability is "wrong" or "bad." Most people with disabilities won't mind answering a child's question.

**Myth 9:** The lives of people with disabilities are totally different than the lives of people without disabilities.
Fact: People with disabilities go to school, get married, work, have families, do laundry, grocery shop, laugh, cry, pay taxes, get angry, have prejudices, vote, plan and dream like everyone else.

**Myth 10:** It is all right for people without disabilities to park in accessible parking spaces, if only for a few minutes.
Fact: Because accessible parking spaces are designed and situated to meet the needs of people who have disabilities, these spaces should only be used by people who need them.
Myth 11: Most people with disabilities do not think about having a special relationship with the opposite sex.
Fact: Anyone can have a special, meaningful relationship. People with disabilities, like other people, look for that “special” someone to share their life with.

Myth 12: People with disabilities always need help.
Fact: Many people with disabilities are independent and capable of giving help. If you would like to help someone with a disability, ask if he or she needs it before you act.

Myth 13: There is nothing one person can do to help eliminate the barriers confronting people with disabilities.
Fact: Everyone can contribute to change. You can help remove barriers by:

- Understanding the need for accessible parking and leaving it for those who need it
- Encouraging participation of people with disabilities in community activities by using accessible meeting and event sites
- Understanding children’s curiosity about disabilities and people who have them
- Advocating a barrier-free environment
- Speaking up when negative words or phrases are used about disability
- Writing producers and editors a note of support when they portray someone with a disability as a “regular person” in the media
- Accepting people with disabilities as individuals capable of the same needs and feelings as yourself, and hiring qualified disabled persons whenever possible

For More Information Contact The Arc of the Mid Ohio Valley

Devoted to promoting the well-being of and ensuring a satisfying and productive life for our citizens with cognitive, intellectual, and related developmental disabilities by encouraging, assisting, and empowering them to live, work, worship, learn and play in their community.

Liz Ford, Executive Director
304-422-3151, ext. 106
liz.ford@thearcmov.org

912 Market Street, Parkersburg, WV 26101
304-422-3151, ext. 106 / www.thearcmov.org / info@thearcmov.org