

West Virginia
Developmental Disabilities Council

Policy on People First Language
Approved 10/10/95

1. Purpose

- A. The Council seeks to actively portray people with developmental disabilities in a positive and productive manner. Such positive portrayal in all written and spoken forms of communication serves to enhance the image of people with developmental disabilities. The Council recognizes that the use of "People First Language" is an effective method to portray people with developmental disabilities in such a manner.
- B. This policy intends to assure that all forms of communication created by the Council, both written and spoken, shall use "People First Language."

2. Requirements

- A. All Council-produced documents, publications, reports, press releases, correspondence and other forms of written communication shall use "People First Language."
- B. Council members and staff shall use "People First Language" when representing the Council in any matter. This shall include any presentations, meetings, public hearings, on site reviews, discussion and other forms of spoken communication.
- C. All Council meetings, including committee meetings, shall be conducted using "People First Language."
- D. All Council-funded projects, their activities, products, materials, and other forms of communication shall use "People First Language."

3. Definitions

"People First Language" is the practice of referring to the person first rather than the disability first. For example it would be correct to say a *student with a developmental disability* rather than a *developmentally disabled student*. Putting the person first places the focus on the person, rather than the disability. This is also true when referring to groups of people.