



A Pledge of Respect for Students with Disabilities

All students, especially students with disabilities, have the right to dignity and respect. The Americans with Disabilities Act states that “Americans with disabilities... are entitled to the same rights and freedoms as everybody else: a right to belong and participate fully in the American experience; a right to dignity and respect in the workplace and beyond...” Students with disabilities have a right to be respected as a whole person and not be judged by just their disability.

To ensure this right of respect, I will use respectful language in the form of person-first terminology in my communications. I pledge to:

- ❖ Place the student first before the disability
 - *A child with autism*, instead of *an autistic child*
- ❖ Place groups of students first before the disability
 - *Students in special education*, instead of *special education students*
- ❖ Use respectful terms when referring to peer groups
 - *Students without disabilities* instead of *typical students*
- ❖ Model back person-first terminology when others do not use it
 - When someone says, “*special education students...*” just continue the conversation by modeling back, “*yes.... students in special education...*”
- ❖ Inform others about person-first terminology
- ❖ Remember that changing the way we speak is a process and takes time

For more information about person-first terminology, please contact the Inclusion Collaborative at (408) 453-6756 or visit www.inclusioncollaborative.org

Please fax to 408-453-6596

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