



COMMUNITY VOICES



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WE SHOULD ALL USE 'PERSON-FIRST' TERMINOLOGY...

## WE SHOULD ALL USE 'PERSON-FIRST' TERMINOLOGY...

What is Person- First Terminology? Well, in short, the practice places the person before a label. For example, say "a boy with autism" instead of "an autistic boy."

This simple but significant change acknowledges that a person has qualities beyond a disability. It also recognizes that terminology has the dual ability to empower, or reinforce stereotypes and misconceptions.

Federal, state, and local Santa Clara County agencies have started to recognize that terminology can influence perception and are using Person First Terminology and Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) has decided to take the lead.

Recognizing the impacts of language and that a disability is just one characteristic of a person, SCCOE is adopting the Person First Terminology policy and is hoping to act as an agent of change for the equity, acceptance, and respect for people with disabilities for, not only the 31 districts in this county, but also for the cities, agencies, and community of Santa Clara County.

"This policy aligns with SCCOE's goal to be a central and active leader and voice on critical education issues," said Janice Battaglia, Director of the Inclusion Collaborative, a Santa Clara County Office of Education program that works to ensure children with special needs receive the same educational opportunities as other children.

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