



Neuroaffirming Disability Language Guide

Respectful Language • Supports Inclusion • Centers Dignity

Instead of...

- ✗ Suffers from autism
- ✗ Afflicted with ADHD
- ✗ Non-compliant / Defiant
- ✗ Tantrum / Meltdown (used dismissively)
- ✗ Refuses to participate
- ✗ Not trying
- ✗ Low functioning / High functioning
- ✗ Too sensitive / Overreacting
- ✗ Wheelchair bound
Confined to a wheelchair
- ✗ Special needs
Problem child
- ✗ Normal kids / people

Use...

- ✓ Autistic person or Person with autism
- ✓ Person with ADHD
ADHD brain
- ✓ Needs support
Having difficulty with this task
- ✓ Experiencing overwhelm
Sensory or emotional overload
- ✓ Participation looks different
Needs alternative ways to engage
- ✓ Higher support needs
Uses communication supports
- ✓ Experiencing sensory overload
Needs sensory adjustments
- ✓ Wheelchair user
Uses a wheelchair
- ✓ Child with a disability
Neurodivergent child



Key Principle:

Follow the preference of the individual or community.

Focus on **support**, not **pathology**.