

Should I say "autistic person"? or "person with autism"?

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Editors Note: I personally think we should be allowed to say autistic child, disabled person etc rather than person with a disability which just sounds cumbersome. We have other articles on the site about the language of disability.

My seven-year-old niece recently received her paper diagnosis. To welcome her into her newly-recognized autistic family, I enlisted the community's help. We put together a book of welcoming messages, artwork, and short informational articles she could use to learn more about what it means to be, not only autistic, but capital-A Autistic.

This is the third of the three short essays I included.

Should I Say "Autistic Person" or "Person With Autism"?

When some people talk about autistic people, they say "autistic people." Others say "people with autism." Sometimes, these two groups of people argue over which is the "right" thing to say.

Lots of autistic people prefer "autistic person" to "person with autism." For them, their autistic brain is a part of them. It's not something that was added on or that they just put on in the mornings, the way you might put on a blue shirt. They want others to notice that their brain is a *special* part of who they are and an *okay* part of who they are.

Many doctors, teachers, and counselors prefer "person with autism." They feel that it is more respectful to mention the word "person" first. They want to emphasize that being a *person* is what makes someone special and okay, whether or not they have autism.

You can choose whether you want to use "autistic person" or "person with autism" when you talk about yourself. You can also change your mind!

When you meet other autistic people, the polite thing

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English

