

## **BASIC DISABILITY ETIQUETTE**

- It is appropriate to shake hands with a person who has a disability even if they have limited use of their hands.
- When talking with a person who has a disability, speak directly to that person rather than to a companion or interpreter.
- Ignore guide dogs or other service animals. Don't pet them, they are working.
- When offering help, wait until the offer is accepted. Make sure to listen or ask for instructions.
- When greeting a person with a vision disability, always identify yourself and anyone else that is with you. Ask, "Shall we shake hands?" Let the person know when you are leaving or exiting the conversation.
- Don't worry about common phrases such as "See ya later," or "Gotta run."
- Treat adults as adults. You may choose to use simple language depending upon the situation. However, do not use childish language.
- Do not patronize people who are in wheelchairs by patting them on the head or shoulder. Do not lean on the wheelchair.
- To get the attention of a person who is deaf, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand.
- Do not assume that all people who are deaf can read lips. However, if he/she can read lips, speak slowly and clearly without exaggerating your lip movements.
- Give your undivided attention to someone who has difficulty speaking. Ask short questions which require short answers. Wait for the person to finish their answer and do not cut them off.
- When speaking to someone in a wheelchair, sit down or kneel in place if possible to place yourself at his or her eye level.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions when you are unsure of what to do.