

## New guidance aims to promote inclusive language in AAP communications

May 21, 2021

Article type: [News](#)

Topics: [Advocacy](#), [Diversity, equity and inclusion](#)

Guidance on the use of anti-biased, inclusive language in AAP content has been developed by the AAP Board Committee on Equity and approved by the full Board. Called Words Matter, the document addresses gender, gender identity and sexual orientation; race and ethnicity; disability and other general considerations.



The guidance will help contributors in the development of AAP content, such as documents and communications. However, it is not intended to be a single authoritative source for specific terminology.

“Every effort should be made to determine what is most appropriate for the topic, type and purpose of the communication,” the guidance states. “...Content creators should consider the target audience when choosing language and framing and, when possible, consult with impacted individuals and groups to ask how they wish to be identified.”

The genesis for the guidance came about while the AAP Board Committee on Equity was developing action steps for the Academy’s Equity Agenda Year 1 Workplan, said committee Chair and Board member Wendy S. Davis, M.D., FAAP. “The committee identified working to assure the incorporation of inclusive and anti-biased language in written and spoken AAP content as a high priority.

“While excellent internal and external resources exist, we saw an opportunity to amplify this guidance for content creators by providing a framework that — rather than prescribing specific words — supports thoughtful consideration of choosing language that most effectively promotes equity, diversity and inclusion for our members and the patients and families that we serve,” Dr. Davis explained.

The guidance also includes strategies to make content more inclusive, such as use of strength-based and person-first language, and avoiding terms that obscure meaning, like vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Informed by a diverse array of sources, the guidance will be updated to reflect evolving vocabulary.

“We hope the document will also be a tool that helps pediatricians create linguistically and culturally safe and effective medical homes, reflecting one of the key clinical practice goals of the Year 1 Workplan,” Dr. Davis said.

The use of inclusive, anti-biased language is consistent with the [AAP Diversity and Inclusion Statement](#), and supports the [AAP Equity Agenda](#).

The Words Matter guidance can be found at <https://bit.ly/3uK8pe6>.

