

“We want others to know that we are people first and our disabilities come second.”

WHAT IS PEOPLE FIRST?

We are people with developmentally disabilities joining together to learn how to speak for ourselves. We live in foster homes, our parent’s homes, group homes and our own apartments. We go to school; we work in sheltered workshops and in community businesses.

DO WE REALLY WANT TO SPEAK FOR OURSELVES?

YES! We believe that if we can learn to talk at our meetings and among ourselves, we can learn to talk to anyone about things that are important to us. We talk to our families, our services providers, our case workers, to city councils and mayors. We talk to legislators and legislative committees, to our governors and even the President. Even though it may be hard to understand us sometimes, people listen to us because we know what we are talking about.

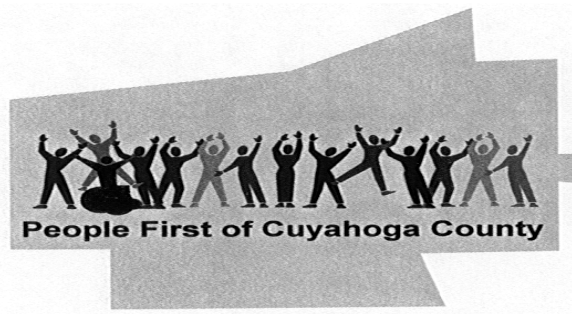
WHAT ARE OUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES?

People First members stand up for their rights. But we have also learned that we have to be responsible and act responsibly to exercise our rights. We help other members when they are having problems, to help them solve problems in a responsible way.

WHAT CAN WE TEACH THE COMMUNITY THAT WE LIVE IN?

We can teach the community that we can do things that they never thought we could. We are teaching communities that we can learn and that we know what is going on around us. We can vote, ride busses by ourselves, get married, have a job and do the same things everyone else does.





AS AN ADVOCATE WE:

- Work for change and make things happen
- Stay well informed
- Help others to make their own choices and take control of their own lives
- Stand by the decisions of the person for whom he is advocating
- Help people say what they want and make sure they are heard and answered
- Try to make sure people have the opportunity to be included in their community
- Enlist the support of others
- Help others develop decision making skills
- Develop a clear vision of what needs to happen
- Identify the people who have power to make changes happen

*** People First is a nation wide self-advocacy movement that gives individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities the training to build skills in decision making and choosing wisely so they can advocate for themselves and preserve their rights. Individuals gain greater independence and participation in the community. People First Meetings are held the third Monday of each month at the Independence Civic Center March thru December. Please call the People First Help-line at The Arc for information and to register at 216-736.8395. Please leave your name, address and phone number.**