



**PATHS**  
for Parents with ID

Providing Accessible Training  
and Home Support

## Plain Language

Plain language is communication your audience can understand the first time they read or hear it.

**First rule of Plain Language: Write for your audience**



### General Guidelines:

- **Use short, simple words**
- **Use the same term consistently**
- Choose “baby” or “infant”
- **Remove unnecessary words** (example on back)
- **Address one person, not a group** (example on back)
- **Use active voice** (example on back)
- **Use contractions where they sound natural**
- **Provide examples**
- **Use lists** (replace a paragraph with bullet points)

Federal Plain Language Guidelines:  
[www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov)

## Use Active Voice

Passive Voice	Active Voice
Social behaviors are learned by children through observation and interaction with peers	Children learn social behaviors through observation and interaction with peers
Confidence is built in children when they receive positive feedback	Children build confidence when they receive positive feedback

## Address One Person, Not a Group

Don't Say	Say Instead
Babies' sleep patterns change frequently	Your baby's sleep patterns will change frequently
When parents understand their infant's cues, it helps create a strong bond	When you understand your infant's cues, it helps create a strong bond

## Remove Unnecessary Words

Don't Say	Say Instead
a number of	several, a few, many
is able to	can
be responsible for	must
on a monthly basis	monthly
in order to	to
at this point in time	now
in the event of	if