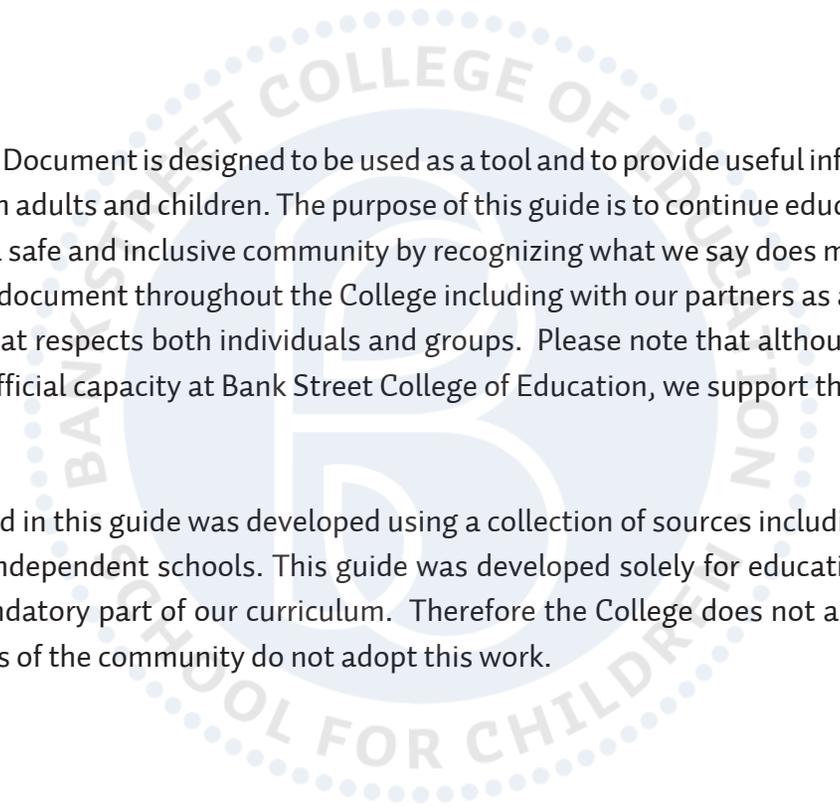




LANGUAGE VALUES AT BANK STREET

The logo is a circular seal with a dotted border. Inside the border, the text "BANK STREET COLLEGE OF EDUCATION" is written in an arc at the top, and "SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN" is written in an arc at the bottom. In the center of the seal is a large, stylized letter "B".

The Language Values Document is designed to be used as a tool and to provide useful information on our daily interactions with both adults and children. The purpose of this guide is to continue educating our community toward maintaining a safe and inclusive community by recognizing what we say does matter. This guide will be used as a support document throughout the College including with our partners as a way for us to have a common language that respects both individuals and groups. Please note that although this guide has not been adopted in an official capacity at Bank Street College of Education, we support the mission and goal of this work.

The information found in this guide was developed using a collection of sources including work produced by colleagues at other independent schools. This guide was developed solely for educational purposes and is not an official or mandatory part of our curriculum. Therefore the College does not assume any liability in cases where members of the community do not adopt this work.

In our interactions with each other as adults and with children, what we say matters. At the Bank Street School for Children, we have developed the following guidelines for the purposes of ensuring a safe and inclusive community for all individuals and groups of people. We use these guidelines as a tool for professional development, parent education, and orienting visiting educators, artists, and authors who spend time with our children.

Here are guidelines for language use within our community.

Remember:

- Use language that is free of assumptions about people.
- Take care of mistakes that happen.
- Children and adults are in charge of the language and terms they use to identify themselves. And these decisions can change.

This booklet provides language guidelines for gender, family structure, sexual orientation, culture, ability, religion, and socioeconomics. The goal is to shift our default language when addressing people we don't know and larger groups of people so that our language is inclusive as possible. Since language is always changing, this document will be modified periodically.

GENDER

Human beings exist along a gender-identity continuum. At Bank Street, we use inclusive language that values gender diversity.

Instead of...	Say...
Boys and girls, ladies and gentlemen, miss or mister	9/10s, folks, people, Room 206... Readers, writers, dramatic players, scientists, mathematicians, community members, campers
You guys	You, you all, y'all
"he or she"	they
(When reading a book) The girl / the boy on this page...	The child, kid, person, friend...
Sweetheart, handsome, beautiful	The child's name, you, the person in the blue shirt
Using a boy girl pattern to seat, line students up, etc.	Find other ways to group students (such as by shoes or sandals, patterns on clothing, etc.) or make line/seat spots, calling on students by table, by interest, numbers
"tomboy"	"a girl in my class who likes to play [insert sport]" (describe what the girls does, rather than using the label 'tomboy')
mailman, fireman, caveman	mail carrier, firefighter, cave dweller
complimenting appearance	"Tell me why that dress is special to you" "you look so happy today" "I can see that you are very excited about your new hair cut". "I bet you can run really fast in those new sneakers"
lining up for swim - girls and boys	"if you use the girl's locker room...", "if you use the boy's locker room...", "if you get ready with Mr. Jones" "if you get ready with Ms. Sams..."
"boy things" / "girl things"	"kids' things," there are no boy or girl things Or just name the things--"playing with trucks, or superheroes, or dolls..."

FAMILIES

Families are formed and structured in many ways. At Bank Street, we use inclusive language that reflects this human diversity.

Instead of...	Say...
mom and dad	grownups at home, your family
parents	parents and guardians (with older students) grownups (with younger students)
nanny, babysitter	caregiver
is adopted	was adopted

SEXUAL ORIENTATION

Human beings exist along a sexual-orientation continuum. At Bank Street, we use inclusive language that values sexual-orientation diversity.

Don't make assumptions about heteronormativity, i.e., boys have or want girlfriends, girls have or want boyfriends. Avoid phrases like, "Ladies' man," "Boys will love those eyelashes," or "Your mom and dad must be so proud."

People get to love who they want to love.

If you are not sure about what language to use, you can ask:

- "What do you call the person you are with?"

Work to avoid making assumptions about how adults identify themselves in the present or how children might identify themselves in the future. Sexuality can be fluid along the course of a person's life.

CULTURE

People have cultural ties that are familial and personal. At Bank Street, we use language free of stereotypes as we engage in conversation that touches on culture.

Instead of...	Say...
A person is a minority (in regards to race/ethnicity)	They are a person of color (if they identify as such).
What are you? Where are you from? Where are you really from?	What is your cultural background?

BEING ABLE

People have different learning styles, needs, and abilities. At Bank Street, we use language free of stereotypes as we engage in conversation that touches on ability.

Instead of...	Say...
A person is learning disabled	A person has a learning difference.
A person is handicapped (physically)	A person has a physical disability or is someone living with a physical disability.
A person is ADHD	A person has ADHD.
A person is blind	A person is visually impaired.

In general, we like to speak about different abilities in terms of what individuals benefit from in order to be their best selves. Everyone, even people with no disabilities at all, benefits from some sort of support to be more successful.

- If someone wants to talk about how someone in their life other than themselves has or is living with a disability, that person can say they are “affected by” the disability.
- Someone with an intellectual disability (down syndrome, cerebral palsy, etc.) is someone who benefits from support to be successful in their daily routines/tasks.

- Someone with a learning disability/difference is someone who benefits from support in their learning/ organization.
- Someone who benefits from support to hear better is hard of hearing, someone who doesn't need support is hearing.
- Sign language is a language just like English and Spanish, so both hearing and deaf people can speak it!

RELIGION

At Bank Street, we use language free of assumptions as we engage in conversation that touches on religion. As a guiding framework, it may be helpful to say, "Some people believe in a god or many gods and some people do not believe in any god."

Instead of...	Say...
What religion are you?	What does your family celebrate?
What did you get for Christmas/ Hannukah [or any religious holiday]?	What did you do over break?
Happy Holidays!	Have a great break!

SOCIOECONOMICS

At Bank Street, we use language free of assumptions as we engage in conversations that touch on socioeconomics.

Instead of...	Say...
Where did you go for break?	What was a meaningful interaction from your break? Name something you learned over break?
Everyone has the [insert item].	Some people have the [insert item] or Not everyone has the [insert item]
Saying or implying that public schools are bad and private schools are good...	There are many school options open to students and families. We can't make assumptions about a school that we do not attend.

