

[http://www.lpaonline.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=74:faq-&catid=19:site-content&Itemid=113](http://www.lpaonline.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=74:faq-&catid=19:site-content&Itemid=113)

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***Q: What is a midget?***

A: In some circles, a midget is the term used for a proportionate dwarf. However, the term has fallen into disfavor and is considered offensive by most people of short stature. The term dates back to 1865, the height of the "freak show" era, and was generally applied only to short-statured persons who were displayed for public amusement, which is why it is considered so unacceptable today.

Such terms as dwarf, little person, LP, and person of short stature are all acceptable, but most people would rather be referred to by their name than by a label.

[http://www.lpaonline.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=198:the\\_m\\_word&catid=19:site-content&Itemid=176](http://www.lpaonline.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=198:the_m_word&catid=19:site-content&Itemid=176)

## **LPA issues statement to abolish the "m" word September 2015**

Little People of America, the world's oldest and largest dwarfism support organization and an international, membership-based organization for people with dwarfism and their families, advocates to abolish the use of the word "midget". The word "midget" was never coined as the official term to identify people with dwarfism, but was created as a label used to refer to people of short stature who were on public display for curiosity and sport. Today, the word "midget" is considered a derogatory slur. The dwarfism community has voiced that they prefer to be referred to as dwarfs, little people, people of short stature or having dwarfism, or simply, and most preferably, by their given name.

When we surveyed our community about the usage and overall impact of the word "midget", over 90% of our members surveyed stated that the word should never be used in reference to a person with dwarfism. As an advocacy organization, our charge is to take the lead in providing accurate and current information to the public when the "m" word is used erroneously, and often carelessly, as a description of a person with dwarfism. Whether the intention of the user of the word is used to bully and to demean, or just as a synonym for small, our collective experience shows us that language has the power to cause permanent damage to one's self-esteem and identity.

We have made great strides in our advocacy with effective results. For example, major media venues, like the New York Times, have stopped using the term "midget" to refer to people with dwarfism. Over the years, LPA has educated politicians, sports figures and people in the entertainment industry regarding the improper and hurtful use of this word. Further, we have been in contact with schools around the country whose sports teams and/or mascots have the word "midget" in their names, encouraging them to change it. The word "midget" in use today has a negative, degrading, and mean-spirited feel and identity.

LPA can provide further educational materials about the history of the word "midget" and its evolution, advocacy resources, and support for you to help in the effort to remove "midget" from the everyday vernacular. Our collaborative efforts will put the word "midget" into permanent

retirement, and have it join the ranks of other antiquated and hurtful terms that are not used anymore.

### **LPA and the USDA**

The board and the membership of Little People of America (LPA), the world's oldest and largest dwarfism support organization for people with dwarfism and their families, is strongly in favor of the Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) of the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) proposal to revise the United States Standards for Grades of Processed Raisins by removing five references to the term "midget" throughout the standards. On May 13, 2013, AMS received a letter from the Little People of America stating that we "are trying to raise awareness around and eliminate the use of the word 'midget'." The letter further stated that, "Though the use of the word midget by the USDA when classifying certain food products is benign, Little People of America, and the dwarfism community, hopes that the USDA would consider phasing out the term midget." We are thankful that the USDA considered and listened to this important request.

The word "midget" is used as a derogatory slur to refer to people of short stature. Whether or not the intention of using the word is to bully and to demean, or just as a synonym for small, the term has been deemed a slur by those within the community and should be eliminated accordingly. In a recent organizational statement, LPA put forward a call to action to abolish the word from the everyday nomenclature and to replace it with synonymous designations when necessary. The proposal by the AMS supports this call and is a model for other entities that use the word "midget" as a designation to consider changing this language.

### **LPA Fights M-Word Usage**

Little People of America (LPA) is aware of and is troubled by the statement made by Cincinnati Bengals Head Coach Marvin Lewis, referring to The Cleveland Browns Quarterback Johnny Manziel as a "midget" on Monday, December 9th, 2014. The word "midget" is considered by Little People of America to be an antiquated slang term and is most often used in a derogatory manner toward a shorter than average person, or specifically, a person with a diagnosable skeletal dysplasia or medical condition. The word 'midget' has been sometimes used to refer to people of short stature, but is now considered to be a slur by the majority of the members of our community. Many feel that the term dehumanizes and objectifies those with dwarfism. LPA has been actively working to get the word taken out of society's vernacular, where it is often used carelessly and without regard to who else it may affect.

As an advocacy organization for people with dwarfism, LPA has made it one of its charges to educate people about respectful ways to refer to people of short stature, emphasizing that the word midget is not appropriate because of its insulting connotation. We are glad that Mr. Lewis publicly apologized about his "poor remark," and are pleased that he extended the apology to the dwarfism community. We believe that this acknowledgment supports us in raising awareness of how unfortunate word choice can so easily demean.

LPA would also like to recognize Michael David Smith of Pro Football Talk, who quickly responded to the comment and directed his audience to the stance taken by our organization about the use of this word. We thank Smith, and other allies who are raising awareness about dwarfism and language.

Read the article on Salon.com entitled "Who are you calling a 'midget'?"

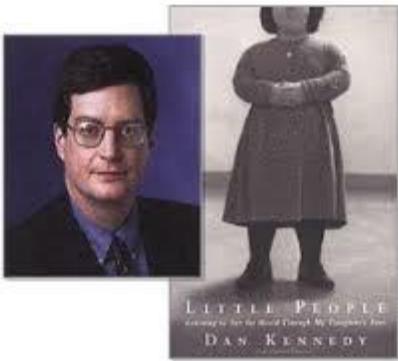
<http://www.salon.com/search/?q=midget>



[Who you calling a “midget”? - Salon.com](#)

Jul 16, 2009 ... The resulting video, starring motorcycle maven Jesse James and titled “Jesse James Gets Dirty With *Midgets*,” features three very short actors ...

[www.salon.com/2009/07/16/m\\_word/](http://www.salon.com/2009/07/16/m_word/)



[Little people - Salon.com](#)

Dec 16, 2003 ... The word “*midget*” — a made-up word dating only to the 1860s — is considered offensive by most people in the dwarf community today, ...

[www.salon.com/2003/12/17/little\\_people/](http://www.salon.com/2003/12/17/little_people/)