Basic Points of Etiquette...

1. Avoid asking personal questions about some one's disability. If you must ask, be sensitive and show respect. Do not probe, if the person declines to discuss it.
2. Be considerate of the extra time it might take for a person with a disability to do or say something.
3. Be polite and patient when offering assistance, and wait until your offer is accepted. Listen or ask for specific instructions.
4. When planning a meeting or other event, try to anticipate specific accommodations a person with a disability might need. If a barrier cannot be avoided, let the person know ahead of time.
5. Be respectful of the rights of people with disabilities to use accessible parking spaces.

When speaking or writing about disability...

1. Refer to a person's disability only when necessary and appropriate.
2. Use people first language-- refer to the individual first, then to his or her disability. *(It is better to say "the person with a disability," rather than "the disabled person.")*
3. The following terms should be avoided in a disability context, because they disempower people or have negative meanings:
   - invalid
   - able-bodied
   - wheelchair-bound
   - victim
   - crippled
   - defect
   - suffers from
   - handicapped
4. Avoid terms that imply that people with disabilities are overly courageous, brave, special, or superhuman.

When meeting and talking with a person who has a disability...

1. A handshake is NOT a standard greeting for everyone. When in doubt, ASK the person whether he or she would like to shake hands with you. A smile along with a spoken greeting is always appropriate.
2. Speak directly to the person with a disability, not just to the ones accompanying him or her.
3. Don't mention the person's disability, unless he or she talks about it or it is relevant to the conversation.
4. Treat adults as adults. Don't patronize or talk down to people with disabilities.
5. Be patient and give your undivided attention, especially with someone who speaks slowly or with great effort.
6. Never pretend to understand what a person is saying. Ask the person to repeat or rephrase, or offer him or her pen and paper.
7. It is okay to use common expressions like "see you soon" or "I'd better be running along."
8. Relax. Anyone can make mistakes. Offer an apology if you forget some courtesy. Keep a sense of humor and a willingness to communicate.

When meeting someone with a disability that affects learning, intelligence, or brain function.

1. Keep your communication simple. Rephrase comments or questions for better clarity.
2. Stay focused on the person as he or she responds to you.
3. Allow the person time to tell or show you what he or she wants.

When you are with a person who uses a wheelchair...

1. Do not push, lean on, or hold onto a person's wheelchair unless the person asks you to. The wheelchair is part of his or her personal space.
2. Try to put yourself at eye level when talking with someone in a wheelchair. Sit or kneel in front of the person.
3. Rearrange furniture or objects to accommodate a wheelchair before the person arrives.
4. Offer to tell where accessible rest rooms, telephones, and water fountains are located.
5. When giving directions to a person in a wheelchair, consider distance, weather conditions, and physical obstacles (curbs, stairs, steep hills, etc.)

Talking with a person who is deaf or uses a hearing aid...

1. Let the person take the lead in establishing the communication mode, such as lip-reading, sign language, or writing notes.
2. Talk directly to the person, even when a sign language interpreter is present.
3. If the person lip-reads, face him or her directly, speak clearly and with a moderate pace.
4. With some people, it may help to simplify your sentences and use more facial expressions and body language.
When meeting a person with a disability that affects speech...

1. Pay attention, be patient, and wait for the person to complete a word or thought. Do not finish it for the person.
2. Ask the person to repeat what is said, if you do not understand. Tell the person what you heard and see if it is close to what he or she is saying.
3. Be prepared for various devices or techniques used to enhance or augment speech. Don’t be afraid to communicate with someone who uses an alphabet board or a computer with synthesized speech.

Interacting with a person who is blind or has a disability that affects sight or vision...

Adapted from http://www.disabledperson.com/articles/etiquette.asp