

The F-Words and Individual Education Plans

The F-Words of Childhood Disability:

Function, Family, Fitness, Fun, Friends and Future

The Six F-Words for Childhood Disability

1



FUNCTION

I might do things differently but I CAN do them. How I do it is not important. Please let me try!



2 FAMILY

They know me best and I trust them to do what's best for me. Listen to them. Talk to them. Hear them. Respect them.

3



FITNESS

Everyone needs to stay fit and healthy, including me. Help me find ways to keep fit.



4 FRIENDS

Having childhood friends is important. Please give me opportunities to make friends with my peers.

5



FUN

Childhood is about fun and play. This is how I learn and grow. Please help me do the activities that I find the most fun.



6 FUTURE

I will grow up one day, so please find ways for me to develop independence and be included in my community.

CanChild Centre for Childhood Disability Research published a breakthrough research paper entitled “The ‘F-words’ in Childhood Disability: I swear this is how we should think!” redefining how we talk about kids with disabilities. Inspired by more than two decades of CanChild research and continual discussion amongst members of the CanChild family, the paper introduced six essential “F-words” that Gorter and Rosenbaum believed should be the focus in childhood disability. These important, new ideas about health and childhood disability demonstrated the need for expansion of our thinking in “Function,” “Family,” “Fitness,” “Fun,” “Friends,” and “Future.”

- **Function:** refers to what people do such as body functionalities and how things get done; synonyms include “role,” “job,” “task,” (for children, “play” is their “work”).
- **Family:** represents the essential “environment” of all children.
- **Fitness:** refers to how children stay physically active including exercise and other recreational opportunities.
- **Fun:** includes particular activities children enjoy participating and involving themselves in.
- **Friends:** refers to the friendships established with peers – social development is an essential aspect of personhood.
- **Future:** is what child development is all about. It refers to parents and children’s expectations and dreams for their future.

The “F-words” build upon the World Health Organizations (WHO’s) International Classification of Functioning, Disability, and Health (ICF) framework. The ICF framework shows how body structure and function, activity, participation, environmental factors, and personal factors are interrelated and equally influence our health and functioning. This holistic approach encourages us to focus on elements that

are important to all children's development incorporating their participation, activities, and environment.

Since 2012, the "F-Words" have become widely used to support children with disabilities. They move professionals away from the traditional health approach to "fix the child" to a whole approach that considers all of the child's strengths and needs. This initiative leads to a plan that focuses on the child and family context while integrating the services of multiple professionals and organizations.

In 2018, Danijela Grahovac, a Senior Technical Support Analyst at CanChild and a mother of a child with special needs, applied the "F-Words" framework to her child's Individual Education Plan. CanChild has now posted valuable IEP resources on their website at [F-Words Application for Education](#).

For more information about the F-Words and how they can be used to support your child, check the CanChild website at [CanChild – F-Words in Childhood Disability](#).