

# The WHO's ICF and the 'F-Words for Child Development': Impact Around the World

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# My Goals with this Talk...

1. ... to present ideas about how we can *think*, and *talk*, and *act* when considering 'health' and 'disability'... and
2. ... to provide evidence that this expansion in our thinking really matters!

YOU will decide if this happens...





**Q: “Do you think we will be able to ask questions? There’s a lot to talk about!”**

**A: “YES – ESSENTIAL TO CHALLENGE HIM!”**

*Smith & Ringale*



# An Overview of My Ideas

- As a ‘developmental’ pediatrician I have worked for many decades with children with *disabilities* and their families.
- I believe that the WHO’s ICF framework for health has transformed our thinking. In this talk I would like to consider four themes...



# My Themes for Today...

- **First, let's look back** 🕒🕒 at how we have traditionally talked about and acted concerning health conditions;
- **Second, we will consider these ideas as they concern parents and families** who have worries about their child's health or development;
- **Third, we will explore the WHO's ICF framework and our 'F-words for Child Development'** to bring the ICF to life; and





# My Themes for Today...

- *Finally*, we will look at:
  - the *application* of these ideas by parents and service providers...
  - the *impact the F-words are having* on families, on service providers, on programs for children with impairments and their families, on the wider community, and even on policy makers, and...
  - some *tools* people have created to apply them...



So let us go on a  
journey together...

We'll look back 🗺️ in  
order to see where  
we have come from,  
where we are now,  
and where we might  
be going.



# Theme 1: Where Did We Start?

👁👁 Let's look back at the past!

- WHAT has been the 'culture of disability'?
- Think about our training in **childhood disability**
- How were we *trained* to think and act?
- We adopted ideas from acute care medicine!
- We adopted ideas from adult rehabilitation!





# In our clinical training...

- We were **taught** to believe...
  - **We need a medical** understanding (**'diagnosis'**) of problems
  - **Treatment – based on diagnosis** – should aim to 'fix' problems
  - **'Normal' function** is the treatment goal (certainly for children with developmental challenges getting 'rehabilitation')
  - Service providers are the **experts**
- We believed: **experts should diagnose, treat, and fix!**



# Alas...

- We cannot ‘fix’ or ‘cure’ most conditions in medicine...
- For children with developmental issues and functional challenges, people have been pessimistic, and asked **“...but what can you do for them?”**
- **ANSWER? New ideas**, like the ICF framework and the F-words, have expanded the discussion considerably!
- Let’s see whether you agree with this statement!



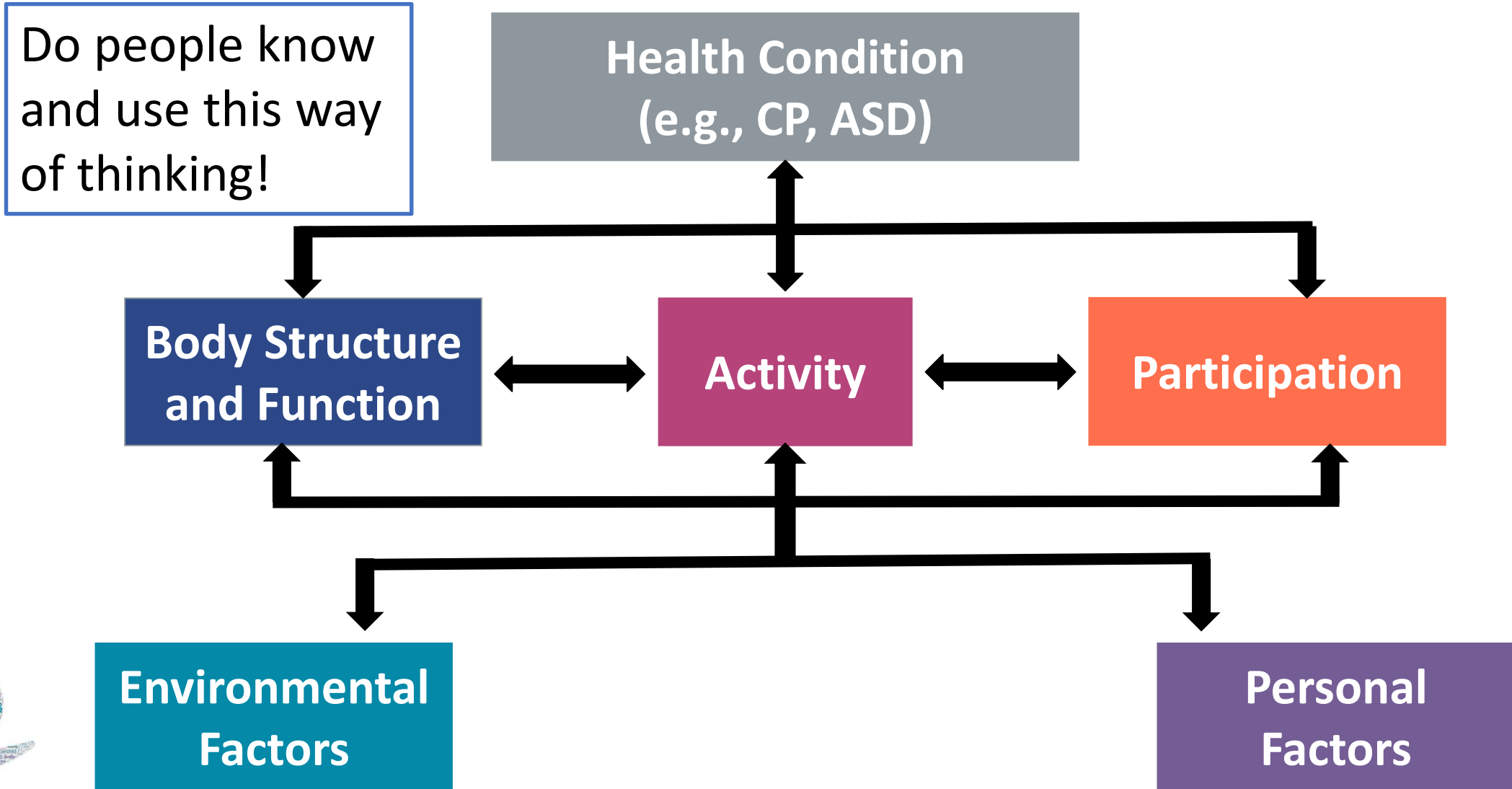
# Theme 2: New ideas about 'HEALTH'



- Health is 'the ability to adapt and self-manage in the face of social, physical and emotional challenges' (Huber *et al.* 2011).
- In other words, **functioning** (*however it is done, regardless of ability/disability*) can be understood as the **evidence of health**.
- Now we have the ICF to help and guide us!

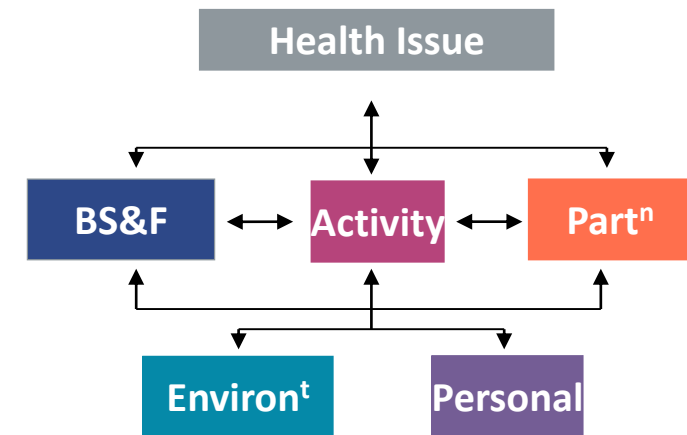


# Theme 3: WHO's ICF Framework



# Why do we like the ICF?

- It is a framework for **health** for **everyone**
- The words are '**neutral**'
- Everything is **interconnected**
- This is a '**dynamic system**', so where we start our interventions may be less important than we used to think
- It focuses on **strengths** – what people **CAN do!**





# The F-words for Child Development



**Child:** care, health and development

Review Article

doi:10.1111/j.1365-2214.2011.01338.x

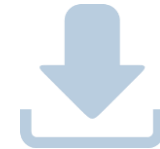
## The 'F-words' in childhood disability: I swear this is how we should think!

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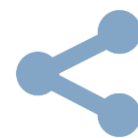
Accepted for publication 18 September 2011



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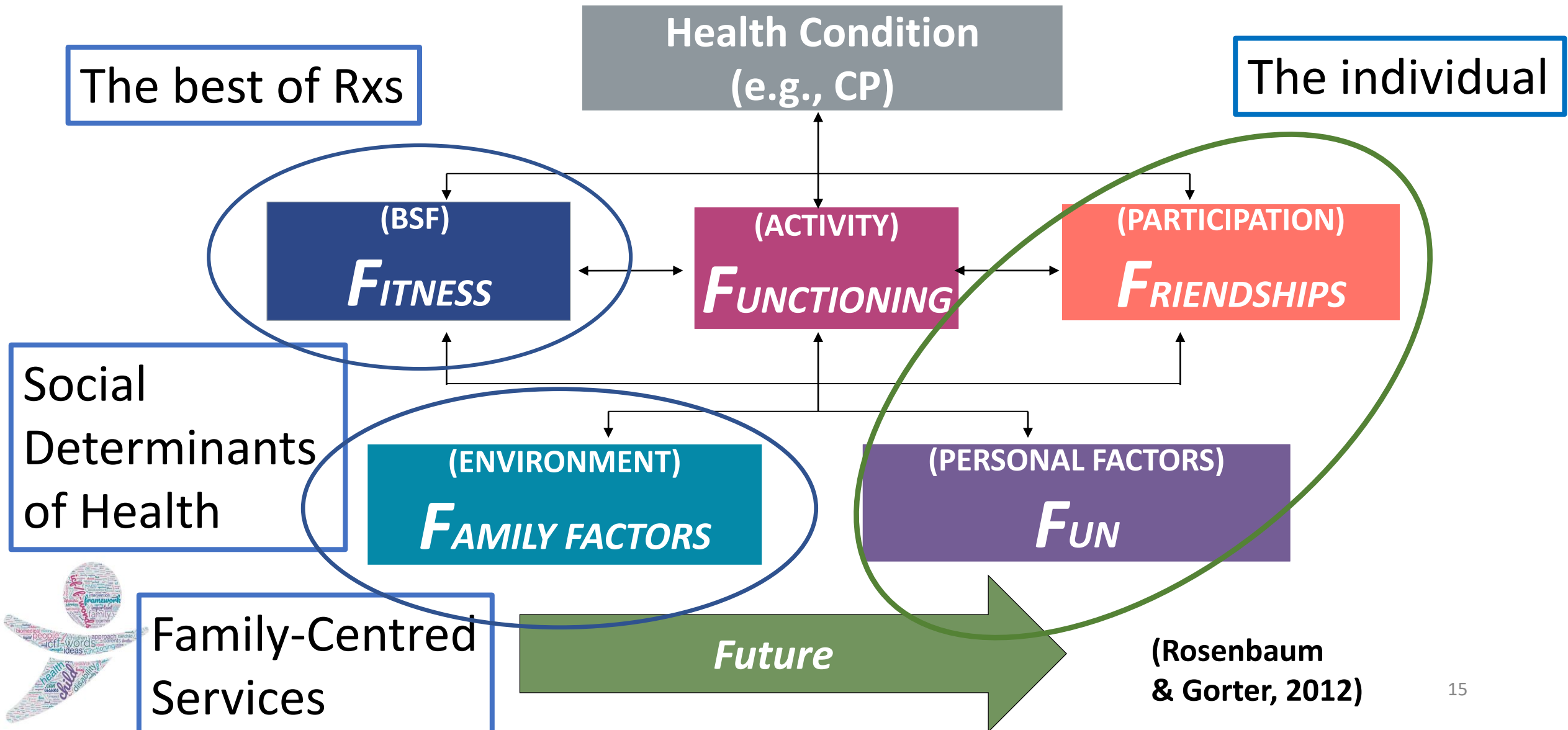


Shared around the world and  
translated into **>35 languages**

**Free:** <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/j.1365-2214.2011.01338.x>



# "I See F-words" (ICF) in Child Development



**OMG... we never  
saw things that  
way before!**



# The ICF Framework<sup>1</sup> and the 'F- Words'<sup>2</sup>



**Fit ness**  
Everyone needs to stay fit and healthy, including me! Help me find ways to keep fit.

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

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

**Body Structure and Function**

**Activity**

**Participation**



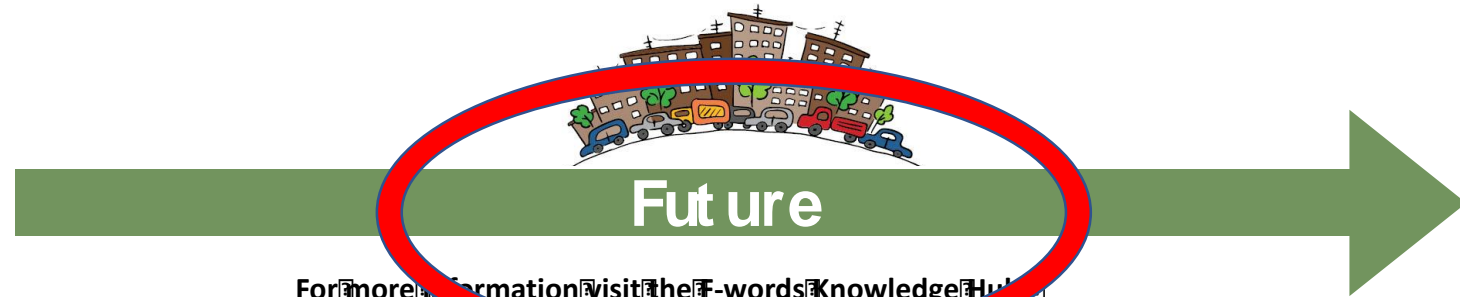
**Environmental Factors**

**Personal Factors**



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

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



For more information visit the F-words Knowledge Hub  
[www.canchild.ca/f-words](http://www.canchild.ca/f-words)



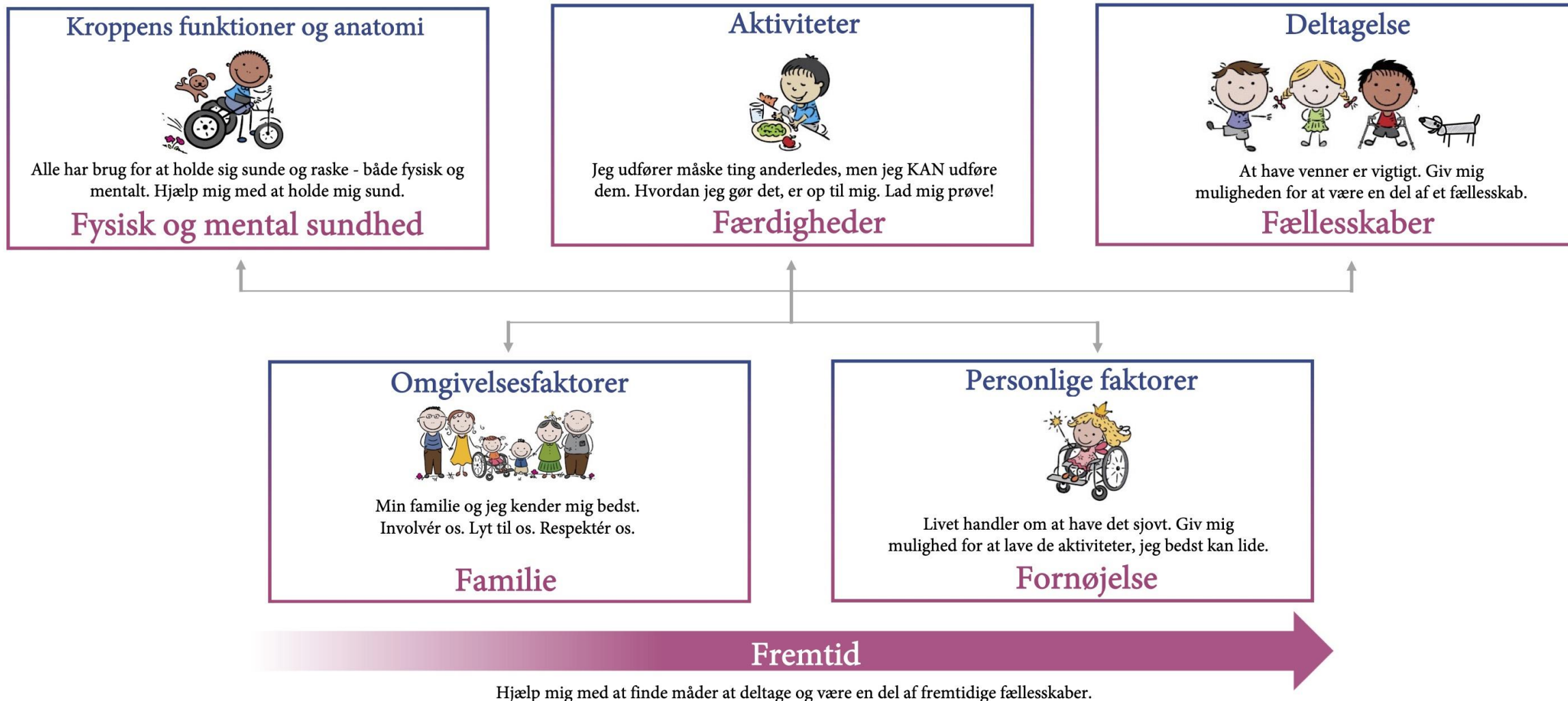
1) World Health Organization. (2001) International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

2) Rosenbaum P, Gorter JW. (2012). The F-words in childhood disability: I swear this is how we should think! *Child Care Health Dev*; 38.

\*Photos shared with permission from World CP Day.



# ICF modellen<sup>1</sup> og de 6 f-ord<sup>2</sup>



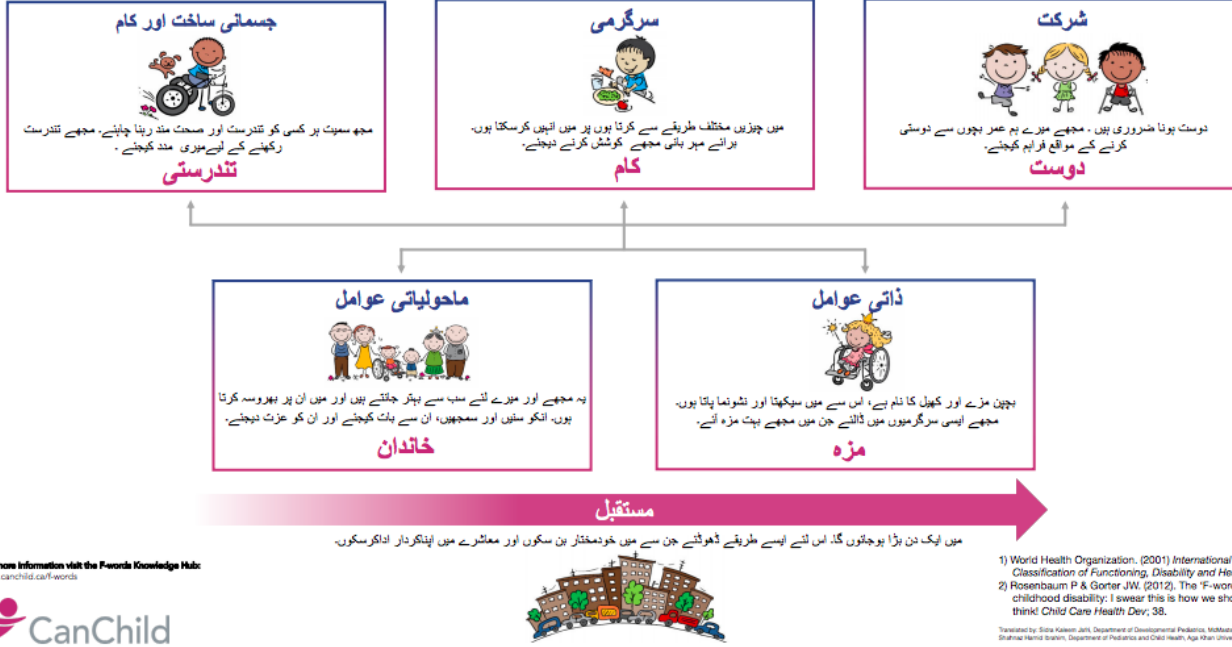
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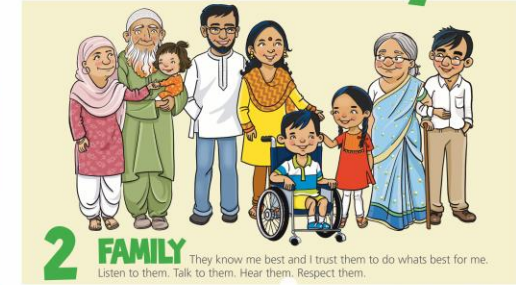
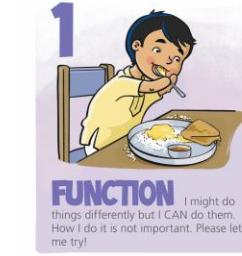
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2) Rosenbaum P & Gorter JW. (2012). The 'F-words' in childhood disability: I swear this is how we should think! *Child Care Health Dev.*; 38.  
Translated by: Saira Kabeer, JMI, Department of Developmental Pediatrics, McMaster University  
Shafiq Hameed Ibrahim, Department of Pediatrics and Child Health, Aga Khan University.



## The Six F-Words for Childhood Disability



<https://www.canchild.ca/en/research-in-practice/f-words-in-childhood-disability>



Proudly supported by The Allergan Foundation

Based on Rosenbaum, P. & Gorter, J.W. (2012). The F-words in childhood disability: I swear this is how we should think! *Child: Care, Health and Development*, (38) 4. Visit <https://www.canchild.ca/en/research-in-practice/f-words-in-childhood-disability> for more resources.



The F-words/ICF translated in Urdu and many other languages.

<https://www.canchild.ca/en/research-in-practice/f-words-in-childhood-disability/f-words-translations>

The World CP Day poster translated in Tamil and >35 other languages.

# Theme 4: IMPACT of these ideas!

- **Parents** love them... the ideas are liberating!
- **Service providers** use them...
- Whole **programs** have rebuilt all of what they do around them...
- **Government ministries** are promoting them (MCCSS)
- We are involved in research with colleagues in many countries – at THEIR request.
- Here are some examples of people's experiences...



# From a *mother*

You will gather information from reports, testing and IEP goals and this will give you invaluable insight into my son's needs. *For a fuller picture of my awesome child, however, I would like to present you with the following document **from my child, about my child.***



# From another *parent*

The F-words are brilliant and take the focus off disabilities and put it on abilities...that is part of the current paradigm shift for me. *It's a new way of thinking.* How do we move forward with this framework, and how can we improve our daughter's life in the context of her school, and our family and friend network?



# *Parent and Youth*

- *It's been huge for us, although they are just six simple words, they've just changed the whole way we look at living. (Parent)*
- *They're my F-words, my dreams, my goals, my ambitions. (Youth)*





# From a *Program Manager*

I think it's a really... *universal language that we can use across teams, across agencies, across systems, that really works from a family-centred place.*



# From a *colleague*

I am writing a quick email to share a happy story:

“Today in clinic I saw a child (who has CP and is functioning at a GMFCS V)– whose mother attended CP-NET Science and Family Day last Wednesday. She reported to me that her entire approach to raising her son has shifted from one of ‘fixing’ to embracing the F-words and a wellness approach. She came to clinic with her goals related to the F words all worked out and felt very empowered! I couldn’t be more pleased”



# From another *colleague*

Today I saw a 6-year-old girl with CP GMFCS V, refugee from ... via ... parents tried Stem Cell Therapy in ... and came here with hopes to help her. We had a long consult with a whole team... trying to answer all the questions they had. I tried to explain what we understand by a functional approach and what the purpose of therapy is.... At the end, I showed them the F-words poster in Arabic, they read carefully, asked if these words are meant to be the child speaking and I confirmed. The mom commented under tears “This is beautiful, that’s what I wish for my daughter.”



# BUT... There are *challenges*

“I would say that we still continue to experience some barriers for some of our working community partners in making that shift ... I am referring to all community members, so social services, child welfare, our mental health, our school system.”



# Examples of a few tools

- The F-words tools have been created by parents and colleagues and are shared by them, with their permission, on the CanChild website.
- These are free for your use!
- Go to [www.canchild.ca/f-words](http://www.canchild.ca/f-words)






# F-words Agreement - Kay 2013



Add a photo of yourself here!  
(Select jpeg or png files)

\_\_\_\_\_ 's F-words Agreement 

By: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

☺ Please consider these things when we work together ☺

**FUNCTION** - I want to do stuff! It may not matter if I don't do it like everyone else!

**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...


**FITNESS** - Everyone needs to stay fit and healthy and I am no different.  
I might need to use different ways of getting fit and staying fit and need help to do this....

**FUN** - Whatever floats my boat!!.....

**FRIENDS** - to meet, get to know, have fun with, to learn with, to grow old with....

**FUTURE** - The future is Now - Tomorrow is what I make of today.  
I don't want opportunities to pass me by. Help me achieve what I can today.

Thank you

 CanChild

© Diane Kay, Parent (2013)

*“To me the Agreement represents an informal but serious pact between the child and whoever they rely on for support.”*


*- Parent*



# F-words Collage – Grahovac 2015



\_\_\_\_\_ 's  
F-words Collage



CanChild

Add a photo of yourself here! (Select jpeg or png files)	Add a photo of yourself here! (Select jpeg or png files)	Add a photo of yourself here! (Select jpeg or png files)
FUNCTION	FAMILY	FITNESS
Add a photo of yourself here! (Select jpeg or png files)	Add a photo of yourself here! (Select jpeg or png files)	Add a photo of yourself here! (Select jpeg or png files)
FUN	FRIENDS	FUTURE

© Danijela Grahovac, Parent (2015)

*“The collage to me is good for my students who are maybe nonverbal. And where I'm trying to like do more pictures and simplify language.”*

- Occupational Therapist



# Vasilijes's F-words Collage



FUNCTION



FAMILY



FITNESS



FUN



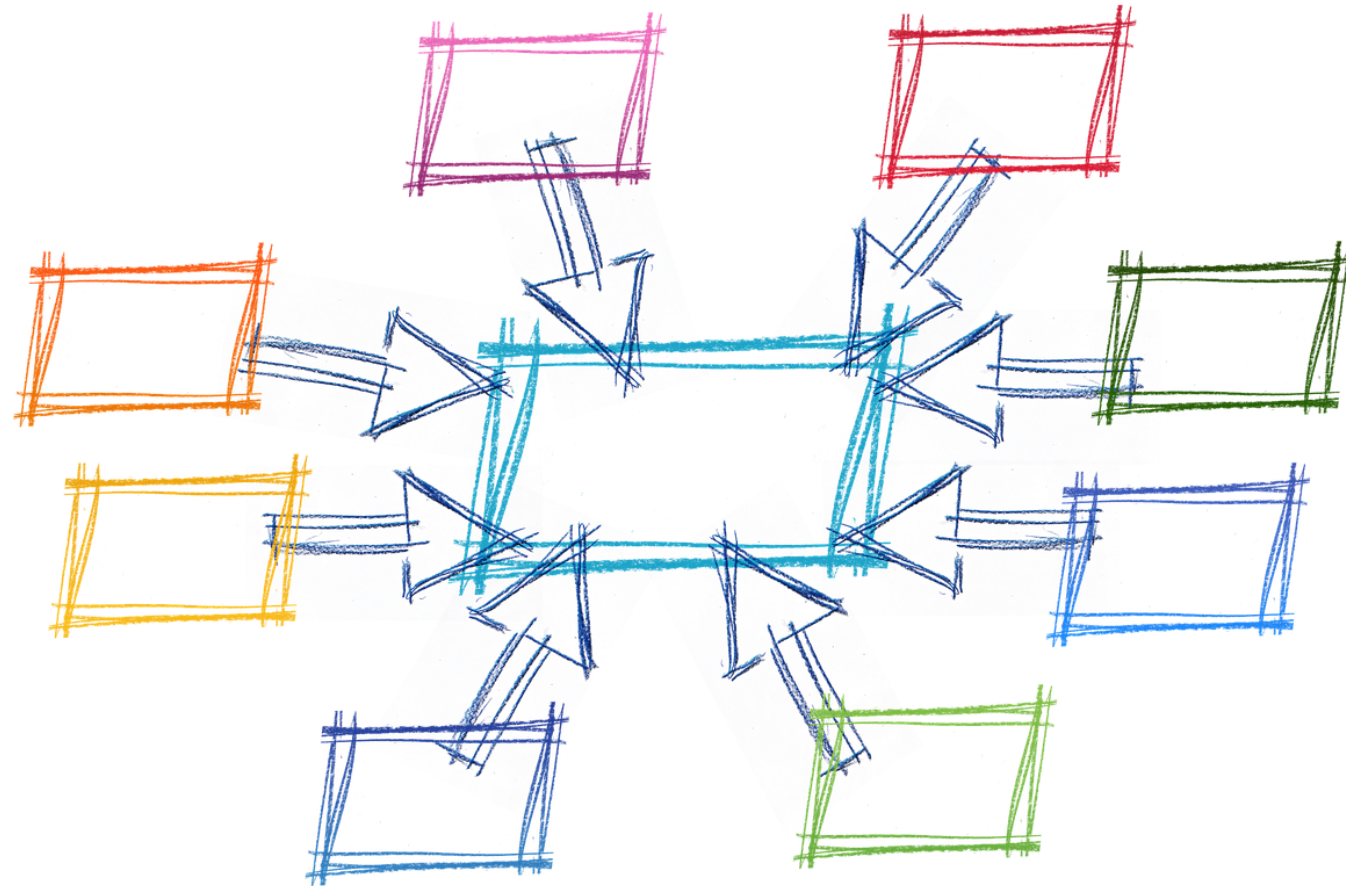
FRIENDS



FUTURE



# Goal setting with the F-words...





# F-words Goal Sheet



**My F-words Goal Sheet**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructions:** Please use this form to write down one goal for each of the F-words – Function, Family, Fitness, Fun, Friends & Future and explain why this goal is important to you. These can be goals you would like to work on at home, in therapy, in school, and/or in the community. Together let's work on the goals that are meaningful to you!

**FUNCTION:**

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**FAMILY:**

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**FITNESS:**

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**FUN:**

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**FRIENDS:**

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

**FUTURE:**

Goal: \_\_\_\_\_

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

(Adapted from Fuller & Susini Goal Sheet, 2015)

*“I think the F-words Goal Sheet is going to be very useful. I like that there is a place for each goal and **why** they are important! Having this shows why something is important to the child and family, when it may not be clear otherwise.”*

*- Clinician*





# F-Words Drawings by a 7-year old



# Impact of these changes...



We are focusing on the **CAN** vs **CAN'T**

- Ideas we need to **promote**:  
development, child/family strengths,  
achievement, being family-centred, life-  
course thinking....
- Ideas to **de-emphasize**: ~~fixing, normality,~~  
~~disability~~

# In Summary

- New ideas and frameworks expand the ‘spotlight’.
- We are not throwing out whatever ‘works’.
- Instead, we are thinking more broadly!
- The evidence suggests that these ideas and tools make a difference to people’s lives.
- They are free for the taking!
- Please share YOUR experiences with us.





***Thanks...  
Now it is  
time to  
DISCUSS!  
DO NOT  
BE SHY!***

