

FUN FITNESS FRIENDS FUNCTION FAMILY FUTURE*



By Sandy Loewen

These are the guiding principles that Physiotherapists consider when working with children with additional needs at school. Our main goal is to help children reach their full potential in physical development while they grow and learn.

Physiotherapists work with children with conditions such as Cerebral Palsy, Spina Bifida, Down Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder or Developmental Delay. We work with them to discover their strengths and set goals to be worked on. We plan fun activities to help the student work on their goals. They are often working on improving their flexibility, muscle strength, balance, coordination and motor planning (a skill that allows us to learn a movement sequence, such as for throwing a ball.)

Working on a consultative/collaborative basis, we teach the

child or group of children and school staff the recommended program. We make activities fun as they learn new skills such as learning to walk with a specialized walker, how to sit with good balance on the carpet at meeting time or how to kick a soccer ball. We help children learn to ride a bike or to ice skate. It's always a celebration when a child takes their first steps or sinks a basketball shot on the court!

Physiotherapists teach school staff how to safely lift or assist children to move to and from their wheelchair. We teach classroom teachers how to use movement with their students to keep them alert and ready to learn with yoga or coordination activities. We work with Phys. Ed teachers to adapt activities so that all children can participate. Sample suggestions are attaching jingles to plastic bowling pins at school for a student with decreased vision

so they can hear the bowling pin fall over or playing badminton with a balloon as the birdie.

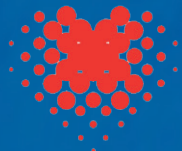
We also provide information to families about community recreational activities for their child such as swimming or sledge hockey. We want our students to learn activities that they enjoy and can play with their friends for many years.

Physiotherapists are members of a school's team working with children to help them become the best they can be. It is an honor as a physiotherapist to be part of that team!

*Source: www.canchild.ca

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