



## BUILDING AN EVERYDAY CHILDHOOD — WHILE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Looking for ways to help your child thrive? This checklist will get you started.

### DREAM BIG

What do you see in your child's future? Following a vision helps you make plans and decisions.

#### How to create a Vision Statement for your child:

- Look at your values or core beliefs.
- Focus on your child's unique qualities and strengths.
- Then write a Vision Statement (one sentence or more) about your dreams for the future.
- Write Action Steps based on your Vision Statement.
- Share your Vision Statement with family, friends and service providers.

#### Sample Vision Statement:

Jennifer will have the same opportunities at home, school and in our community as her brother and sister.

#### Check out:

[CanChild Videos about enjoying an Everyday Childhood and the F-Words in Childhood Disability.](#)

### FIND FRIENDS

Close relationships are vital for mental and physical health throughout our lives.

#### Try these ways to spark friendships:

- Explore community based, inclusive programs and centres. Try the YMCA, EarlyOn Child and Family Centres, public libraries and community recreation centres.
- Try new structured, play-based community activities.
- Get to know your child's instructors (preschool teachers, camp counsellors, music teachers etc.) Stay in touch with those who really connect with your child.
- Get involved in your community. Volunteer as a family at events based on your interests.
- Chat with neighbours. Find out their names. Drop off cookies. Offer to water plants when they're away.

# GET A GREAT START AT SCHOOL

One of the best ways to build friendships is at your local school.

## Try these tips for helping your child transition to school:

- Investigate your neighbourhood schools. Go for tours. Attend Open Houses. Speak to neighbours about their kids' school experiences.
- Find out your School Board's policy on school attendance. Some Boards allow families to choose specific schools, regardless of their address.
- Meet with your chosen school's principal and school teacher.
- Make an All About Me Book with your child with photos. Include information on their favourite foods, activities, people etc. Share this with school staff.
- Ask your child's teacher how they would like to communicate so you can support your child's learning. Weekly email? Communication book?
- Learn about the IEP (Individualized Education Plan).
- Attend all IEP meetings to advocate for your child's curriculum-based education and social opportunities.
- Let your child practice opening lunch bag containers, carrying a backpack, zipping up their coat.
- Visit your child's classroom before school starts. Take photos. Create a picture book or social story so your child knows what to expect.
- Attend school events such as School Council meetings, Fun Fairs and assemblies.

## Check out:

[All About Me Student Profile Sheet Based on the "F-Words for Child Development" from CanChild.](#)

# IMPROVE YOUR FINANCES

What will your child be like as an adult? What government funds will be available? You may not have the answers, but you CAN build a financial future for your child. **Start now.**

- Apply for your child's Social Insurance Number.
- Apply for the Disability Tax Credit (Form T2201) with Canada Revenue Agency.
- If you are eligible for the Disability Tax Credit, open a Registered Disability Savings Plan (RDSP) for your child and the Child Disability Benefit. Both require DTC eligibility.

See if you qualify for:

- [Assistance for Children with Severe Disabilities \(ACSD\)](#)
- [Special Services at Home funding](#) for respite and for personal development supports.
- [Jordan's Principle: Funding for First Nations Children to access products, services and supports](#)
- City/community subsidies for recreation, summer camps, nursery schools.
- Local service club or organization funding or bursaries.
- Grants offered by disability specific charitable organizations.

**Check out:**

The [P4P Professional Services Directory \(Ontario\)](#) with lawyers, financial advisors and accountants that understand disability issues.

[Empowered Kids Ontario Funding Sources.](#)

## **CONNECT WITH OTHER PARENTS**

Reach out to other parents to share experiences, strategies and advice. **These friendships can last a lifetime.**

**Check out:**

The [P4P Family Support Networks Directory \(Ontario\)](#)

[Connectability.ca Family Support Groups](#)

[Autism Ontario Family Supports](#)

[BLOOM](#) Family stories, expert advice, latest news on disability. By Holland Bloorview Kids Rehab Hospital.