

“My Abilities First” App: an innovative abilities-oriented approach e-tool for children and youth with childhood-onset disabilities

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BACKGROUND Traditionally, services for children and youth with childhood-onset disabilities were planned based on “what was wrong” and what they “could not do”.

Approaches differed in the way the problem was defined, but virtually most of traditional change-focused interventions sustained that people needed services because they had a problem.

Moreover, most tools available today focus on proxy descriptions of limitations and deficits, as opposed to an abilities and/or strengths oriented approach. Hence, a shift in the disability paradigm and how “needs” are identified is required.

OBJECTIVE To create an innovative abilities-oriented approach application (App) for mobile devices called “My Abilities First” based on the ICF framework.

DESCRIPTION The “My Abilities First” App will collect abilities, preferences and choices, along with limitations, and create a functional report guiding meaningful and individualized recommendations. The App will provide a much-needed personalized description of a child’s or youth’s with childhood-onset disabilities functional potential and health.

The “My Abilities First” App will follow 3 steps.

- 1) the App will educate children and families on how to identify non-medical needs and identify abilities and resources available in the community.
- 2) the App will collect “abilities” and “needs” based on the children and families’ perspectives; subsequently the App will match the families’ needs to the best resources available in the community.
- 3) the App will provide a report based on the child’s functional profile and recommended resources. This report can be shared with teachers, health professionals and alike to help support the children and their families.



Celebrating abilities
Playground adaptations, proposed by a 7 year old girl to help her friend using a Wheelchair (BC, Canada)



“MY ABILITIES FIRST” App for mobile devices - DEMO



SIGNIFICANCE This novel App will promote an abilities-oriented approach focused on what children and youth with childhood-onset disabilities value the most, directly impacting the care of this population around the world.

The “My Abilities First” App will empower children and families to take a lead in their own data collection and care process, working in collaborative ways on mutually agreed upon goals.

The “My Abilities First” App will provide an innovative way to incorporate “what a child with a childhood-onset disability CAN do”, build upon their “abilities” and help them achieve their goals. Finally, focusing on the abilities of children and youth with disabilities is a meaningful starting point in supporting healthy life trajectories, consequently achieving fulfilling lives.

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