

# Measures of “Participation” in School Children with Disabilities

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“Participation” in life experiences for school children is important for the development of psychological, emotional and physical skills. Children at school age may face a transition from preschool to school settings, or from home to community contexts that generate change in life experiences. Especially for school children with disabilities, full participation in home, school, and community is the ultimate outcome for developing rehabilitation and education plans. The International Classification of Functioning, Disabilities and Health (ICF) and its child and youth version (ICF-CY) define participation as “involvement in a life situation”. However, participation of children has been defined with varied terms and multiple perspectives across measurement tools. Therefore, this review synthesized participation measures by 3 constructs (“Capability”, “Performance”, and “Subjective experience”) with the aim to operationally define “Participation” for children at school age. The reviewed measures for participation were linked to the three constructs and corresponding measurable dimensions. Dependent on aim for assessment professionals can use the measures for specific dimensions to support children’s participation by identifying participation related environmental problems, and for setting goals in collaboration with teachers and families. (FJPT 2013;38(1):37-49)

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Based on the United Nations’ Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), participation has been described as the child’s right to be respected. The child is regarded as an active participant in his/her family, school and community life (Article 7, 8, 12, 13, 17, 23 in UNCRC). However, participation of children has been defined with varying terms and multiple

perspectives. The International Classification of Functioning, Disabilities and Health (ICF) and its child and youth version (ICF-CY) define participation as “involvement in a life situation” and as performing activities in natural settings.<sup>1,2</sup> Some Nordic scholars further clarified participation not only as performance but also as a child’s subjective experience of involve-

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