



VOLUNTEER F-WORDS CHECKLIST

A quick reminder...

At the Dance Ability Movement, we recognize that we are all unique, we all deserve equal opportunities and that we all have the ability to dance. With this philosophy in mind, we now use the 'F-Words' by CanChild to further illustrate this concept. The F-words focus on six key areas of child development. The following checklist has actionable items **for you to do** with your dancers during class and help clarify your role as a volunteer!

FUN:

- ☐ Set the tone of the class to be a fun and engaging environment by:
 - Enjoying yourself!
 - Having high energy and being enthusiastic.
 - We want to see positive body language- smiling, hives and laughing are encouraged!
 - Always greet your buddy (and their family) in the lobby with a smile.
- ☐ Observe all dancers, do you think they are having fun? If so, what makes you think they are? Who are they having fun with? Are they having fun alone? If you are unsure, politely ask.
- ☐ Dress up during themed class days. Encourage dancers to do the same!
- ☐ Ask your dancer for fun songs or activities they enjoy and relay this information to the teacher.
- ☐ During freeze dance or freestyle- follow/copy what your dancer is doing to build connections. Provide positive and specific reinforcement and offer suggestions for movement/interaction with others in a fun way.
 - You can say "I like how you are moving with the beat of the music".
 - During these activities you can interact with other dancers too.
- ☐ Observe how the dancers express joy. If you are uncertain, ask the family how to make certain elements of class more fun for the dancer.
- ☐ Use your own creativity!

FRIENDS:

- ☐ As a volunteer you can model appropriate social boundaries and expectations for dancers. This will help them learn what's acceptable when making friends!
 - For example, if you greet dancers with a smile or high five, the dancers may pick up on similar strategies and use this with other dancers to create friendships!
 - Ask for permission before you do something – this is a great strategy when working with the dancers and also helps teach them to do the same when interacting with other dancers.
 - You can also suggest your dancer sit near another dancer who they can copy/share props with. Allow others to join in.
- ☐ Introduce yourself on the first day to everyone.
 - Drum Circle Activity.
 - Name Clap Activity.

- ☐ Use a name tag for the first few weeks. Likewise, ensure you know each name of the dancers in your class and use their names frequently!
- ☐ Attendance is crucial!
- ☐ Provide support to your dancer.
 - Initiate conversations- Ask them how they are doing or how their day was!

FUNCTION:

- ☐ Each dancer is unique and will have different ways of dancing!
 - Your role is to promote movement through dance, and it is important to observe HOW your dancer moves, learns and adapts for their own abilities.
- ☐ Consider different ways of communicating with your dancer.
 - Use visual cues (pointing, hand gestures etc.) to assist them in understanding your instructions.
 - Use clear and simple instructions and words/terms that your dancer can understand or relate to.
- ☐ Consider how your dancer engages in necessary daily tasks. For instance, how will you know when they need to use the washroom? How will you know if your dancer needs to take a break and drink water? Will they ask you themselves?
 - Ask the family these important questions on the first day.

FITNESS:

- ☐ Encourage movement in the dancers as much as possible!
 - By moving, even just one body part, our dancers are staying active!
- ☐ At the beginning of class, ensure each dancer participates in the warmup and stretch.
- ☐ Match your dancer's pace during class.
 - You want to find the right balance and not make it too easy or too hard.
- ☐ Participate and dance along during each class. It is important we all move around!
- ☐ Check with the OT about how to facilitate movements in your dancers. You can assist them in dance actions as this will help them build core strength, and other muscles that are essential to development.
- ☐ Be cognizant of your dancers breathing rate. If you notice they are heavily breathing, or excessively sweating, they may need a break! Rests are okay! However, if your dancer seems unwell, seek help immediately!
 - You can offer to slow things down or ask the family if they have water available.
- ☐ Involve dancers in action songs!
 - This develops coordination, flexibility, and overall body strength in the dancers.

FAMILY:

- ☐ On the first day, introduce yourself to your dancer's family.
 - Learn the important family members in your dancer's lives.
 - Who will bring them to class?
 - Ensure you learn their names.
- ☐ Communicate with the family throughout the season on any important dates, events, reminders etc.
- ☐ Ask families for their input and feedback BEFORE and AFTER class.

- Before class check in with the family and see if your dancer is ready to dance.
- After EVERY class share something with the family that went well for the dancer during class. It is important to check in with the parent after each class.
- If your dancer is having an off day, let the teacher or OT know and ensure this is communicated to the family (decide how to best approach the situation together so the family knows you are interested in supporting their dancer, be clear with what you are observing that might be different than usual about the dancer's participation, and invite feedback).
- Remember the key is to talk to the family using strengths of the dancer.
- You are responsible for your dancer's transitions to/from class.
 - Greet your dancer in the lobby.
 - Ensure your dancer is picked up by the parent at the end of classes.
 - This means waiting with your dancer at the end of class.

FUTURE:

- Help facilitate confidence for the dancer's future and increase their self-efficacy.
 - Let them and their families know when they did a good job.
 - Engage in discussions re: future hopes and dreams.
 - Ask what they want to be when they grow up etc.
- Consider how your dancer feels about participating in recital. This is part of goal setting the OT does with the dancer, but it is important for you to know their goals as well!
 - You play an important role in talking about recital, alleviating potential nerves, and making it exciting for them.
- Use the F-words collage template to jot down notes on the dancer's progress and observations you notice each class. This will be handed to the dancer and their families at the end of the season.
- Continue to work with your dancer to promote participation and movement through dance.
 - By doing this each class, you are contributing to the dancer's growth!
- Communicate with your dancer, OT, teacher, family, and Mallory and Jade on a regular basis. This will ensure everyone is on the same page and contribute to successful classes each week!

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

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