

**ICF-CY:
representing children's and adolescents' functioning, disability and health.**

The first two decades of life are characterized by rapid growth and significant changes in the physical, social and psychological development of children and youth. Parallel changes also define the nature and complexity of children's environments across the stages of infancy, early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence. Each of these changes in children's environments is associated with their growing competence, societal participation, and independence. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health for Children and Youth (ICF-CY) is a derived version of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF, WHO, 2001) designed to record characteristics of the developing child and the influence of environments surrounding the child. The ICF-CY belongs to the "family" of international classifications developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) for application to various aspects of health. This derived version of the ICF can be used by providers, consumers and professionals concerned with the health, education, and well being of children and youth. It provides a common and universal language for clinical, public health, and research applications to facilitate the documentation and measurement of health and disability in child and youth populations. The ICF-CY can assist clinicians, educators, researchers, administrators, policy makers and parents to document the characteristics of children and youth of importance for promoting their growth, health and development.

The development of the ICF-CY was carried out in response to the request by WHO for a version of the ICF for universal use in health, education and social sectors for children and youth. Between 2002 and 2005, a WHO Work Group (*) carried out a series of meetings and field trials in which existing ICF codes were reviewed and new codes were identified that could describe the characteristics of children and youth. The document prepared by the Work Group was then reviewed within the network of WHO collaborating Centres, and was eventually finalized.

ICF-CY, the outcome of this process, is presented officially here in Venice.

This international WHO meeting, hosted by the Regione Veneto, will be an occasion for clinicians, educators, policy makers, family members, consumers and researchers to address the impact that this new tool may bring to improve health, education and rights for all children and youth.

***WHO Work Group** on the development of a version of the ICF for children and youth (2006): Rune J. Simeonsson, chair (USA), Matilde Leonardi, co-chair (Italy), Eva Bjorck-Akesson (Sweden), Judith Hollenweger (Switzerland), Donald Lollar (USA), Andrea Martinuzzi (Italy), Huib ten Napel (Netherlands).