



## Special-Needs Business Profile: Fun and Function

By Terri Mauro, About.com Guide

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### Proprietor:

Aviva Weiss and her husband, Haskel, started Fun and Function in early 2007. “As I was purchasing sensory products for my daughter -- specifically weighted clothing -- I was appalled at the poor style and high prices of the products I received,” Weiss recalls. “I felt that there could be a way for kids with special needs to fit into their environments -- and feel and look good too!” So they “borrowed lots of money from family” and got started.

### Business Description:

“We create and sell affordable and cool therapeutic toys, educational resources and clothing to facilitate each child’s development and fullest potential,” says Weiss. Categories on the site include Sensory, Perception, Fine Motor, Gross Motor, Speech/Oral, Incentives, and Equipment.



Aviva Weiss and her four children (Photo courtesy of Fun and Function)

### Parenting Connection:

Weiss, an occupational therapist, has a child with sensory processing difficulties. “When my daughter was born, I noticed she had low muscle tone. She had a hard time self-regulating and cried constantly. She met her motor milestones very late and finally walked at 24 months. At first, I panicked. Her sensory sensitivities were hard to handle, as she could not tolerate noisy, bright, crowded environments. She sensed my nervousness and cried harder when I was overwhelmed. Things changed when I accepted her needs and learned to remain calm and emotionally detached during meltdowns. She is a joy and has blossomed since.”

### Time Investment:

Fun and Function is a full-time job for Weiss, “along with bringing up four children.” She cites being home with the kids and “being able to use my creativity while helping others” as the best things about the business. The hardest thing? “Managing my time well so that I don’t get sucked into working 24 hours a day.”

### Future Plans:

Among the Weisses’s plans for the future of their company are “growing our Fun and Function product line, and setting up a foundation with the money going directly to needy families with kids who have special needs.”

**Family Input:**

The daughter who provided inspiration for starting the family business enjoys being involved in it, Weiss reports. “She loves getting to trial toys and offer ‘expert’ feedback. It’s a part of her life -- Mommy and Daddy work at Fun and Function.”

**Professional Advice:**

Starting a business is not for everyone, says Weiss. “It really depends on the person. Starting and running a business requires risk taking and stamina. You need to be able to think ahead, work very hard, take risks and hope and wait for the business to be successful.”

**Parenting Wisdom:**

When asked what advice she would give to other parents about raising a child with special needs, Weiss responds, “Love and accept your child for who he/she is. Try not to worry too much. The future usually does not turn out the way we imagine it to be and we waste lots of time worrying.”