

Abstract No. 1.5      Tuesday 5th September 2017 at 12:00-12:45

**Title: Never say never! Optimizing senses and functions releases new learning**

Presenter:              Line Hovland, Eikholt national center for the deafblind, Norway

Main focus: Mainly practice, Congenital deafblindness

Abstract: Overall theme:

Never say never – the story about a young woman with congenitally deafblindness who by the age of 29 finally learns to read through braille. A result of a well coordinated team around a motivated person?

Background:

Linda is born blind, with a severe hearingloss and cp, and has a delayed development. She has been followed up with special education at school through childhood and early adolescence, but was not able to learn to read and write.

As she got an iPhone, Linda used “Siri” to call her mother and her boyfriend. We thought the iPhone could give new motivation to try to learn to read and write, so she could reach her network through sms.

Goals: To strenghtening the independent way of connectedness with her social network through sms with her iPhone and brailledisplay.

Method/approach:

During the process several proffessionals are involved. The hearing is optimized and the cp-stricken hand is trained. There is focus on concept formation and orientation in space. The braille-teacher introduce and drill braille-letters on the brailledisplay wich gives maximized strong sensoryinput. The braille-teacher cooperate with the local teacher who use the letters in the reading-education. There is a close cooperation between all involved.

The result is that Linda today is reading, and now able to learn about the nuances in words and language through touch, which earlier was unattainable because of her hearingloss.

Conclusion:

To succeed in the work with people with congenital deafblindness an holistic approach is necessary. Maturation never stops, goals that was beyond reach can become achievable with time and the right contributions.

What can be learned from the presentation?

- 1) Never say never
- 2) The importance of a well coordinated team and an holistic approach
- 3) The maturation process is often delayed in children with congenitally deafblindness