Abstract No. 4.5 Wednesday 6th September 2017 at 12:00-12:45

Title: Deafblindness, Self-Stimulation, and Availability for Learning

Presenter: David Brown, Self-employed, USA

Main focus: Both research and practice/Congenital deafblindness

Abstract: Most children with congenital deafblindness today have significant medical issues which result in other sensory systems, as well as vision and hearing, also not working properly, including perception of pain, smell, taste, touch, and balance. Because every one of our senses is designed to develop and work simultaneously with all the others, a problem with one sense may result in problems with the functioning of other, apparently unrelated and intact, senses. Two of these 'other' senses, the proprioceptive sense and the vestibular sense, are particularly important but often ignored. Knowing about these senses, how they work, what might happen if they are not working properly, and what to do about it, can make a surprising difference to the development of functional vision and hearing. A consideration of the functions of ALL our senses can help us to understand why we self-stimulate, and also understand what any child's self-stimulation behaviors tell about their difficulties and needs. As a result of this perspective many behaviors that are generally thought of as 'bad' begin to be seen as actually quite smart adaptive responses. Sometimes accepting, or re-channeling, or even encouraging these behaviors can be much more helpful than merely trying to stop them.

OBJECTIVES (What do you want the audience to learn?)
1.To develop a clearer focus on the identification & use of individualized motivators
2.To focus & organize their observations in a more effective way
3.To adopt and develop a broader idea of what constitutes 'self-stimulation'
4.To utilize a child's current expressive behaviors in determining the best way forwards
5.To adopt and develop a better insight into what certain behaviors mean
6.To develop an awareness of the very important proprioceptive and vestibular sensory systems