

Poster

**Title: Developing social connectedness through physical activities**

Presenter: Anders Martin Rundh, Centre for Deafblindness and Hearing Loss (CDH), Denmark

Co-presenters: Mads Kopperholdt (Centre for Deafblindness and Hearing Loss)  
Marijke Bolwerk (Royal Dutch Kentalis St. Michielsgestel)  
Lotte van de Weem (Royal Dutch Kentalis St. Michielsgestel)

Main focus: Both research and practice/Both congenital and acquired deafblindness

**Subtitle:**

An international project between schools for children with deafblindness and multiple communicative impaired children.

We want to inform you about an international project between Denmark and the Netherlands, concerning Adapted Physical Activities (APA). This project convinced us, and we hope it will convince you, of the importance and possibilities to focus on social interaction and communication between children with deafblindness during physical activities. In our project, we have seen that during those activities it is possible to create an ideal environment to work on social interaction and communication between children, which can be seen as an important base of social connectedness.

You will go home inspired and with proved practical tools to take with you for using in your own practice.

**Summary**

In deafblind education interactions are often between a student and his or her adult communication partner. One of the reasons for this is that children with deafblindness need sensitive responsive communication partners to be able to develop. The focus on (the development of) social interaction and communication between the children with deafblindness is often limited. This is a shame, because, as all other children, children with deafblindness will surely benefit from contacts with their peers. It will have a positive effect not only their communicative development, but also their cognitive and social-emotional development.

Communication between children with deafblindness is not self-evident, they need help from their communication partners for this. In our APA project we help the children by creating a safe and inspiring environment with possibilities to meet and develop social interaction and communication with other children.

We will share our experiences about the project. The first part of the APA-project started in 2011 and ended in 2013. It was a collaboration between Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands to explore the possibilities of social development in physical activities. In 2016 Denmark and the Netherlands decided to start a follow up project to make our ideas



about social connectedness in APA classes more evidence based. At this moment, both countries have weekly APA classes in which we create as many social interaction situations as possible, embedded in the physical activities. The results of this project we will measure through dynamic assessment, in which we will focus on the development of the children and the effect of chosen partner strategies. At the time of the Conference we will be halfway our project and will share the first outcomes with you.