

Nordic Forum “Social Well-Being of a Disabled Child” March 15.-16.2007, Tartu

Possibilities of Communication of Children with Disabilities Communication and Technology Centre Tikoteekki Eija Roisko

Slide 2:

Communication and Technology Centre Tikoteekki

- promotes Communication for people with complex communication needs with the use of Alternative and Augmentative Communication (AAC).
- promotes the use of Assistive Technology (computers, programs etc.) for the people with Disabilities

Slide 3:

Tikoteekki comes from:

ti=computer technics

ko=communication

teekki=lending

- National Tikoteekki is a department of the Finnish Association on Mental Retardation (FAMR)
- Tikoteekki started at 1995
- Supported by the Finnish Slot Machine Association
- Multidisciplinary teams in use (speech therapist, occupational therapist, IT-adviser, AAC-trainer)

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Tikoteekki provides:

- Assessment of communication
- Assessment of the use of the computer
- informing and Teaching services
- projects concerning AAC and Computer Techniques in rehabilitation, education and communication

Slide 5:

Tikoteekki-network

The Tikoteekki of the Finnish Association on Mental Retardation coordinates the Network of Tikoteekkis around Finland

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Assessment of Communication

- To the people with speech and language disabilities of all ages
- The aim is to find the most suitable way to communicate in his or her environment. The process is carried out in clients own

- environments (home, school etc.)
- Tryout of communication aids in everyday situations
- Families are included as active participants
- Most important: the families and people nearby understand the meaning of the communication and how they can support their child to communicate (modelling, use communication aids).

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A child can have intellectual disability, CP, autistic behavior, trauma etc.

- Few or none words to express?
- Facial expressions, gestures, pointing, action?
- Few initiatives and messages: difficulties to recognize?
- Understanding of concrete language?
- Lots of communicative breakdowns and misunderstandings
- Lots of learned passivity/helplessness
- Few or none words to express?

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AUGMENTATIVE and ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION (AAC)

Slide 9-11:

Three functional groups who need alternative form of communication (Stephen von Tetzchner, Harald Martinsen, 1999):

1. Expressive language group
 - can understand other people´s speech
 - ability to express themselves is minimal
 - f.ex. Children with cerebral palsy (motor impairments)
 - purpose of AAC:
provide them enough good communication form to express themselves in all kinds of situations, for the rest of their lives
2. The supportive language group
 - children whose language development is very delayed (temporary need of AAC before they learn to speak)
(developmental dysphasia, Down Syndrome)
 - children who need AAC now and then (talking with strangers, difficult topics, noisy situations etc.)
3. Alternative language group
 - little or no use of speech as a means of communication
 - AAC is their main form of expressive communication
 - they also need AAC to understand language
 - they need AAC permanently (Autistic children, severely intellectually disabled children etc.)

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Client case:

- Matti, 5-year-old boy disabled when he was two years old
- difficulties in motoric activity
- difficulties in cognitive development
- lingual abilities at the beginning of the assessment

-able to be in good contact and concentrate on interaction

-able to understand concrete language

-able to express himself with looks, facial expressions, gestures, pointing and action

-little possibilities to express himself verbally

The aim of the communication assessment:

- to ensure the possibilities of expression by broadening the range of means to communicate

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The people participating in the assessment:

Matti and his parents

the speech therapist and the occupational therapist responsible for rehabilitation

personnel from Matti's day-care

speech and occupational therapists from Tikoteekki

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- The aims of Matti's assessment:
- 1) to find functional and practical means of interaction and communication for Matti
- 2) to support and encourage the community to communicate interactively

Slide 15:

Finding together means for communication

- Picture Symbol folder (PCS)
- Manual signing
- Speech Device (one message)
- Speech Device (eight messages)

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- Matti's support will change according to his age and mental development.
- His support therefore at every age should respond to his needs.

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- More information is needed to the parents and people in the welfare and social sector -
> early intervention
- Parents need information about possibilities of communication of the children with disabilities
- Parents need knowledge how to support they children to make initiatives, how important is to recognize them and respons.

Interaction is build in every child, we just have to see it and support it with our natural ability to communicate and respons and also with those alternative and augmentative communication

aids which have been proved to be functional for the children with communication disabilities.

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