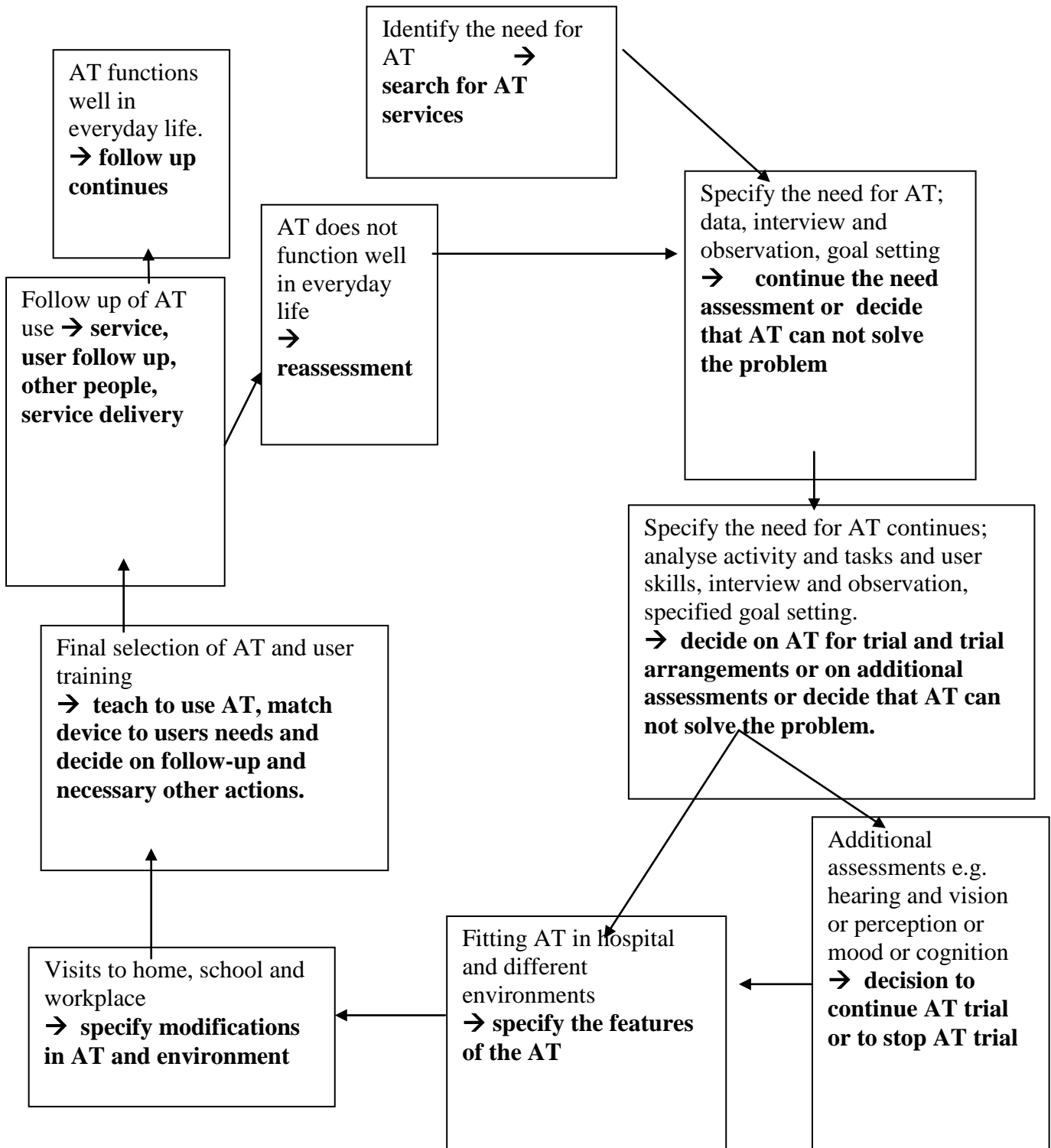# Assistive technology to support a disabled child at home - information sources

Anna-Liisa Salminen

Disabled children want to do the same things as other children and young people of their age. Assistive technology (AT) can be used to support these activities. AT can support disabled children to play with toys, communicate effectively and in an age-appropriate manner, to stand and/or sit, to feed, to wash and dress, to participate in art, music activities and physical education, to produce written work, and to read.

A number of critical elements have been identified in assistive technology assessment to optimise its integration into the different environments of children and hence address their functional goals.

These elements are described in the following figure. These include conducting in-depth assessment that identifies clear goals, task analysis within daily environments, examination of the child-device interaction closely, extensive training and follow up. Involving the family as well as professionals such as teachers by establishing mutual expectations and using effective communication strategies is important part of this process.

Identify the need for AT → **search for AT services**

AT functions well in everyday life. → **follow up continues**

Specify the need for AT; data, interview and observation, goal setting → **continue the need assessment or decide that AT can not solve the problem**

Follow up of AT use → **service, user follow up, other people, service delivery**

AT does not function well in everyday life → **reassessment**

Specify the need for AT continues; analyse activity and tasks and user skills, interview and observation, specified goal setting. → **decide on AT for trial and trial arrangements or on additional assessments or decide that AT can not solve the problem.**

Final selection of AT and user training → **teach to use AT, match device to users needs and decide on follow-up and necessary other actions.**

Additional assessments e.g. hearing and vision or perception or mood or cognition → **decision to continue AT trial or to stop AT trial**

Visits to home, school and workplace → **specify modifications in AT and environment**

Fitting AT in hospital and different environments → **specify the features of the AT**

Figure 1. Process of AT assessment

Source: Kanto-Ronkanen, Salminen Apuvälinetarpeen arviointi ja käytön seuranta, p. 63, in Salminen (ed.) Apuvälinekirja, Kehitysvammaliitto, 2003.

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