



# ABSTRACTS

12<sup>TH</sup> ECER-AAC CONFERENCE „AAC All Day“

1.-3. July 2019 BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

# **Addressing the Communication and Education Goals of Children with Severe Speech and Physical Impairments (SSPI) through the use of AAC and Assistive Technology**

**Vicki R. Casella**

**Affiliation:** Executive Director, The Bridge School, San Francisco, USA

**Abstract:** An effective, comprehensive program for children with severe physical impairments and complex communication needs must address all areas that impact their ability to be active participants in their community. This includes a developmentally sound educational curriculum with a special focus on self-determination; a systematic approach to multimodal communication systems; the provision of independent up-right mobility; and, in the case of children with Cortical Vision Impairment, the supports necessary to develop functional use of vision. This presentation will introduce The Bridge School's model, course of study, use of augmentative and alternative communication and assistive technology, and instructional strategies to address the needs of our students.

## **Addressing Cortical Visual Impairment (CVI) in an Educational Environment**

**Vicki R. Casella**

**Affiliation:** Executive Director, The Bridge School, San Francisco, USA

**Abstract:** Recent statistics reveal that Cortical Visual Impairment is now the most common cause of impaired vision in children, yet many educational professionals have little knowledge of nor experience in assessment of this condition and the development of effective intervention goals and objectives. Addressing this challenge is critical for all students, especially those who rely on augmentative and alternative communication (AAC). This presentation will address the strategies we have developed at The Bridge School, under the guidance of a cortical vision expert, and how they are integrated into our educational curriculum and employed throughout our daily routines.

# **Early/Emerging Communicators with AAC: Presume Limitless Opportunities for Learning**

**John Costello**

**Affiliation:** Director, Augmentative Communication Program, Boston Children's Hospital, Boston, USA

**Abstract:** People who are Emerging Communicators with AAC may be of any age. One's ability to learn is based both on innate skill and the richness of opportunities and expectations provided to that person.

This session will focus on the benefit of providing opportunity and intervention, even while a comprehensive assessment is being planned. The need to participate in an evidence based feature match based assessment and trial will be detailed while focusing on what motivates and is most interesting to the child. Recognizing that augmentative communication can be used for expression, receptive language and organizing/understanding the world will be detailed.

Focusing on communication partners being familiar with methods of communication support and providing training and modelling will be discussed. Providing AIDED Language modelling and robust vocabulary exposure while Create opportunities for learning language and making communication available by engineer the environment with AAC will be highlighted.

## **Anchored approaches in AAC: how to stimulate communicative intent and vocabulary development**

**Stijn Deckers**

**Affiliation:** Pedagogical Sciences, Stichting Milo (AAC center); Radboud University Nijmegen; President of ISAAC-Netherlands and Flanders, Netherlands

**Abstract:** Learning new vocabulary revolves around making connections with the child's knowledge, experiences and their perception of their environment (Aitchison, 2006), as is the case in anchored instruction. Anchored instruction is based on the proofed concept of shared contextualized learning environments and used strategies such as highlighting relevant information and connecting the child's present experiences with his or her previously acquired knowledge. Evidence for the anchored approach in an intervention for children with intellectual disabilities and communication problems was found in a study by Van der Schuit, Segers, Van Balkom, Stoep and Verhoeven (2010), all related to our AAC treatment center: Stichting Milo in the Netherlands. Anchored instruction serves as the basis for our treatment, which we call the 'KLIN©-method'. Both the theoretical background and practical examples and implications will be addressed during this presentation. A case study of a child with complex communication needs (CCN) will be used to illustrate anchored instruction and the ways to use anchored instruction by several activities to stimulate the communicative intent of children with CCN and to enhance their vocabulary development.

# **Core vocabulary and its applicability for atypical populations**

**Stijn Deckers**

**Affiliation:** Pedagogical Sciences, Stichting Milo (AAC center); Radboud University Nijmegen; President of ISAAC-Netherlands and Flanders, Netherlands

**Abstract:** Professionals and parents in the field of AAC often ask about what vocabulary to include on AAC systems. A developmental approach to vocabulary selection, such as core vocabulary, in which the language on the AAC system closely reflects the language of typically developing peers, is highly encouraged. Most effective communication levels can be reached, when core vocabulary is combined with fringe vocabulary. With these fringe or content words, an individual is able to reflect on his/her own activities, interests, environments and their personal style. In clinical practice the discussion related to the selection and use of core vocabulary with students who are severely cognitively/multiply impaired is highly relevant and often the following question is asked: 'Is core vocabulary the comparable for individuals from atypical populations with that of typically developing peers?' The aim of this presentation is to answer this question and show the results of several core vocabulary studies in (a)typical populations. The purpose of this presentation is to introduce the concept of core and fringe vocabulary. Several studies in several atypical populations, such as young children with Down syndrome, show great support that core vocabulary is highly comparable and thus of high importance in AAC vocabulary selection.

## **Potential of multisensory environment (Snoezelen for development of communication skills in children with intellectual and multiple disabilities**

**Jana Hrčová**

**Affiliation:** Department of Education and Special Education PF KU, Ružomberok; 3lobit

**Abstract:** The contribution deals with the possibilities of using the multisensory environment Snoezelen to support the communication skills of children with intellectual and multiple disabilities.

This environment is characterized by a specific atmosphere and equipment that helps to relax, calm down, activate the child.

Among other things, through Snoezelen, we can support and develop different levels and forms of communication.

It facilitates child's communication with the surrounding environment through various interactive technologies and simplifies the interpretation of child's expression.

Furthermore, the paper presents the experience with the use and contribution of this environment in building elementary forms of communication, using alternative and augmentative communication, in building and supporting the initiative in communication and in reducing the fear of communication or interpersonal communication.

## **To train the trainers**

**Sophia Kalman**

**Affiliation:** Paediatrician, AAC consultant for the Hungarian Bliss Foundation; University lecturer at the ELTE Barczi Gusztav Faculty of Special Education, Budapest; Hungary

**Abstract:** At the 11th ECER AAC Conference in Bucharest the question of training the trainers has become a hot topic. After years of offering introductory or elementary AAC courses, presenters faced a new challenge. When AAC becomes the integral part of any program for non-speaking individuals, as a consequence more and more locally available courses will be needed with competent new lecturers. Thus the future AAC interventionists' trainers must be trained...

While developing a trainers' training in AAC, two basic factors should be considered. 1. Since the precondition for the participants is to have sufficient AAC practice, there is no need for AAC baselines. 2. The trainees are considered partners, who are expected to actively share their own experiences. Today the trainees should learn to provide AAC courses not only by knowing all about the latest developments in AAC technology, but in the expected question-based, fresh style with every topic open for motivating debates. Thus **didactics**, **dynamics** and **discussions** are important features requiring **interactivity**, **involvement** and a continuous sharing of **information**. Three D's and three I's can be effective, contemporary tools for training the trainers.

## **The AAC Device is a wonderful tool, but it needs proper mounting to be used**

**Robert Kohls**

**Affiliation:** Director of Sales & Training Europe, Rehadapt; Germany

**Abstract:** When relying on Assistive Technology like a communication device or an environmental control unit, users don't accept compromises. Their appliances are essential and need to be held safely and in reach around the clock.

Mounting solutions must accomplish this without adding complexity to the clients, caretakers or technology providers - life holds enough challenges already. That's why we do everything we can to build solutions that make life simpler for all parties involved. Simple, intuitive, reliable - that's how our solutions work. To achieve this goal, our broad portfolio of components gets continuously refined and amended. As a result our systems are so versatile that there are hardly any needs we cannot cover. After almost two decades of product design, we have learned that the product alone is often not enough. Hence we have developed a unique service that places the needs of our customers at the center of the designing process. Based on your wheelchair photos our engineers design a bespoke solution for your specific needs - free of charge! We employ the full resources of our engineering department as a natural part of the development of the best customized solution for every single client.

Our high standards in engineering are embedded into our service-oriented concept. The result is a simple message: Mounting and positioning? We got you covered. Anything. Anywhere. Anytime.

*Communication around the world? We make it possible.....*

# AAC – first or last option?

**Anastázia Kormanová**

**Affiliation:** Speech and Language Therapist, Národný ústav detských chorôb (NÚDCH), Bratislava; Slovakia

**Abstract:** The long-term care center for high-risk newborns in the Neonatal Clinic Intensive Medicine in the National Institute of Childhood Diseases provides early speech therapy intervention for children with identified risk of significant communication problems at birth or if there is a potential for the presence of risk factors with a secondary impact on optimal development of communication, speech and language skills.

the evidence of the need for early/speech therapy intervention as well as the effectiveness of the early intervention is increasing and provides a basis for a diagnosis and intervention approach.

AAC is not the last option, but rather the first line of intervention that can provide the first foundation development of understanding and production of spoken language, therefore, we are interested in our daily speech therapy practice to provide AAC as early as it is possible according to individual needs of child and its family.

The aim of our paper is to introduce to the participants of the conference the theoretical background and AAC approaches at an early age intervention, our communication approaches applied to clients according to their individual needs available in speech therapy practice: GUK, GO TALK, GRID 3, Communicator 5.

Furthermore, we are interested in supporting speech and language therapists to implement AAC into early age intervention. Pointing out the need of implementation of educational programs for children with disabilities, which include AAC education standards in the pre-primary education and at the same time highlighting the need for the accessibility of AAC at an early age through compensatory aids in communication.

## **Film as Observable Communication (FaOC); an Augmentative tool for Storytelling**

**Mascha Legel**

**Affiliation:** Visual Anthropologist, Radboud University Nijmegen, Netherlands

**Abstract:** A presentation of the research-project “My Film, My Story” in which an innovative teaching method for schools has been development using self-created film, by children and young adults with Complex Communication Needs (CCN), for the purpose of sharing daily personal narratives and language development.

Film as Observable Communication (FaOC) is a method in development, which is being validated through practical implementation. Children and young adults with Complex Communication Needs (CCN) learned how to make films of daily life events, for the purpose of telling their story with the assistance of their film. The FaOC method has been developed and validated in a research-project at Radboud University in collaboration with Dundee University, Scotland.

The first results demonstrate the enjoyment enjoyed by the children and their communication partners when relating personal narrative using the children's self-created films. Conversations using film were more extended than those without film with more topics and themes being observed.

An interdisciplinary approach, merging AAC, AT and digital film can create new activities and communication methods for children who use AAC. The possibilities of digital film and AT create new possibilities for using personal created film as assistive tool in daily personal narrative and expressive-language-learning in schools.

## **Universal design for learning and AAC: didactics of inclusive teaching/learning settings**

**Liya Kalinnikova Magnusson<sup>1</sup>, Magnus Magnusson<sup>2</sup>**

**Affiliation:** <sup>1</sup>Dr. in special education, University lecturer in special education, University of Gävle; Faculty of Education and Business Studies, Affiliated researcher at the Institute of Russian and Eurasian studies, Uppsala University; Sweden

<sup>2</sup>Magnus Magnusson, professor in linguistics, Moscow State University named after M.Lomonosov, Moscow, Russia

**Abstract:** Universal design for learning (UDL) is a well known theoretical platform, which is responding to the issues of how to implement inclusion in everyday classroom based on teaching/learning settings regardless of learners' age, whether small children or adults. UDL tries to unite the idea of reaching all students/learners and using a broad spectrum of didactical methods among teachers. Several basic dimensions will be introduced and discussed:

1. Provision of multiple means of representation (what alternatives of the instruction to learners could be performed, and what is the role of the AAC means, etc.).
2. Multiple means of action and expression (how students could 'deliver' their learning outputs and their AAC aids, etc.).
3. Optimisation of multiple means of engagement (meanings of values, autonomy, demands and interaction among learners, etc.).
4. Importance of translation and interpretation (how do learners and teacher understand each other).

AAC is perfectly suited to demonstrate the effectiveness of Universal design for learning and teaching. The presentation will give increate examples of this by video materials.

## **AAC in Early Intervention. Sharing experience from professional practice.**

**Aldona Mysakowska-Adamczyk<sup>1</sup>, Anna Walkiewicz<sup>2</sup>**

**Affiliation:** Coordinator of the Early Intervention Team and Speech & Language Therapist<sup>1</sup>, Early Intervention Team at the Special School no. 327 in Warsaw; President of “Mówić bez Słów” – ISAAC Polska organization (Polish ISAAC chapter); Poland

Psychologist<sup>2</sup>, Early Intervention Team at the Special School no. 327 in Warsaw; Board Member of “Mówić bez Słów” – ISAAC Polska organization (Polish ISAAC chapter)

**Abstract:** Acquiring language and communication skills in early years builds foundation for future participation in social life, high quality education, access to leisure and other important activities. With early access to appropriate AAC tools and strategies, young children with disabilities get a chance to develop language and communication skills that they require to achieve their full potential and maximize outcomes. All children, including kids with developmental delays and disabilities, learn language from more competent language users within context of the interactions and activities that happen during their daily lives. Looking for the most effective intervention models the Early Intervention Team at Warsaw Special School no. 327 has been shifting from “working with the child” to family-centered approach. Partnership with parents allows to create supportive aided language environment to enable the child to participate and learn from interactions in everyday routines and activities. Experience from implementing partnership model of early AAC intervention shows that parents who are mutually involved in the process of team planning, implementing and evaluating intervention, gradually become confident, competent and independent supporters for their child’s development. This presentation will describe and show the example of implementing family-centered early intervention model with providing AAC for young children.

## **How to ensure that nonverbal people participate in social life?**

**Agnieszka Pilch**

**Affiliation:** Special Education Teacher, Deputy Principal and Chief of AAC; “Step by Step” Nonpublic School in Zamość; Board Member of “Mówić bez Słów” – ISAAC Polska Organization (Polish ISAAC Chapter); Poland

**Abstract:** At the Step by Step Nonpublic Special School Complex in Zamość, Poland there have been many years of work done towards providing AAC users with opportunities to participate in various forms of social life. Implementing AAC Standards at the school made it easier to prepare students for such activities. There are meetings held between the nonverbal students and preschoolers and also with guests from outside the school during which they can improve their conversation strategies. For 13 years we have been organizing concerts to celebrate the annual ISAAC International AAC Awareness Month in October to which we invite AAC users together with their families, friends and therapists from the whole Zamość area as well as local authorities. We cooperate with local Roman Catholic Church. We prepare AAC resources for religion lessons, confessions and active participation in masses. We host meetings between AAC users and students from various schools in our area at which we discuss



the Polish film & quot; Life Feels Good (Chce się żyć)&quot;; and we create another opportunity to talk with our nonverbal pupils. Our AAC users take part in many public debates and countrywide conferences. We also join in organizing local events. Our last action was taking part in the Polish Language Festival held in Zamość and a nearby town, Szczebrzeszyn. All of the examples of actions taken by us help broaden the circle of environments that our students and graduates feel comfortable in.

## **AAC for individuals on the Autism Spectrum and beyond**

### **Albane Plateau**

**Affiliation:** Speech and Language Pathologist, Educator for National Federation of Speech Language Pathologists; Clinical Consultant and Trainer for Tobii Dynavox France

**Abstract:** Based on a set of scientific evidence, this presentation will discuss the needs of individuals with Autism.

1. Communication. We will examine how, by relying on what motivates these people the most, we can not only teach them the necessary words to communicate, but also the different functions of language to expand their verbal behaviour. We will look at how the different languages of Snap + Core First make this application particularly robust linguistically. We will look at how the use of symbols and of Speech Generative Devices meets their cognitive specificity and supports the development of their communication and language.

2. Behaviour. We will visit the different features supporting the behaviour of these people, in different contexts bearing social situations.

3. Learning. By way of example, and remembering what Light and McNaughton have taught us, we will observe how the operational competence of autistic people supports their development in linguistic and social fields. We will recall what Donatello et al. tell us different facilitators. Finally, we will detail how the design of the application supports the development of literacy.

We will conclude about how the ecosystem of TobiiDynavox supports the development of different language skills.

## **Technology + Game + Interactivity**

### **Lenka Říhová**

**Affiliation:** Special Education Teacher, AAC approach, Deputy Director; Special Primary School Poděbrady; i-SEN; Czech Republic

**Abstract:** The combination of games and technology is a great motivation factor for most children. Producers of computers games and applications know that, as well as those who educate children with special needs.

Games in tablet are served as the best motivation and reward for the activity in many classes. The strength of technology is its interactivity – a possibility to interfere somehow in the process and influence its course.

In my post I want to focus on the possibilities how to use the connection "Technology + game + interactivity" for the benefit of AAK users' development in the following areas:

**Comprehension support and vocabulary.** The core words represent the basic building blocks of AAC. The frequent words which are useful in many situations and phrases, but also often abstract and more difficult to understand for children. Playful interactive apps make easier for children to approach them, model them in the course of the game and consolidate their meaning and involvement in the active lexicon.

**Development of reading literacy.** Adapted books with pictograms are designed for children who need visual support for understanding or learning.

Adapted technology-enabled books offer interactivity that encourages active participation in the reading and learning process, helps understanding, develops memory, vocabulary, and supports reading.

The presentation will be accompanied by practical examples and video clips.

## **Supporting language development for literacy in aided communication**

**Martine Smith**

**Affiliation:** Associate Professor, Clin Speech & Language Studies, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

**Abstract:** Children who use aided communication are exposed to written representations of their language systems from a very early stage. However, there is ample evidence that this exposure does not accelerate their development of literacy skills; instead, the majority of individuals who use aided communication under-perform in reading, spelling and writing, relative to their perceived cognitive abilities. This presentation focuses on the speech and language underpinnings of word-level skills (decoding and spelling), as well as text-level activities of reading comprehension, and generative writing. Consideration is given both to typical development and to the unique context of children using aided communication, outlining factors for consideration in assessment and in intervention. These include: the importance of vocabulary and the development of robust lexical representations that can serve communication and literacy skills; building expressive language skills and supporting access to opportunities to generate extended multi-modal texts; and extending opportunities to experience complex language to support comprehension.

## **Setting educational goals to improve communications competencies of AAC users at special school**

**Alina Smyczek**

**Affiliation:** SLT in Special School no. 11 in Krakow; Co-founder and chairwoman of the Board of Directors of „Mowic bez Slow“ (ISAAC Polish Chapter); Poland

**Abstract:** Start point of presentation is communicative competence of AAC users described by Janice Light and David McNaughton (1989, 2014). Their concept can be seen like excellent framework to set educational goals on the teaching process pathway. Acquisition of AAC skills needs to be optimally planned. Concret goals seted for each student are critical for creating best communication and educational environment by each member of teachers/therapists team. During presentation a few case studies will be introduced. AAC users with different communication systems and skills will be described with their AAC goals. Video illustration will be provided. All examples come from students and team of Set of Special Schools No 11 in Cracow, Poland.

## **Blood, Tears and Down: Communication and Poems Using Grid 3 - Case Report**

**Jana Šarounová**

**Affiliation:** Special Education Teacher – SLT, Special Education Center for Children And Youth With Speech Disorders focusing on AAC; Czech Republic

**Abstract:** The case study follows the story of a young woman with cerebral palsy, her education and the way to functional communication. It also maps the current ways of communication with her family and friends via email and social networks.

Hana uses the Grid 3 communication software for work with the computer, which is controlled by the chin switch. It helps her to write emails, search for favourite music, photos, information. For Hana the computer also means being able to express her feelings with the help of tender and sometimes sad poems which she writes.

However, her story is also a reflection which shows that solving communication problems with/of nonverbal people is extremely important, but in order to lead an independent life it is required much more.

So far our society provides very few possibilities for adults with severe physical disabilities.

## **School AAC Strategies**

**Carmen Vâlcu<sup>1</sup> and Alina Țuțu, Petrica Cotaș, Raluca Vlad**

**Affiliation:** Special Education Teacher<sup>1</sup>, Special School St. Nicholas, Bucharest, Romania

**Abstract:** Our Special School “St. Nicholas” is the largest special school in Bucharest and the second in the country, having a great reputation in the special education field since 1969, when was founded. It is conceived as a complex unit with 22 classrooms, speech therapy rooms, psychology and medical offices, kineto-therapy rooms, technology-confectionery, computer, art, multisensory rooms, etc. Our school offers education to more than 230 children aged between 3 and 18 years of which in different levels (kindergarten, primary and secondary school). Almost half of them are children with severe/associated disabilities.

The presentation describes AAC strategies that we use in our school, meant to develop and enhance the multimodal communication of our non-verbal students, by teaching them and implementing AAC communication strategies in our educational activities, daily, until the routine is constructed and internalized. This presentation will describe how emergent and context-dependent AAC communicators students communicate and participate in their daily routines activities and how they interact with their classroom peers. The video presentation contains social daily or weekly routines of the students, which are specifically constructed to lead to communicative competencies.

## **Eye Gaze Pathways, using Gaze Interaction in Sensory, Communication and Access**

**Kaveh Vefagh**

**Affiliation:** Regional Manager EMEA (Europe Middle-East India Africa), Tobii Dynavox; Sweden

**Abstract:** This presentation will cover gaze interaction as an interaction and input method in various settings within sensory, AAC and computer control for individual for various disabilities. We see examples of how gaze patterns can be used to assess, improve and better understand users using the eye tracking data. Various important parameters and advice for achieving success with eye gaze will be covered, as well as considerations and advice regarding visual, motoric and cognitive challenges. We will look at how eye gaze and gaze interaction can be taught to create screen engagement and early interaction, followed by eye gaze as an access method in AAC to facilitate symbol communication. Finally, eye gaze as a tool to gain full control of the computer, mainstream applications, the user’s environment and the ability to connect with the world at large to gain independence.

# **Emerging users starting with augmentative and alternative communication**

**Stephen von Tetzchner**

**Affiliation:** Department of Psychology, University of Oslo, Norway

Communication and language constitute the core of human social life, in both typical and atypical development. They are not only skills of the individual but a shared way of life. When a child has little or no spoken language and augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) is initiated to become part of his lifeworld, the child is not the only emergent user of AAC: Significant people in the environment must be guided to understand and use AAC in order for the environment to become communicatively accessible and supportive. When the double competence – of the child *and* the environment – is emerging, the alternative means of communication and language will become a foundation of the social life of the child, the family and peers.

## **Kája - the motivational program live and playfully**

**Bohdana Voříšková**

**Affiliation:** Speech therapist CAAK, Hradec Králové; Czech Republic

**Abstract:** The aim of the lecture is to promote the functional group speech therapy intervention in the area of AAC, which is fun and engaging for children.

It shows to the listeners the possibilities of school, how to streamline the learning of a pupil with severely impaired communication skills. The motivation program takes approximately one lesson and is intended exclusively for non-verbal pupils. Pupils come with their own means of communication. Some of them are using a communication bag with peeling pictures, some the communication table in the showcase, others an iPad with a communication application or with another technical aid for AAC. The main character is Kája, who has typical clothes and arrives with a suitcase on wheels. He pulls out various things and pictures from suitcase that he presents to pupils and creates funny communication situation. Pupils practice vocabulary on one topic during one month with Kája. Within the program he teaches the pupils to communicate through pictures and signs. He sings and signs song with children. Kája leads pupils to communicate with each other, engages their senses. The realization of the program is a highly creative activity for him. Children are more active during the program.

**Conclusions:** The motivational program combines individual speech and language intervention and a regular lesson in the classroom. It allows pupils to gain experience with AAC system. It helps to precede an undesirable behaviour. We encourage significantly pupils' desire to communicate. We completely simulate common communication in the child world.

## **Family Involvement in the Early Stages of the AAC Intervention Process**

**Judy Wine**

**Affiliation:** Team member, Omer Center for AAC and IT; Consultant, Israel Rett Syndrome Association; Israel

**Abstract:** To demonstrate the importance of the involvement of family members in the AAC intervention process. Clinical experience shows that parents, siblings, and even grandparents are key to the successful implementation of an AAC program. However, AAC tools are most often provided within the educational setting; the child is trained to communicate in a variety of situations in the educational framework with a vocabulary tailored to those situations. When asked if the parents have been involved in the process a typical answer is that the tools being used will be sent home after the child has learned how to use them. And when they are sent home, how many therapists and educators have the time in their busy schedules to give the family the necessary guidance regarding the use of these tools and strategies?

This lecture will discuss the ways in which parents and other family members can become active partners in the AAC team. As professionals, we have to go through a problem-solving process with family members to determine the intervention(s) and the vocabulary selection which are most appropriate for the child and for the family constellation and we must provide models for AAC usage.

## **The Development and Implementation of Communication Systems for Children with Rett Syndrome**

**Judy Wine**

**Affiliation:** Team member, Omer Center for AAC and IT; Consultant, Israel Rett Syndrome Association; Israel

**Abstract:** To introduce the conference participants to the use of AAC tools and strategies with children with Rett Syndrome (RTT). RTT is a neurological disorder which occurs primarily, but not only, in girls. Typically, development is normal up to the age of 8 to 24 months; the syndrome is marked by the loss of purposeful hand use and the development of stereotypic hand movements (wringing, claspings, hand mouthing) as well as the loss of whatever speech the child has so far developed. Approximately 95% of children with RTT do not develop functional speech. Yet clinical observation indicates that these children have a strong desire to communicate and interact with others. AAC provides intervention tools which enable them to communicate. AAC strategies include all those forms of communication (which are not speech) which can be used to express thoughts, needs, wants, questions, emotions, and ideas.

This session will be clinically oriented. It will focus on the AAC strategies used by persons with RTT to communicate both at home and at kindergarten/school. The use of eye gaze technology to enable access to computerized communication will be highlighted. Video clips will be used to demonstrate the effectiveness of these communication methods.

## **How to solve unsolvable ...? (AAC on curative stay)**

**Teréz Zupko**

**Affiliation:** Speech and Language Therapist, ADELI Medical Center; Piešťany; Slovakia

**Abstract:** Spoken language communication is a specific human ability, and people usually take it for granted. There are those among us who, for various reasons, cannot speak spoken language. AAC was created for them.

Even more specific is the case of those AAC users (even potential ones) who go to a rehabilitation stay (even abroad) where they speak language different from their mother tongue.

It is a challenge not only for them, but also for the professionals, speech therapists, to find a way, an alternative communication during the stay. We are already dealing with established communication systems, but also with cases where the simplest, basic form of communication is absent. Our goal is to choose the most suitable option for the client or the most effective form for the stay (also for continuation). Sometimes it seems to be insoluble ...