

Annual report from “The Nordic network on Tactile Language” to the Nordic leadership forum of deafblindness. An overview over the process and work of the network in -2022.

Aim and purpose of the network

The purpose of the network is to find the core points in tactile language, in order to understand how the tactile modality is used when people with congenital deafblindness speak. The network sees a need for being more specific about language in a tactile modality.

More knowledge is needed to develop intervention that supports language development in the tactile modality. The network aims to spread the knowledge into the practitioner field to support language development among people with deafblindness.

Members of the network

Jessica Jägryd / Caroline Lindström (Sweden)

Nedelina Ivanova (Iceland)

Helle Buelund Selling / Susanne Jensen (Denmark)

Marit Irene Vie, Linda Henriksen (Norway)

Network meetings in 2022:

February 18th : Online meeting

- Setting a program for the network’s course in April 2022

April 4-5th : Meeting in Denmark

- Detailed plans for the course in Denmark April 2022

May 3rd: Online meeting

- Evaluation of the network’s course in Denmark April 2022

June 20th: Online meeting

- Planning a network session at the Nordic conference in Finland 2022

September 7th: Online meeting

- Planning a network session at the Nordic conference in Finland 2022

October 28th : Online meeting

- Evaluation of the network session in Finland

November 4th : Online meeting

- Planning a course in April 2023

Activities 2022

To achieve the purpose and overall aim for the network these tasks have been accomplished during 2022:

- **New members**
During 2022 we welcomed one new member in our network. Linda Henriksen from Norway. Sini Peltokorpi from Finland decided to leave the network due to lack of time.
- **Network session at the Nordic conference in Tampere, Finland**
Our network gave a presentation about our aim and work at the Nordic conference in Tampere, Finland.
- **Course about “Tactile language development”**
Our network arranged a course about Tactile language development in Denmark. The course was held on April 5-7th in Copenhagen. There were about 30 participants from Denmark, Norway, Finland and Sweden.
- **Spreading information and knowledge through the Network’s Facebook group “Nordisk Taktil sprogligheds gruppe**
Our network started a Facebook group in 2011. The group function as a channel to spread information and to reach professionals and families in different countries. It is also a channel where everyone can share with each other on the topic Tactile language.

INTERNATIONAL CONTRIBUTION AND COLLABORATION

In 2021 our network started to contribute to and collaborate with other professionals internationally. This new approach to collaboration has been a consequence after the publication of the English version of the book “If you can see it you can support it” in 2019 and the webinar series based on the book which was held in English in 2021. The Nordic work and the international work has therefore been parallel processes for our network during since 2021. It is important for our network and the focus of tactile language to also consider perspectives from professionals outside of Scandinavia. We have a lot to learn from each other.

- **Collaboration with Steve Rose**

Steve Rose is a Speech and Language Therapist who has been working in the deafblind field for nearly 20 years. He has a strong focus on parent-child interaction, communication competency and early intervention. Our network has been collaborating with Steve during 2022 through mutual discussions about developing language in a tactile modality.

- **Collaboration with Texas school for the blind and visually impaired (TSBVI)**

In September 2021 our network was contacted by professionals in Texas, Austin. They had seen our book "If you can see it you can support it" as well as our webinars online and were interested in a collaboration about the topic Tactile language. In Texas they have an online programme called "The Texas deafblind project" in which they intend to spread information about deafblindness in relation to interaction and communication.

The professionals within TSBVI were very keen on developing their work further on the topic of Tactile language and were planning to hold a study group with the book "If you can see it you can support it" as a base. The collaboration between some members in our network and professionals in Texas has continued online during 2022, the group has also expanded with professionals from Perkins.

- **Contributing to Dbl Communication network's webinars in 2022**

Two members in our network have contributed to a webinar Serie held by Dbl communication network. The webinar Serie was aimed at parents and consisted of different themes connected to language development and children with deafblindness.

Future plans:

- Continuing our webinar series about "Tactile language". There are still a few chapters left to arrange webinars about.
- Arranging a course that focuses on children's language development in a bodily-tactile modality. Also including a parent perspective.
- Collaboration with the network Communicative relations.
- Attending and contributing at the Dbl conference in Ottawa, Canada 2023
- Focus on developing the "Tactile circle" with a multimodal perspective.
- Contributing to knowledge development at Perkins school for to blind through a webinar in May 2023.

Norrköping, April 24th 2023

Caroline Lindström, National Resource Centre of Deafblindness, Sweden.