

Report from Centre of Communication and Special Needs in Denmark

A New Core Textbook on Deafblind Pedagogy

In October 2025, the new core textbook "*Døvblindepædagogik – en grundbog*" was published in connection with the Danish national conference on deafblindness. The textbook brings together established pedagogical theories with accumulated knowledge and extensive practice-based experience from the field of congenital deafblindness.

The development process has been ongoing since 2022, and current efforts are focused on implementation at national, Nordic, and international levels. At the upcoming Nordic conference, both a workshop on central concepts from the book and a poster presentation providing an overview of its content will be presented. Furthermore, possibilities for translating the textbook into English are being explored to increase accessibility and international dissemination.

Action Research Project: *Meaningful Youth with Usher Syndrome*

CFD and the Specialist Consultancy for the Deafblind have been actively engaged in the action research project "*Meaningful Youth with Usher syndrome*", conducted in collaboration with Aalborg University.

Based on a series of future workshops involving young people with Usher syndrome, their relatives, and deafblind consultants, the project focuses on supporting psychosocial transition processes in youth. The participatory approach has led to the identification of several key initiatives, including:

- the development of a knowledge platform (*Usherpedia*),
- a theme day designed by and for young people with Usher syndrome,
- and an overview of support across the life course.

In collaboration with young people and their families, efforts are currently directed towards realizing these initiatives in practice.

In addition, the project has contributed significantly to knowledge dissemination. Emerging themes have been presented at the Danish national conference on deafblindness, and a scientific article has been accepted for publication in the journal of *Nordic Welfare Research*. A second article with a stronger psychological focus is currently on preparation for a Danish journal.

The project and its findings will also be presented at the Nordic conference through multiple formats, including world cafés, short presentations, and an article session.

Assessment Material and Nordic Collaboration

The Nordic assessment material, developed in collaboration between the Centre for Communication and Special Needs and other Nordic partners, is expected to be published following revisions by the end of 2026 or early 2027.

Although it still hasn't been published widely, the material is already being applied in practice across Nordic countries and forms a central component of the Nordic education on assessment, which commenced in September 2025. Participants from across the Nordic region contribute to a

dynamic learning environment, supporting mutual insight into both shared approaches and national differences in the assessment of deafblindness. Experiences so far indicate that the material provides a valuable framework for introducing greater structure and systematics into assessment practices.

The Nordic education has proven to be an important arena for professional dialogue, strengthening competencies and supporting the continued development and qualification of assessment practices. The current participants will finish their education in June, and a new group will start up in late September.

Research and Development Collaborations

The Centre for Communication and Special Needs continue to collaborate with research institutions and universities through networks, research groups, and joint projects, and supervision of student theses.

One current example is a collaboration with the University of Southern Denmark focusing on the development of a new project investigating how early language development in individuals with congenital deafblindness can be supported through music therapy interventions. The aim is to explore how multimodal approaches may contribute to making language more accessible and meaningful.

Contribution to International Research

Another work worth mentioning is the contribution to international research on the definition. The Centre for Communication and Special Needs has also contributed to an international qualitative study exploring how individuals with deafblindness themselves experience and conceptualize deafblindness in relation to existing definitions.

The study is based on a phenomenological approach and includes semi-structured interviews with 36 participants with deafblindness from five of the World Health Organization's (WHO) regions.

Findings reveal considerable diversity in lived experiences, challenging current definitions of deafblindness. Participants describe deafblindness as a spectrum and express a need for more inclusive and person-centred definitions that better reflect the complexity and variability of their experiences.

DBI

Focus is on the World Conference in Davos, Switzerland, taking place from 19–23 June, with a pre-conference on 17–18 June.

Residential Services

We are seeing a slight increase in the number of children using our services, including both educational programs and residential and respite care.

At the same time, we continue to face challenges, as some municipalities choose alternative solutions.