



# Deafblindness

Basic principles

Teacher's manual

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This book is compiled and written by Haakon Lie, Signo Vivo and Kenneth Verngaard, international department, the Signo Foundation, in close collaboration with Sr. Emma Kulombe, Chisombezi Deafblind Center. All illustrations in the booklet are by Solvi Aspen Solvang.



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# Acknowledgements

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of the booklet. This book builds on the booklet for the parents, and is developed by Haakon Lie and Kenneth Verngaard, in close collaboration with Sr. Emma Kulombe.

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# Introduction

The book you are holding in your hands is the result of a desire to make something that is very complicated easy and accessible for everyone. It is meant to provide an overview of the basic principles on how to interact with persons with deafblindness. The primary target groups for the book are teachers, community based rehabilitation workers and

other persons who follow up families with children with deafblindness. This book builds on a booklet developed for parents/families/caregivers, and is meant to be a tool to for teachers who provide guidance and follow up the families. The booklet to the parents has proved to be a powerful resource for the families and for the teachers. The illustrations

in the booklet are good starting points for discussions between the teachers and the families. They provide illiterate parents with tools to convey what they have learnt about deafblindness to other family members. Parents have used the booklet to discuss issues related to deafblindness with neighbors and community members, such as gender issues, cultural issues and how the local community can support families with children with deafblindness. The book for the teachers provides information about deafblindness and general principles for communication and interaction with children with deafblindness, and provides information about how the illustrations in the booklet for the parents could be discussed. In this book the left page is the same as one page in the booklet developed for the parents. The right page provides more information teachers can find useful.

This book takes use of the Nordic definition of deafblindness: Deafblindness is a combined vision and hearing impairment of such severity that it is hard for the impaired senses to compensate for each other. Thus, deafblindness is a distinct disability.

Deafblindness is a distinct, low incidence disability. Within this small group of persons with deafblindness, there are great variations between each individual. Some persons with deafblindness have some usable vision and/or hearing. Some persons with deafblindness have additional physical, medical and/or cognitive challenges. Some persons have deafblindness from when they are born and before language acquisition; congenital

deafblindness. Some persons develop deafblindness after language acquisition; acquired deafblindness. All this results in huge individual differences between persons with deafblindness. The field of deafblindness is a huge field, and it is not possible for this book to cover all aspects of the topic in a thorough way. This book is meant to be a resource, a starting point for discussions, a help for teachers to work together with families with children with deafblindness. It is important to remember that all children are different. Principles described in this book may fit many children, but will not fit for all. It is important that teachers who take use of this book discuss with parents and try to identify the individual strengths and challenges of each child, and develop an individually adapted program for each child.

When using the book to discuss deafblindness with parents and caregivers, we have experienced that many other related issues have presented themselves. Inclusion, culture and gender are issues that have lead to many interesting discussions.

## Inclusion

People with deafblindness have equal right to be included in all settings in the society as any other person. Inclusion can mean inclusion in their families. Inclusion can mean inclusion in the families and the local communities, it can mean inclusion in mainstream schools, and it can mean inclusion in the society in general. The most important aspect of inclusion is that a person with deafblindness and her/his surroundings

can communicate, interact, understand and be understood, and be respected and fully acknowledged as a human being of equal value to all others. Inclusion must happen on the individual term of each child.

Inclusive Education for children with deafblindness can mean many things. Educational services to children with deafblindness must be delivered in individually adapted co-created settings, based on the individual needs, strengths, resources and challenges of each child. If possible, and with necessary resources and assistance available, a child with deafblindness can be included in mainstream classrooms. The family is important for all children, and usually the best interest of the child is to live together with her/his family. Children with deafblindness should be together with her/his family, and educational services to children with deafblindness must be developed in close collaboration with the parents.

Persons with deafblindness require life-long assistance from persons in their surroundings. The assistance needed is varied, depending on the individual need of each person. The assistance can stretch from the need for full 1:1 assistance in all aspects of life, to access to assistive aids (e.g. hearing aids and Red and White Canes) or access to persons who can communicate and assist the person with deafblindness with whatever the person may need. Many persons with deafblindness are totally dependent on a partner to get information, to communicate, and move around in their surroundings. For

many persons with deafblindness the most important senses are the bodily senses - movement and touch - maybe supported by some residual vision and/or hearing. Persons with deafblindness communicate with their whole body, all the time. This means that the partners of persons with deafblindness have to learn to observe the person with deafblindness holistically and detailed at the same time. In addition they have to learn to express themselves in a bodily way.

Communication is developed in togetherness with competent partners, and the person with deafblindness and the partner co-create meaning and communication in shared experiences. Communication may thus develop, whenever the person with deafblindness and the partner are together. It takes much more time and energy to learn through the bodily senses, which means that repetitions are essential, and that the learner often will need short sessions and longer breaks. The United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Article 24 states that all persons with disabilities have the right to access inclusive education. Article 24 section 3 states: States Parties shall enable persons with disabilities to learn life and social development skills to facilitate their full and equal participation in education and as members of the community. To this end, States Parties shall take appropriate measures, including: (3C): Ensuring that the education of persons, and in particular children, who are blind, deaf or deafblind, is delivered in the most appropriate languages

and modes and means of communication for the individual, and in environments which maximize academic and social development.

When developing educational plans for a child with deafblindness, it is important to discuss how education can be individually adapted to the specific needs of each child with the child itself, with the parents/caregivers and with teachers in local mainstream schools. Sometimes the environments that maximize academic and social development could be found in a mainstream classroom, if all necessary resources and assistance are in place for the child to be included. Sometimes delivering education to children with deafblindness may include one-on-one instruction, accessing sensory rooms, orientation and mobility training, or education-related therapies. Community- and home-based education, whether part of the formal education system or not, should also be recognized as forms of inclusive education. Teachers and parents/caregivers should aim to include children with deafblindness into an inclusive mainstream school, but at the same time recognize the right to respect the liberty of parents to choose community or home-based education for their children, with an individually adapted quality educational plan, based on the best interest of the child. No form or mode of education should be seen as permanent. The teachers and parents/caregivers should

consider the best of the child at all times, and be flexible to meet the need of the child.

## Culture

Culture is a huge topic that we will only focus on superficially in this booklet. Culture can be described as the way an individual and a group think, behave and maintain certain beliefs, language, and social rules. Culture provides roots, structure and understanding about the society and the individual. Culture gives people an understanding of who they are and it provides a sense of belonging and identity. Cultural rules, structure, belief systems, language and meanings have to be agreed with others. Culture can thus only develop when people come together. There has been research done focusing on identifying a “deafblind culture”. This has proved to be challenging, because of the huge individual differences between persons with deafblindness, and due to the fact that deafblindness is a low incidence disability limiting the opportunity for persons with deafblindness to meet and interact.

We will not brave to define a “deafblind culture”, but we will point to one aspect of culture that has made it easier to discuss cultural issues with parents. Language and communication is one of the keys to define a culture, and even though there are great differences in how persons with deafblindness communicate, there are some similarities as well. For most persons with deafblindness communication is not possible without physical contact. Pointing at this as a “cultural aspect”

related to deafblindness has made it easier for many parents to understand and relate to this. In meetings with parents, we have sometimes had discussions where parents are stating that they cannot do some of the things described in the booklet due to their culture. One frequent example is bodily contact. “In our culture we cannot be that close”. Teachers should discuss this issue openly with the parents. Physical contact in relation with deafblindness is about communication. Denying a child with deafblindness physical contact means denying the child the means to communicate. The child must be respected and be allowed to communicate on her/his own terms. If there are challenges based on culture, the teachers should discuss with the parents how they best can adapt to give the child the opportunity to communicate freely.

## Gender

Gender issues can unfortunately also only be superficially described in this booklet. The CRPD emphasizes gender equality and women’s rights as a central concern. It confirms the situation that research and practitioners have drawn attention to; that multiple layers of discrimination face disabled women and girls, as well as men and boys. Girls, men, boys and women have differentiated experiences of disability based on their gender and the place and status they have in their societies. In addition, all research show that disabled women and girls are often amongst the most marginalized and excluded in a society. They experience high rates of illiteracy, sexual and physical violence and exclusion from accessing

services such as schooling, work training and reproductive health care. Children with deafblindness are especially vulnerable for sexual abuse and physical violence. Children with deafblindness have limited possibilities to protect themselves against sexual abuse and physical violence, limited possibilities of identifying the perpetrator, and limited possibilities to describe what they have been exposed to. It is especially important to discuss with parents what they can do to protect their child. This booklet describes the need for physical contact for enabling communication. Physical contact with a child with deafblindness is all about communication. A child with deafblindness must be respected, and all physical contact must be on the terms of the child. If you as a teacher ever should suspect or get information about a child being abused or exposed to violence, you must take all steps necessary to protect the child.

Gender issues should be discussed with parents of children with deafblindness. A girl with deafblindness and a boy with deafblindness should have the same right to access all types of assistance, services and education. Derived from our experience in Malawi, all too often mothers and female family members are the ones who follow up the child with deafblindness. Both parents are equally important resources for the child, and the teachers should discuss with the parents how both the mother and the father can interact with their child. Fathers should be especially encouraged to follow up and interact with their child. In a book

by Michael E. Lamb (The Role of the Father in Child Development, 2010, p. 492) it is described that fathers are often more likely to define a situation as negative or positive depending on the extent to which they feel that their child is accepted socially by their neighbors and acquaintances. Encouraging the father to be more active should go hand in hand with spreading information to the local community, and working to change attitudes towards children with deafblindness.

## Limitations

Developing this book has presented us with many challenges. The first and obvious one is how to develop the right illustrations to describe the key issues about deafblindness. We have hopefully been able to present illustrations that show the central aspects of communication with persons with deafblindness, but recognize the perils of presenting one illustration that is meant to be an example of one specific situation, and describing general principles based on this one illustration. All children with deafblindness are individuals, with huge individual differences depending on a lot of individual factors. The degree of hearing and visual impairment; additional disabilities and/or medical conditions; the level of follow up from the parents, from CBR-workers, from teachers; congenital deafblindness or acquired deafblindness; if acquired – at what age; late intervention – early intervention. These are just some of many factors that will have a huge influence on each individual.

An additional challenge has been the format of this book. In this book, most left-pages are generally the same page as one page in the parent's booklet. The right page has more text, and is meant to give teachers more background information that they can use when discussing with the parents. This two-page format has been chosen for two reasons. First we wanted the book to be user friendly. When discussing with the parents, the teacher will always see the same in the book she/he is using as the parents can see in their booklet. The other reason is copy-friendliness. If the teachers want to copy the booklet to parents, all they will need is a copy of the book for the teachers. They can copy the left page and give it to the parents, and do not have to have access to the parent's booklet. We expect this book to be copied outside of our control, and this is a way of ensuring that even if only the book for the teachers is available, it is still possible to make a copy for both the teacher and the parents.

The format has however also given us some challenges. It has been challenging to write short and detailed at the same time. Just one page available for discussing some of the principles and topics in this book is limited and limiting.

We hope that this book can be an inspiration for teachers, parents, CBR-workers, volunteers and more, and be used as a starting point to provide information about deafblindness, and to discuss how to best interact with persons with deafblindness. Our intention is that the book can be used in follow up visits to the

parents; in group meetings with parents; in discussions with teachers at local inclusive mainstream schools; to provide information to neighbors and the local community.

Oslo – October 2016 – Haakon Lie and Kenneth Verngaard, the Signo Foundation

## Definitions

### Partner/competent partner:

A "competent partner" can be anyone. A parent, a sibling, a grandparent, a friend, a neighbor, a teacher etc. The reason for using the term "competent partner" is that interaction with persons with deafblindness should always be done based on knowledge about the individual person with deafblindness and general knowledge about deafblindness, and it should be based on equality in the relationship.

### Teacher:

This booklet uses "teacher" as a term to describe a formally educated teacher as well as a resource person who follows up the parents and families of children with deafblindness. We recognize that there are many people who can take the role of following up the families; Community Based Rehabilitation workers (CBR-workers), assistant teachers, parent groups, volunteers and more. When using the term "teacher" we mean all who use this booklet to follow up and guide parents.

### Parent:

This booklet uses the term "parent" to first of all describe the biological parents of a child. However we recognize that some children do not live with their biological parents due to different reasons. In many places HIV and AIDS leaves many children without parents. When we use the term "parent" in the booklet we mean any caregiver; the biological parents, other family members or anyone else who are responsible for the child.



# 1. Communication

Children with deafblindness develop communication in principle as seeing/hearing children. However, they use a bodily approach, which is needed in the case of deafblindness. It requires that the people who are interacting with children with deafblindness have specific knowledge on how this can happen. Furthermore, teachers need to master different modes of communication and to have detailed knowledge on how communication is developed in children in general. The reason for this is that development of communication with children with deafblindness has to be facilitated by families, teachers and caregivers. Communication is developed in togetherness with competent partners, and the child and the partner co-create meaning and communication in shared experiences. Communication may thus develop whenever the child and the partner are together. The purpose of communicating with each other differs from situation to situation. The partner must facilitate and be aware of the different communicative functions.

Communication means to share something. In this sharing process the partners share emotions, expressions, ideas and memories. Communication happens between two or more partners. Therefore communication cannot be developed or performed without another person. Both partners are active in the process and together they co-create and develop communication.

When you communicate with another person you need to be in contact with that person. To be in contact means that both partners

pay attention to each other and are aware of what the other person wants to share, as well as on how she is trying to bring her thoughts through. During the communication process, partners continuously give feedback to each other in such a way that both of them experience to be seen, to be reacted upon and to be understood by the partner. Communication requires that the partners are able to sustain contact and attention to each other or to be in contact over time. Therefore one of the basic intervention strategies is focused on sustaining interaction with children with deafblindness and their partners.

As communication is co-created and developed by both partners, it is unpredictable. This means that you never know how a situation will develop when you make contact with a child with deafblindness. You never know for sure how she reacts to your initiative, and you never know what the child with deafblindness will “say” or do next. This means that partners of children with deafblindness need to be very sensitive, open minded and observant and be ready to share with other workmates on how the child reacts and on how she possibly contributes during the communication process. The slower tempo and the breaks during the flow of interaction and communication are essential strategies to enable the child with deafblindness to be active in the process.

Partners can communicate without using a formal language, but of course the most efficient way of communicating is to develop either sign language or speech. Therefore

teachers should always aim at developing language if the child has the potentials to develop speech or sign language, or maybe elements from both languages. However it is important that partners always use ways of communication that is understandable for the child with deafblindness. The parent, the houseparent or the teacher, whose aim is to support a child with deafblindness in developing communication, has to communicate with the child on the terms of the child. That means that they answer and use the expressions that the child has already required and at the same time they try to add or “teach” the child more advanced ways of communication. The goal is that the child with deafblindness learns from being together with his partners. It is important to be aware that many children with deafblindness may never be able to communicate fully with sign language. The most important is to help the child to communicate. Means and modes of communication are less important than giving the child the opportunity to communicate, understand and be understood.

In principle a deafblind child learns to communicate whenever he is together with another person who is able to meet him on his terms. This means first of all that the partner is able to communicate in ways that are possible for the child to understand, and it means to answer to any way the child tries to express his needs or thoughts. The child is always communicating – it is the responsibility of the partner to try to understand what the child communicates.

Communication cannot be trained; it develops when the child experiences something together with another person, and when the child feels secure and motivated. Good learning situations mean that both the child with deafblindness and the partner are emotionally involved in what they are doing and in each other.

Examples of activities where a deafblind child learns to communicate:

- Daily routines such as eating, washing etc.
- Playing with adult partners and his peers
- Exploring the world by making the community known to the child, like going to the market, going to the river etc
- Learning all kinds of practical things like cooking, agriculture and washing clothes (activities of daily living).

All these areas are covered in this booklet, and communication is a key issue throughout the booklet. When the child with deafblindness and the partner act together in these daily activities the partner should try to follow and to expand on the aspects that catch the interest of the child, while he continuously tries to tempt the child’s interest of new aspects. Maybe the partner adds signs to objects or activities that the child is paying interest to, maybe the child herself tries to express what she is experiencing by bodily movements or emotional expressions. Communication must refer to something that is meaningful to the child in her own world of experiences.

For a person with deafblindness, her perceived world only extends as far as the fingertips,

or perhaps a bit further if the person has some functional vision or hearing. This means that the main part of her attention is likely to be on her own body and the immediate surroundings. In order to have a successful interaction, the person with deafblindness will need to be in a comfortable position that allows maximum opportunity for expressions and contact – that means within reach of his partner. The partner has to have an understanding of what it is like to be deafblind and how deafblind persons can experience the world. This is a precondition for understanding the gestures that deafblind children create. These gestures will always refer to how deafblind children experience and make sense of the world. The world of deafblind children is limited and often these children only experience what we as partners show them. The challenge of the partner is to act as an inspiring role model when guiding the deafblind child into the world.

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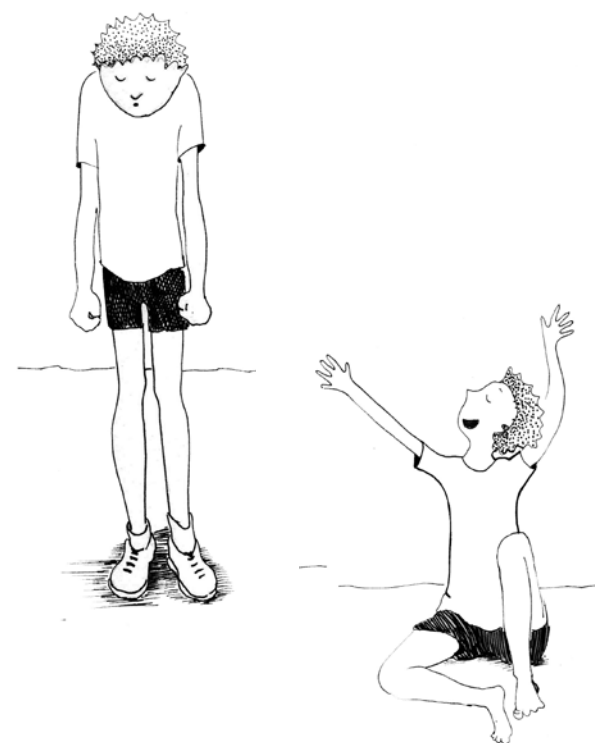
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# 1.1 Bodily expressions

1.1.a



Your child is always communicating with the whole body. Movement, facial expressions, sounds, pointing: everything is communication!

**Your child will communicate what is important to her/him at all times.**



## Description of illustrations (1.1.a)

The illustrations are meant to show bodily expressions. Top left illustrates a child with deafblindness who expresses sadness. Top right illustrates a child with deafblindness who expresses happiness.

Bottom left illustrates a child with deafblindness who expresses that she feels safe and comfortable in her surroundings. Bottom right illustrates a child with deafblindness who expresses anger and frustration.

## Theoretical background for the illustrations

Children with deafblindness create unique bodily expressions to express their feelings, needs and thoughts. This is also observed in seeing/hearing children, but for most children with deafblindness these bodily expressions or gestures will always play an important role in their communication. Examples of bodily expressions are body movements, facial expressions and pointing. The child with deafblindness might want to express that she wants to go to the toilet, is excited, hungry, tired, uncomfortable, happy, or maybe the child with deafblindness wants to do a well-known activity.

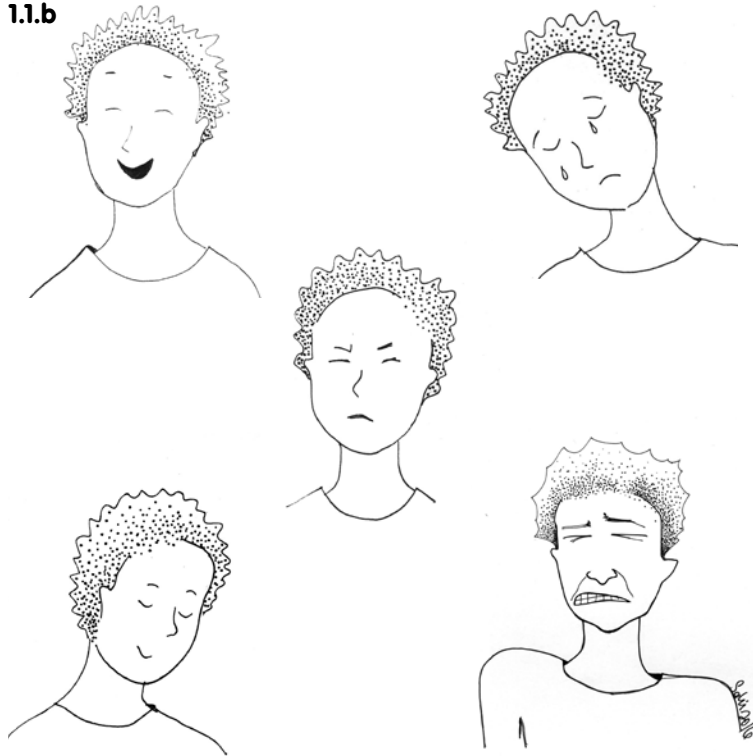
Bodily expressions and gestures are very individual for each child with deafblindness. They emerge from the experiences of the child. Parents, caregivers, teachers, rehabilitation workers or others should collaborate to try to understand what is important for the child and what the child expresses in each situation. Partners have to be able to imagine how the child experienced an event, and look for the significant details the child paid specific interest to. The significant details are what the child wants to share or communicate.

## Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Ask the parents to describe typical bodily expressions they have observed in their child with deafblindness. In group sessions with parents this can be discussed in plenary.



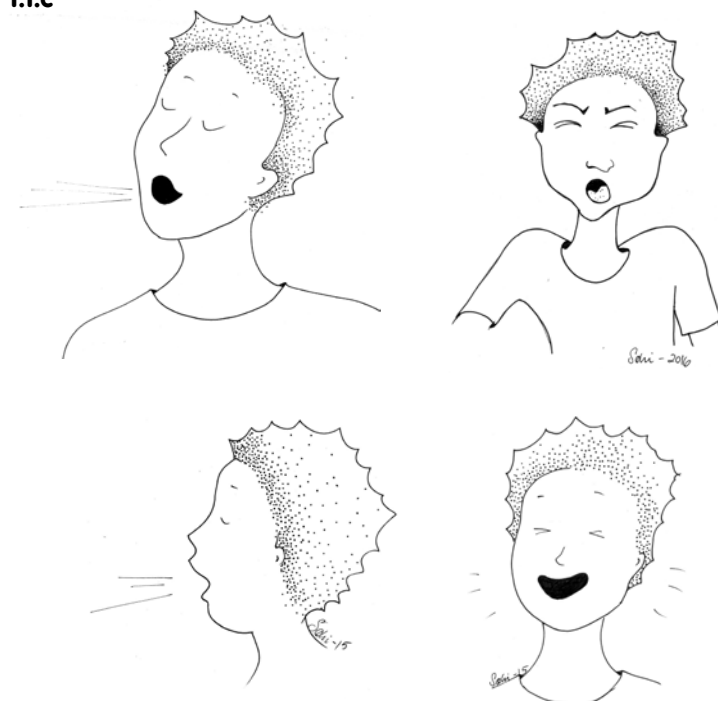
1.1.b



Your child is always communicating with the whole body. Movement, facial expressions, sounds, pointing, and signs: everything is communication!

**Your child will communicate what is important to her/him at all times.**

1.1.c



### Description of illustrations (1.1.b)

The illustrations are meant to show facial expressions. Top left illustrates a child with deafblindness who expresses happiness and joy. Top right illustrates a child with deafblindness who expresses sadness/disappointment. Center illustrates a child with deafblindness who expresses frustration, irritation and/or anger.

Bottom left illustrates a child with deafblindness who expresses that she feels safe and comfortable. Bottom right illustrates a child with deafblindness who expresses pain, discomfort and/or is complaining.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

See text on previous page (illustration 1.1.a)

Like any other child, children with deafblindness will often use their voice to communicate and express emotions. Use of voice and sounds are very individual for each child with deafblindness. Parents, caregivers, teachers, rehabilitation workers or others (partners) should collaborate to try to understand what the child expresses with their voice in each situation.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Ask the parents to describe typical facial expressions they have observed in their child with deafblindness. Ask the parents to describe typical sounds and expressions using

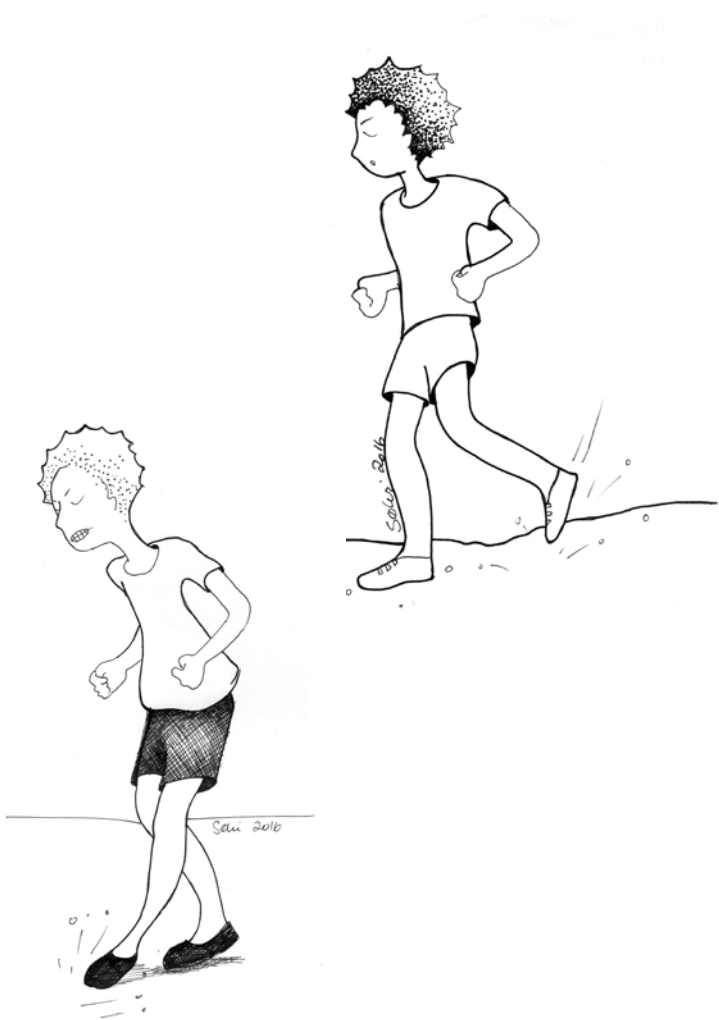
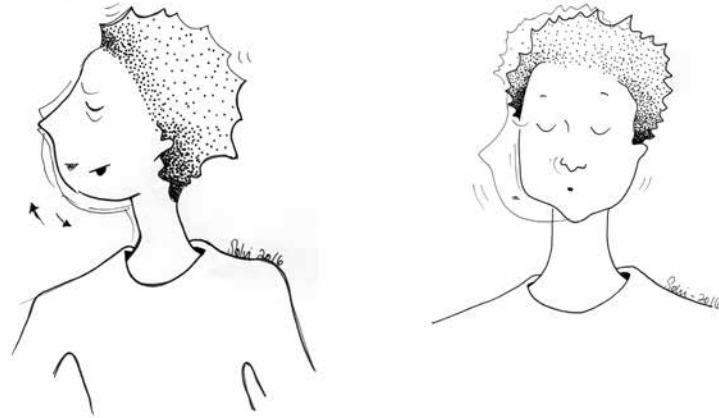
voice that they have observed in their child with deafblindness. This can be discussed in plenum in group session with parents

### Description of illustrations (1.1.c)

The illustrations are meant to show children with deafblindness expressing themselves through voice and sound. Top left illustrates a child with deafblindness who sings and is satisfied. Top right illustrates a child with deafblindness who shouts with frustration, irritation, and/or anger.

Bottom left illustrates a child with deafblindness who is calling for someone or makes a sound without easily observable emotions. Bottom right illustrates a child with deafblindness who laughs.

1.1.d



Your child is always communicating with the whole body. Movement, facial expressions, sounds, pointing, and signs: everything is communication!

**Your child will communicate what is important to her/him at all times.**

### Description of illustrations (1.1.d)

The illustrations are meant to show children with deafblindness expressing themselves through movement. Top left illustrates a child with deafblindness who shakes his head. Top right illustrates a child with deafblindness who nods his head. Bottom left illustrates a child with deafblindness who is kicking. Bottom right illustrates a child with deafblindness who dances.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

Children with deafblindness create unique bodily expressions to express their feelings, needs and thoughts. This is observed in the seeing/hearing children, but for most children with deafblindness these bodily expressions or gestures will always play an important role in their communication. Examples of bodily expressions are body movements, facial expressions and pointing (with any part of the body). The child with deafblindness might want to express that she wants to go to the toilet, is excited, hungry, tired, uncomfortable or happy, or maybe the child with deafblindness wants to do an activity of his choice or the one he likes doing on daily basis.

Bodily expressions and gestures are very individual for each child with deafblindness. They emerge from the experiences of the child. Parents, caregivers, teachers, rehabilitation workers or others should collaborate to try to understand what is important for the child and what the child expresses in each situation. Partners have to be able to imagine how the child experienced an event, and look for the significant details the child paid specific interest to. The significant details are what the child wants to share or communicate with the partners.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Ask the parents to describe typical movements that they have observed that their child with deafblindness. This can be discussed in plenum in group session with parents.

1.1.e



### Description of illustrations (1.1.e)

The illustrations are meant to show children with deafblindness expressing themselves through body movement.

Top left and top right illustrates a child with deafblindness who points with his hand. The father puts his hand on top of the child's hand to confirm that he has joint attention with the child and that he understands what the child is trying to communicate to him.

Bottom illustrates a family sitting together. The child with deafblindness has just noticed a toy on the floor by touch. The child with deafblindness has moved his body in direction of the toy he has just noticed where the toy is placed. The father has put his hand on the child's shoulder, and has moved his body in the same direction as the child to confirm that he has joint attention with the child.

Pointing gestures can be directional and the partner should confirm that he has understood by touching and pointing in the same direction. If the child moves his body towards an object of interest, the partner should direct his body in the same direction to confirm that his attention is joint with the child.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Ask the parents to describe typical movements that they have observed in their child with deafblindness. This can be discussed in plenum in group session with parents.



Your child is always communicating with the whole body. Movement, facial expressions, sounds, pointing, and signs: everything is communication!

**Your child will communicate what is important to her/him at all times.**

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

See text illustration 1.1.a.

As seen in the text 1.1.a. it is important that parents, caregivers, teachers, rehabilitation workers etc. should collaborate to try to understand what is important for the child and what the child expresses in each situation.

Pay attention to how the child moves and directs his attention to the surroundings.

1.1.f



Your child is always communicating with the whole body. Movement, facial expressions, sounds, pointing, signs: everything is communication!

**Your child will communicate what is important to her/him at all times.**

**The hands are one of the most important means of communication.**



## Description of illustrations (1.1.f)

The illustrations are meant to show children with deafblindness expressing themselves through signs and gestures using the hands.

## Theoretical background for the illustrations

All children use their hands to explore and learn, as well as to communicate. For children with deafblindness this is even more important as their hands often are the main source of getting information, and one of the most important means of communication with others.

For many children with deafblindness tactile signs and gestures are necessary for acquiring information and being able to communicate. This subject is further described in chapter 1.2. "Talking hands – Listening hands".

Vision and hearing are the most important senses for developing language. When these senses are reduced it is much more challenging for the children with deafblindness to know what is happening. For children with deafblindness it is difficult to match language to what they pay attention to, because children with deafblindness use their hands for exploring as well as for communicating. This means that the child with deafblindness needs to explore first and then the parent/teacher can add the sign.

The partner should have good sign language skills and be able to present signs tactually in a fluent way. It is always critical to introduce signs without breaking the flow of communication. Another aspect that is essential is that the signs that are presented have to be of interest to the child, and they have to be connected to his world of experience.

It is difficult to say exactly when to introduce signs. The best advice is that it can be done when partners can add signs without breaking the interaction, and when the sign matches what the child is already thinking of.

When the child presents a gesture you confirm the gesture by imitation or touch in exaggerated manner. Then you try to understand what it means – you interpret. You come up with a suggestion of interpretation and wait for the child's reaction. You confirm the gesture to tell the child that you have seen the gesture and you try to understand him. If the child is not satisfied with your suggestion then your interpretation is wrong and you try again. If the child gives you a smile or looks satisfied then you can think that you were right and you have reached a shared meaning and understanding.

This small dialogue or negotiation happens when partners want to make sure that they do understand each other and when they are not quite sure. Negotiation is part of all communication for children with deafblindness. You try out your suggestion for interpretation and you wait for feedback from the child until you reach an agreement and shared meaning.

You negotiate about the meaning of gestures or signs and you negotiate to figure out if the child with deafblindness is asking a question or just commenting. You also negotiate to figure out if the child is communicating about what is happening "here and now" or something that happened some time ago, or something that is going to happen in the future.

## Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Ask the parents to describe how their child with deafblindness uses the hands to communicate and acquire information. This can be discussed in plenum in group session with parents. Discuss how new signs can be introduced to the child. Try to make the parents identify at least three things they think their child is interested in, and where tactile signs could be introduced.



## 1.2 Listening hands - Talking hands

1.2.a



Placing your hand gently on top of the child's hand shows that you are listening, and that you see what the child sees.

1.2.b



Place your hand under the child's hand to show that you are talking or directing the child's attention to something.

### Description of illustration (1.2.a)

The illustration is meant to show a father and a girl with deafblindness playing together with a toy. The father places his hand gently on top of the girl's hand to show that he has joint attention with the girl and they both look at the same item.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

Talking hands and listening hands is a method that can be used to communicate with persons with deafblindness. The concept is that you need to establish "rules" for who is "talking", and who is "listening". The first you need to do is to establish physical contact with the person with deafblindness. This is described more in chapter 2 "How to establish and maintain contact".

Usually the listening hand is placed gently over the talking hand. In a conversation it is right and proper to show who communicates and there is a need for constantly changing the position of the hands (hands under or hands over hand), making sure that the person who is listening always places her hand on top of the hand of the person who is talking.

To show directions the parents/caregivers can place their hand gently under the child's hand. The child's hand should rest on the parent/caregivers hand (not be held by the parents/caregivers). Then the child is listening to the parents/caregivers, and is the one leading the conversation.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Ask the parents/caregivers to describe how their child with deafblindness uses the hands to communicate, and how they can use talking and listening hands with their child. This can be discussed in plenum in group session with parents.

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 4

### Description of illustration (1.2.b)

The illustration is meant to show a father and a girl with deafblindness. The father places his hand gently under the girl's hand to point and show direction.



1.2.c



Show the child that you also can feel elements on an object when you explore together. Touch different parts of the object, and allow the child touch it too, if the child wants to. This can take long time, and you should not force the child to touch the objects. If you touch it, the child will know it is safe, and may also want to touch it.

1.2.d



### Description of illustration (1.2.c)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a boy with deafblindness. Together they touch and explore a maize plant.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

The principle of talking and listening hands for acquiring and sharing information is also used when exploring objects and things together.

When the child with deafblindness shows interest in an object, the parent/caretaker can place their hand on top of the child's hand. This gives the child the experience that the parent/caretaker can see the same as the child, and also that the parent/caretaker is interested in the same thing as the child. The parent/caretaker can also explore details on the object and invite the child to touch and explore the same detail. The child must not be forced to touch anything.

In the process of exploring an object and communicating about details, it is the responsibility of the parents/caregivers to be aware of switching between positioning the hands to talk or listen (taking turns). This will help the person with deafblindness to recognize that communication is going on and they are sharing meaning.

When exploring an object it is also important to keep in mind that the child must be interested in the object. If the child does not show interest, another object should be used instead. It is noteworthy that the child with deafblindness is given a chance of making choice of what to do and with whom instead of imposing things on him. It is advisable to let the person with deafblindness explore all objects around her/his vicinity/ surroundings.

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 4.

### Description of illustration (1.2.d)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a boy with deafblindness sitting close together. They touch and explore a ball.

# 2. How to establish and maintain contact

This chapter is about establishing and maintaining contact with children with deafblindness. Being in contact means that both partners pay attention to each other and are aware of what the other person wants to share and is doing.

Like everybody else, persons with deafblindness enjoy and need to be together with other people. A person with deafblindness is alone if she or he is not in physical contact with other persons, even if they are sitting close together. Physical contact is needed to establish contact with persons with deafblindness. Establishing contact is the opening to communication. When you establish contact with children with deafblindness, they often want to know who you are and therefore they stretch their hands to explore your face, hands or your body. This introduction to contact may take some time. It is the responsibility of the partner to sustain contact by using the initiatives of the child with deafblindness as a starting point for interaction.

“Knock at the door before entering” could be a rule for making contact. This can be done by a slight touch of a part of the body of the child with deafblindness that you know is the least intrusive. Being touched on the shoulder or the arm is for many the most comfortable way to be contacted, but you need to observe the child with deafblindness and identify which way she or he prefers. The head is often sensitive to touch, and touching the head can often be felt as intrusive. You should not go directly to the hands of the child, as this could be felt as a forced way of being contacted. “Knocking at

the door” mentally prepares the person with deafblindness for company. If you gently touch the child and then wait for a while, the child will usually make contact by touching you.

If it is difficult to obtain contact, the child with deafblindness might be aware of you if you imitate what she or he is doing, e.g. her/his movements, her/his vocalization or her/his breathing. The attention that is given to the person with deafblindness is the entrance to contact and interaction. The same strategy can be used if the contact is broken and you want to obtain it again. The child with deafblindness has to be informed when you leave the place or when a visitor has just arrived.

Remember: You will not be able to interact or communicate without first making sure that you have a solid contact with the child with deafblindness.

During the interaction, maintain and sustain contact with any part of your body. This will let the child know that you are there, and give the child an opportunity to communicate with you when the child wants to. As a partner, you must find a comfortable receptive position that allows the child to know that you are present and ready to interact. If seated, this position keeps and allows one to maintain a good physical contact with knees, shoulders or hands. In a gentle way you can sustain and maintain contact. This will serve the same purpose for the child with deafblindness as eye contact for a child who can see. Physical contact informs the child that you are there with her/him and she/he feels togetherness

due to your presence. In this way you are within reach and are available for the child. This provides the child with trust and security.

When breaking contact, you should always inform the person with deafblindness that you are leaving. If the child has no signs you may just gradually and slowly leave his hand free to see how his hands are moving when left alone. This will after some time make the child understand that you will be leaving but will soon be back.

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## 2.1 Establish contact

2.1.a



Contact the child by gently touching the child's shoulder...

2.1.b



... or the child's arm.

### Description of illustration (2.1.a)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a boy with deafblindness. The mother tries to establish contact by gently touching the boy's shoulder.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

The theoretical background is described in the beginning of this chapter. For the classroom teachers the main focus in this section is to discuss with the parents how they can establish contact with their own child. The teacher and the parents should discuss how the child prefers to be contacted. All illustrations are showing the same basic principle: when making contact, the parents/caregivers should be aware of how the child prefers to be contacted. The contact should always be gentle and respectful.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Ask the parents to describe how they usually establish contact with their child. How does the child usually react?

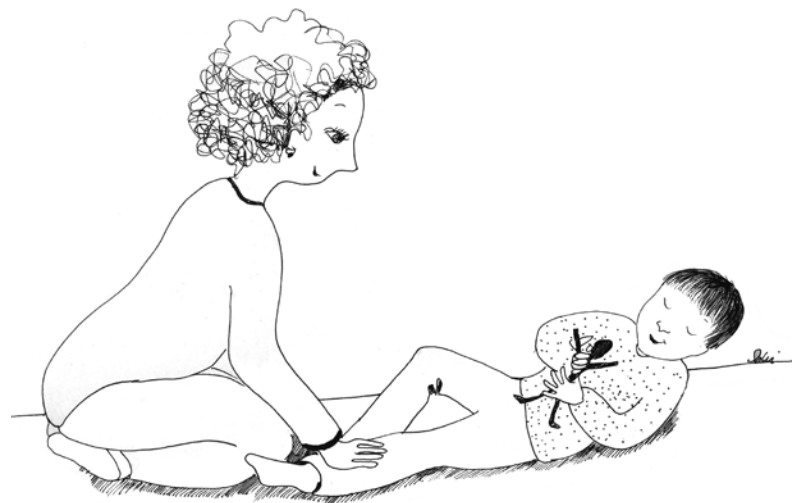
### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 5.

### Description of illustration (2.1.b)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a boy with deafblindness. The mother tries to establish contact by gently touching the boy's arm.

2.1.c



The child's foot...

### Description of illustration (2.1.c)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a boy with deafblindness. The mother tries to establish contact by gently touching the boy's foot.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

The theoretical background is described in the beginning of this chapter. For the teachers the main focus in this section is to discuss with the parents how they can establish contact with their own child. The teacher and the parents should discuss how the child prefers to be contacted. All illustrations are showing the same basic principle: when making contact, the parents/caregivers should be aware of how the child prefers to be contacted. The contact should always be gentle and respectful.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Ask the parents to describe how they usually establish contact with their child. How does the child usually react?

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 5.

### Description of illustration (2.1.d)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a boy with deafblindness. The mother tries to establish contact by sitting down the same level as the in view of establishing physical contact between the two.

2.1.d



... or sit down next to the child in a way that your bodies are in contact with each other.

2.1.e



Let the child know who you are. The child can feel with her/his hands when you are signing your name.

2.1.f



Let the child know who you are by letting her/him touching your hear, your face or your hand.

Gently place your hands on the child's hands to confirm that you can see the same as the child.

### Description of illustration (2.1.e)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a boy with deafblindness. The mother and the child communicate tactilely. The mother lets the child know who she is.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

The theoretical background is described in the beginning of this chapter. The illustrations on this page are meant to show that the next step in establishing contact is to let the child with deafblindness know who you are.

You can introduce yourself by signing your name and telling the child who you are, or by letting the child explore your face or body. Remember that the hands are the child's "eyes" and that the child should be allowed to "see" you.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Ask the parents to describe how they usually establish contact with their child. How does the child usually react?

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 5.

### Description of illustration (2.1.f)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a boy with deafblindness. The child explores his mother's face to identify who she is. The mother has her hands gently placed on the boy's hands to confirm that she "sees" she same as he does.



## 2.2 Maintain contact

2.2.a



Be together with your child over an extended period of time.

Keep the child close to you at all times, also when socializing with others. The child can sit on your lap if she/he wants to.

2.2.b



Be together with your child over an extended period of time. Stay close and allow the child to know that you are there by being in physical contact with the child.

### Description of illustration (2.2.a)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness. The child is sitting comfortably on his mother's lap, while the mother is socializing with a friend and her child.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

The theoretical background is described in the beginning of this chapter. For the teachers the main focus in this section is to discuss with the parents how they can sustain and maintain contact with their own child. The teacher and the parents should discuss how the child prefers to maintain the contact. Both illustrations are showing the same basic principle: Physical contact over time informs the child that someone is together with her/him and is within reach and are available for the child. This gives an opportunity for the child to access information, opportunities for communication when the child wants to and provides the child with trust and security. The contact should always be gentle and respectful and must never be forced on the child.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they are together over time with their child. Do the parents stay in physical contact over time with the child? Discuss how the parents can make sure that the child always has someone that are available for the child. Any family member, the father, the mother, a sibling, the grandfather,

the grandmother, a neighbor, a friend of the child: explore the opportunities found in the family and the surroundings.

### Description of illustration (2.2.b)

The illustration is meant to show a father and a boy with deafblindness. The father maintains contact with the child by keeping his foot in physical contact with the child.

### 3. Being together – being included

People with deafblindness have equal right to be included in all settings in the society as any other person. Inclusion can mean inclusion in their families. Inclusion can mean inclusion in the families and the local communities, it can mean inclusion in mainstream schools, and it can mean inclusion in the society in general. The most important aspect of inclusion is that a person with deafblindness and her/his surroundings can communicate, interact, understand and be understood, and be respected and fully acknowledged as a human being of equal value as all others. Inclusion must happen on the individual term of each child.

This chapter is meant to build on Chapter 2, and to give examples of different situations that can be discussed with the parents. The theoretical background for the illustrations is similar to chapter 2. This chapter is meant to give the teachers an opportunity to discuss with the parents how they should make sure that the child with deafblindness is included in the family and in the local community.

When discussing the illustrations, you can discuss gender perspectives. Many fathers are not active in socializing with the children with deafblindness. Discuss with the parents that it is important for the child to have close contact with both the father and the mother. Discuss how the family experiences having a child with deafblindness. What does the father think is the most positive aspect of the family situation? What does the mother think? How can the family work together to overcome any challenges?

What types of attitudes do the neighbors and the local communities have towards the family? Is the child with deafblindness included in the local school? Does the child play with other children in the area?

For inspiration to be together with the child with deafblindness in all activities of daily living you can look at Chapter 5 – Activities of Daily Living. For inspiration to discuss play activities with a child with deafblindness, you can look at Chapter 6 – Play Activities.

Physical contact between the genders - and across age brackets - are often regulated culturally, religiously, and with or without written rules. It is important to have a cultural awareness, but it is equally important to respect the persons with deafblindness' need for physical contact in order to be able to communicate, navigate the surroundings and access information. The physical contact must always be on the terms of the person with deafblindness, with respect for the personal integrity of each individual. One challenge that we have observed in some cultures is that a father feels that he cannot be in physical contact with his adolescent girl child, as this violates cultural rules. The fathers should be encouraged to communicate with their girl child despite the cultural challenges. The child has the right and need to communicate with her father. You can discuss this issue with the family, but you should also include members of the local community, to create awareness of how persons with deafblindness communicate. The most important is that children with deafblindness are included in

their family and in all activities happening in their community, and they should have the opportunity to communicate freely all the time.

The mother and the father are equally important for the child and have equal responsibility for providing for the child.

Inclusion is also about education. There are several possibilities for developing a quality educational program for a child with deafblindness. The child could be offered home based education in close collaboration with, and under supervision of, qualified teachers. Specialized units in local mainstream or special schools are another possibility. You should also explore the possibility of including the child in a regular class in a local mainstream school. Identify what types of resources that are available, and how they can be utilized. A child with deafblindness should preferably not be moved to a boarding school. If this solution is chosen, it must be done in close collaboration with the child and the family, in the best interest of the child, and to achieve a positive development that the family has not been able to achieve. Boarding school should always be considered as the last solution, and should be time bound and only for a shorter period. The best option is usually to explore all of the venues, and "shop" between the different modes. Maybe the child could go to a local school some of the days, and be with her/his family the rest? Or maybe the family and the child can come to the boarding school together for a shorter period of time? Develop individual solutions that fit best for each child.

This chapter is a chapter that can open for many interesting discussions with the parents. The most important focus in this chapter is that children with deafblindness should not be left alone. Children with deafblindness should always have someone close to them to be able to communicate and be assisted when needed. Being together will automatically create opportunities for communication, and the sense of being included.

3.a



The most important for a child with deafblindness is not to be left alone any time.

3.b



Interaction and communication is all about being together and sharing something with another person.

Interaction can be between two persons, or

### Description of illustration (3.a)

The illustration is meant to show a family sitting together. The father and the mother of the child with deafblindness are in physical contact and she is aware of what is happening among them.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

As a partner, you must find a comfortable receptive position that allows the child to know that you are present and ready to interact. Your position must allow you to maintain light physical contact with any part of the body (e.g. the knees, foot, leg, shoulders or hands, etc.). You can sustain the contact in a gentle way. This will serve the same purpose for the child who is deafblind as eye contact for a child who can see. It informs the child that you are present. In this way you are within her reach and available for the child.

A child with deafblindness learns to communicate in all situations where she/he is together with someone who understands the child's individual expressions. Emphasize to the parents the importance of not leaving the child alone. The parents need to be together with the child to be able to assist the whole time, to communicate and to stimulate the child. If the parents have to go away they should make sure that someone who knows the child is together with the child when they are away. This can be a sibling, a grandparent or anyone who knows the child and who is known by the child.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they include their child with deafblindness in the daily social life activities. Let the parents give examples of good experiences they have had with their child, what they do, and how the child reacts or responds to the activities. What challenges do the families face during social life activities?

Ask the parents how siblings include the child with deafblindness in the daily social life activities, and at what time is this mostly happens? Where is the child when the parents/caregivers are out of the house (working, taking care of other children in the family etc.)? What is the child doing? Discuss how the child can be included in all situations.

### Description of illustration (3.b)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a girl with deafblindness. The girl is touching and exploring her mother's face.

3.c



..among several persons..

3.d



Interaction and communication never happens when someone is alone.

### Description of illustration (3.c)

The illustration is meant to show a family with a girl with deafblindness. The child sits on her father's lap in the center of the family, with all family members within reach.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

As a partner, you must find a comfortable receptive position that allows the child to know that you are present and ready to interact. If seated, this position allows maintaining light physical contact with knees, shoulders or hands. In such a gentle way you can sustain the contact. This will serve the same purpose for the child who is deafblind as eye contact for the child who can see. It tells the child that you are present. In this way you are within reach and are available for the child. In this way the child can get all the information from your hands and your body.

The two illustrations on this page are meant to show how important it is to always to have physical contact with a child with deafblindness. Without physical contact the child is alone, even if it is sitting right next to the family. Inclusion happens through physical contact.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they include their child with deafblindness in the daily social life. Let the parents give examples of good experiences, and ask if they have any

challenges. Is the child with deafblindness included with her siblings? Where is the child when the parents/caregivers are out of the house (working etc)? What is the child doing? Discuss how the child can be included in all situations. You can also take a look at chapter 5, Activities of daily living, and discuss how the child is included in all activities.

### Description of illustration (3.d)

The illustration is meant to show a family with a girl with deafblindness. The child sits close to her family, but is alone. There is no physical contact between the child with deafblindness and her family.

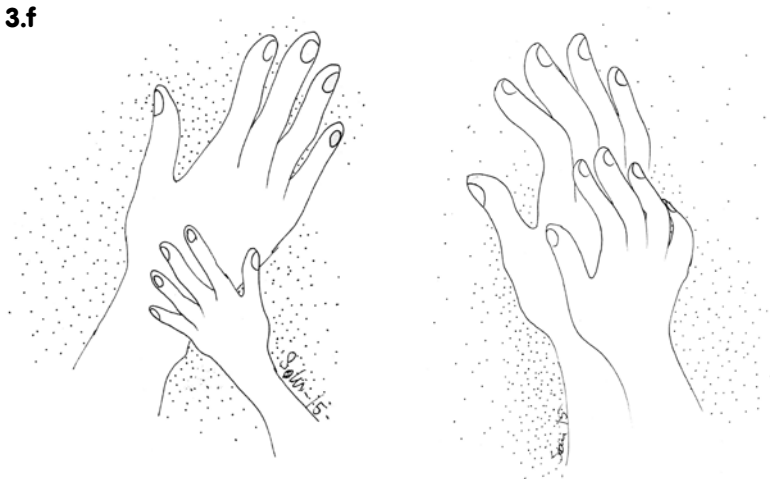


3.e



When you are together with persons with deafblindness you need to be physically close to the person for her/him to know that you are there.

3.f



The hands are one of the most important means for interaction and communication.

### Description of illustration (3.e)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a girl with deafblindness. The child is sitting on her mother's lap.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

As a partner, you must find a comfortable receptive position that allows the child to know that you are present and ready to interact. If seated, this position allows maintaining of light physical contact with knees, shoulders or hands. In such a gentle way you can sustain the contact with the child. This will serve the same purpose for the child who is deafblind as eye contact for the child who can see. It tells the child that you are present. In this way you are within reach and are available for the child. In this way the child can get all the information from your hands and your body.

The illustrations on this page are meant to underline the need to be physically close. When the child wants to sit on her mother's or father's lap, it will give the child a sense of security, comfort, and new energy and create openings for communication.

As described in chapter one, for most persons with deafblindness the hands are the most important source for getting information about the surroundings. When a person is deprived of auditory and visual stimuli, the hands often take the role of both the eyes and ears.

The hands are also one of the most important means for social interaction and communication.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how their child with deafblindness uses the hands in their daily life. How does the child use the hands for gathering information? How does the child communicate with her hands?

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 4.

### Description of illustration (3.f)

The illustration is meant to show hands in physical contact with each other.



## 4. Orientation and mobility

Movement is important for learning. Children develop their motor skills and an understanding of the physical world through movement. Children with deafblindness have challenges in learning how to move through their environment. One reason is that a lack of sensory input removes the reason to explore and develop movement. The lack of movement hinders a natural learning process, and could isolate children with deafblindness more than non-movement would do to a hearing and sighted child. Hearing and seeing children have their distance senses to perceive the world. Learning about the world when you have deafblindness requires physical contact with the surroundings. Movement is important to develop social relationships. Children learn rules of social interaction through playing games and being active together. Lack of movement affects how a child with deafblindness develops social interaction skills, and how she/he perceives and organizes the world, thus hindering basic conceptual development.

Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training provides children with deafblindness many of the experiences that hearing and sighted children get naturally. The teacher and parents (the partner) must teach the child about the environment and how to move through it. The O&M training covers many developmental domains for a child with deafblindness and teaches not only how to physically move in the surroundings, but aids in the overall cognitive and sensory development of the child. Development of balance, physical capacity (muscles), functional movement, social interaction, communication, and a concept of

the physical environment are some examples of possible positive gains from O&M training. Learning how to navigate the surroundings brings a child with deafblindness into physical contact with many different tactile experiences, thus increasing the amount of sensory input they receive. This increased sensory input also teaches the child how to use their residual senses in a functional and meaningful manner.

O&M training increases a child's opportunities for choice and control by giving them chances to show their preferences through movement. It provides a context for the development of communication skills as it provides the child with a communication context. When navigating in the surroundings, the different experiences create many opportunities for communication and introduction of signs. Children with deafblindness can sometimes show increased communication skills in environments where they have received O&M training.

Movement should be functional for children with deafblindness. Specific routes with meaningful destinations that are a part of their daily routine should be at the center of their O&M training. Repeat the same route, and stop at the same landmarks every time. When teaching a child with deafblindness specific routes, natural landmarks and cues should be used to help the child learn the route. Landmarks may include doors, stones, trees, handrails, stairs, changes in floor texture, etc. Organization of the surroundings should be relatively constant. Let objects stay in the same place. All environments should be organized with areas serving specific functions

such as a washing area, a play area, eating area, sleeping area, etc. This helps the child with deafblindness to build the idea that locations have meaning. The different areas can be marked with a tactile cue. Children with deafblindness learn to orient themselves better in a well-organized and predictable environment. When orienting the child around the environment, let the child explore, touch, feel, smell and play with the object the way she/he wanted. After introducing the child to different landmarks and cues you can communicate what they are such as the names, use and purpose for them to be there.

In the beginning of this chapter we have included some illustrations to show how a child with deafblindness can be trained to be able to sit, to crawl, to stand and to walk. We have included this because many parents have reported that they have great challenges with teaching their child with deafblindness to be more mobile. However – this is a booklet about deafblindness – not physiotherapy. In this booklet we will only provide basic suggestions, and aspects to consider related to children with deafblindness. For more information about physiotherapy, you as a teacher or community based rehabilitation worker should refer the child to a physiotherapist or a medical doctor/nurse and discuss with the parents/ caregivers how a specialized program can be developed for each individual child.

Chisombezi Deafblind Centre in Malawi uses the methods shown in illustration 4.1.a to 4.1.i with great success. These can serve as examples of methods that can be tried together with the parents.

A Red and White Cane could also be introduced to persons with deafblindness. A White Cane is the most common, and is often used by people with visual impairments. A Red and White Cane (a white cane with broad red horizontal stripes) is used to indicate that the user has both a visual and a hearing impairment. Using a Red and White Cane requires a lot of training, and will often require the person to have good concepts of the surroundings before the cane is introduced. The cane can sometimes be a very useful tool, but can also represent a "third" object between the person with deafblindness and her surroundings, and limit the possibilities to understand the surroundings. O&M training should be done before a Red and White Cane is introduced. We will not show how to train a person with deafblindness how to use a Red and White Cane, as there is a lot of learning material available for this already. Several guides are available online e.g.:

<http://www.visionaware.org/info/everyday-living/essential-skills/an-introduction-to-orientation-and-mobility-skills/how-do-i-learn-to-use-a-cane/1235>

YouTube:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oEymz3WB640>

## 4.1 Mobility

### 4.1.a



Sitting between the legs will often be the best way to start, and it is the best way to sit to open for communication. If the child sits in a corner, it is very important that the parent is with her/him the whole time to support the child and to open for communication.

Do not let the child sit alone! Be together with the child the whole time.

### 4.1.b



### Description of illustration (4.1.a)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness sitting with his father. The child is sitting upright supported by the legs of the father.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

As described in the beginning of the chapter, some children with deafblindness can have challenges with developing mobility skills.

Children without sitting skills will benefit a lot if they sit between two legs of their caregivers. The legs of the parent act as support pillars. Each leg plays a different role. One leg supports the child at the back and the other leg supports the legs of the child, and help the child not to fall forward. The parent must also assist the child with his hands when needed. Communicate with the child the whole time about what you are doing. As described in Chapter 1, the child will learn to communicate in all situations when she or he is together with a partner. Mobility training like this is a good opportunity to communicate about the different parts of the body of the child. You can also try to let the child sit in a corner to be supported from the back and partly from the sides.

Sitting between the legs will often be the best way to start, and it is the best way to sit to open for communication. If the child sits in a corner, it is very important that the parent is with her/him the whole time to support the child and to open for communication. Do not let the child sit alone!

The first training sessions should be short (about 5 minutes). Be together with the child the whole time.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how the child has developed the motor skills. Is the child stimulated and assisted? Does the child have any known physical disabilities? Demonstrate together with the child and the parents how they can help the child to develop motor skills. Emphasize to the parents the importance of not leaving the child alone. The parents need to be together with the child to be able to assist the whole time, to communicate and to stimulate the child.

### Practical exercises

For all illustrations from 4.1.a to 4.1.i, you should try to find practical exercises relevant for each child and the family. Do the activity together with the parents and the child and assist them practically in any way needed.

### Description of illustration (4.1.b)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness who is sitting with his father. The child is sitting in on a blanket in a corner with the walls supporting the body. The father is constantly in physical contact to assist the child if needed.

4.1.c



You should be in tactile contact with the child and help her/him to learn the necessary movements by repeating them together. The child must decide the pace of the activity and you must follow. Do not force the child if she/he does not want to.

4.1.d



Assist the child to stand on her/his own feet. You might have to give the child a lot of assistance to begin with, by supporting the legs and the body.

### Description of illustration (4.1.c)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness and his mother. The mother assists the child to crawl.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

The child with deafblindness who is learning crawling skills should do the following, sit the child upright, fold one leg just like any person wanting to get up from the sitting position, let the child arms be on the ground and assist her to kneel with both legs. The caregiver should support the child in different positions depending on the needs of each child.

Assist the child to stand on her/his own feet. You might have to give the child a lot of assistance to begin with, by supporting the legs and the body.

When the child is taught standing skills, make sure you observe the child's emotional expressions as shown in chapter 1, Communication. If the child expresses that she/he is not happy you should stop and start all over again. Usually start teaching any activity for five minutes, but if the child likes it, add more minutes up until the child's face or body communicates that she/he is tired. Be in physical contact with the child to support her/him and to communicate. It is important to observe the emotional expressions of the child (see chapter 1) when conducting the activity. Always remember to give support by slight touch, and being near her/him.

The parent should be in tactile contact with the child and help her/him to learn the necessary movements by repeating them together. The child must decide the pace of the activity and

the parent must follow. Do not force the child if she/he does not want to. The parent must try to motivate the child in a positive way by trying to make the activities interesting, safe and fun. At CDBC they have experienced that singing about the activity to the child, is often a good way of encouraging the child to take part in the activity. If the child has residual hearing this can stimulate the child in a positive way.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they can assist their child to crawl and to stand. Discuss with the parents how the child has developed motor skills. Is the child stimulated and assisted? Does the child have any known physical disabilities? Demonstrate together with the child and the parents how they can help the child to develop motor skills. Emphasize to the parents the importance of not leaving the child alone. The parents need to be together with the child to be able to assist the whole time, to communicate and to stimulate the child.

### Practical exercises

For all illustrations from 4.1.a to 4.1.i, you should try to find practical exercises relevant for each child and the family. Do the activity together with the parents and the child and assist them practically in any way needed.

### Description of illustration (4.1.d)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness together with his father. The child is standing while holding a chair. The father is in physical contact with the child to assist the child when needed.



4.1.e



Assist the child to stand on her/his own feet. You might have to give the child a lot of assistance to begin with, by supporting the legs and the body.

4.1.f



### Description of illustration (4.1.e)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness together with his father. The child is standing with his back against the wall. The father is in physical contact with the child to assist the child when needed.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

Assist the child to stand on her/his own feet. You might have to give the child a lot of assistance to begin with, by supporting the legs and the body

When the child is taught standing skills, make sure you observe the child's emotional expressions as shown in chapter 1, Communication. If the child expresses that she/he is not happy you should stop and start all over again. Usually start teaching any activity for five minutes, but if the child likes it, add more minutes up until the child's face or body communicates that she/he is tired. Be in physical contact with the child to support her/him and to communicate. It is important to observe the emotional expressions of the child (see chapter 1) when conducting the activity. Always remember to give support by slight touch and be near her/him.

The parent should be in tactile contact with the child and help her/him to learn the necessary movements by repeating them together. The child must decide the pace of the activity and the parent must follow. Do not force the child if she/he does not want to. The parent must try to motivate the child in a positive way by trying

to make the activities interesting, safe and fun. At CDBC they have experienced that singing about the activity to the child is often a good way of encouraging the child to take part in the activity. If the child has residual hearing this can stimulate the child in a positive way.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they can assist their child to crawl and to stand. Discuss with the parents how the child has developed motor skills. Is the child stimulated and assisted? Does the child have any known physical disabilities? Demonstrate together with the child and the parents how they can help the child to develop motor skills. Emphasize to the parents the importance of not leaving the child alone. The parents need to be together with the child to be able to assist the whole time, to communicate and to stimulate the child.

### Practical exercises

For all illustrations from 4.1.a to 4.1.i, you should try to find practical exercises relevant for each child and the family. Do the activity together with the parents and the child and assist them practically in any way needed.

### Description of illustration (4.1.f)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness together with his father. The child is standing while holding a tree. The father is in physical contact with the child to assist the child when needed.

4.1.g



Let the child step on your feet and walk together while facing each other. The child will feel the movement in the feet and the whole body, and will learn how the legs are moving because of the physical and close contact with you.

4.1.h



### Description of illustration (4.1.g)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness together with his father. The child is standing on his father's feet and holds the father's hands. The father supports the child and walks backwards with the child standing on his own feet.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When the child is able to stand, you can try to encourage the child to walk. Let the child stand facing the parent with support. You can hold the child's hands or support under the arms. Let the child step on your feet and walk together while facing each other. The child will feel the movement in the feet and the whole body, and will learn how the legs are moving because of the physical and close contact with the parent. There is joint attention in doing same thing together. Repeat the activity many times to let the child develop walking skills. Remember to start with short sessions, and add more time as the child develops. Observe the child's emotional expressions and try to make the activity fun and interesting. If the child has residual hearing, you can try to sing about the activity, to make the activity interesting. You can then also try to move in sync with the music.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they can assist their child to walk. Discuss with the parents how the child has developed motor skills. Is the child stimulated and assisted? Does the child have any known physical disabilities? Demonstrate together with the child and the parents how they can help the child to develop motor skills. Emphasize to the parents the importance of not leaving the child alone. The parents need to be together with the child to be able to assist the whole time, to communicate and to stimulate the child.

### Practical exercises

For all illustrations from 4.1.a to 4.1.i, you should try to find practical exercises relevant for each child and the family. Do the activity together with the parents and the child and assist them practically in any way needed.

### Description of illustration (4.1.h)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness together with his father. The child is standing on his father's feet.



#### 4.1.i



Be close to the child to let her/him feel how you move.

#### Description of illustration (4.1.i)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness together with his father. The child is standing and holds the father's hands. The father supports the child and walks backwards and assists the child to walk.

#### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When the child is able to stand, you can try to encourage the child to walk. Let the child stand facing the parent with support. You can hold the child's hands or support under the arms. Be close to the child to let her/him feel how the parent moves. The child will feel the movement in the whole body, and will learn how the legs are moving because of the physical and close contact with the parent. Repeat the activity many times to let the child develop walking skills. Remember to start with short sessions, and add more time as the child develops. Observe the child's emotional expressions and try to make the activity fun and interesting. If the child has residual hearing, you can try to sing about the activity to make the activity interesting. You can then also try to move in sync with the music.

Another way of assisting the child to walk with support is to use parallel bars. You can use sticks or ropes between pillars or trees. The child will first of all be made familiar with the parallel lines and how to walk along it. Help the child to stand and move her/his arms forward as a way of communicating to her/him that it is time to walk. The parent should follow sideways as the child is walking along

the parallel bars and negotiate with the child on how to move her/his legs forward one after the other.

A stick made of wood, a chair, a basket, or other items, can also be used. Let the child hold the stick/chair/basket/other items with both hands alongside her/his parent. This movement can be done in two ways, facing each other, or walking side by side. The item will provide some support to the child, preventing her/him from falling. If the item is a bit large/heavy, the parent must carefully move the item forward in the walking direction.

#### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they can assist their child to walk. Discuss with the parents how the child has developed motor skills. Is the child stimulated and assisted? Does the child have any known physical disabilities? Demonstrate together with the child and the parents how they can help the child to develop motor skills. Emphasize the importance of not leaving the child alone to the parents. The parents need to be together with the child to be able to assist the whole time, to communicate and to stimulate the child.

#### Practical exercises

For all illustrations from 4.1.a to 4.1.i, you should try to find practical exercises relevant for each child and the family. Do the activity together with the parents and the child and assist them practically in any way needed.

4.1.j



When walking, stay close together to allow the child to feel the motion in your body. Then the child will know when you stop, when you are moving, and which direction you are moving in.

This will make the child feel safe.

4.1.k



The child can hold you in your hand...

### Description of illustration (4.1.j)

Father and child walking on a road. The child is holding her father's finger.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When walking, stay close together to allow the child to feel the motion in your body. Then the child will know when you stop, when you are moving, and which direction you are moving in.

There are many ways of walking together. The most important is that the child is given the opportunity to choose how she/he feels most comfortable and secure when walking with someone.

Illustration 4.1.j is showing a girl with deafblindness moving together with the father. There are several ways of assisting the child with deafblindness,

a. Holding the child's hand, as shown in the illustration.

b. Holding the child's hip if she/he is having walking difficulties to give a sense of security, and give an opportunity for independent movement while still having someone nearby.

c. Holding the child on the elbow, or the child holds the guide on the elbow.

d. Using a cane when the child has mastered the skill of walking. The teacher and the child should hold the cane together. The one leading should hold the cane, while the person being

lead should hold her/his hand on top of the other person's hand. (As described in Talking hands/Listening hands.)

e. Carrying the child on the elbow for the child to see things with her/his remaining senses.

The list of suggestions is endless, and these suggestions are just a few examples that can be explored together with the child with deafblindness.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they walk together with their child with deafblindness. Do they have any challenges? Does the child have the mobility skills needed? How do the parents communicate to the child where they are going, or show directions?

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 1, 2 and 3.

### Description of illustration (4.1.k)

Mother and child walking on a road. The child is holding her mother's hand.

#### 4.1.l



..around the wrist, or...

#### Description of illustration (4.1.l)

Mother and child walking on a road. The child is holding her mother's wrist.

#### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When walking, stay close together to allow the child to feel the motion in your body. Then the child will know when you stop, when you are moving, and which direction you are moving in.

There are many ways of walking together. The most important is that the child is given the opportunity to choose how she feels most comfortable and secure when walking together with someone.

#### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they walk together with their child with deafblindness.

#### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 1, 2 and 3.

#### Description of illustration (4.1.m)

The illustration is meant to show the hand of a parent/caretaker and the hand of a child with deafblindness. The child is holding the parent/caretaker's finger.

#### 4.1.m



.. your finger, or...



4.1.n



..arm in arm.

Let the child choose  
how she/he feels most  
comfortable and safe.

### Description of illustration (4.1.n)

Mother and child walking on a road. The child is holding her mother's arm.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When walking, stay close together to allow the child to feel the motion in your body. Then the child will know when you stop, when you are moving, and which direction you are moving in.

There are many ways of walking together. The most important is that the child is given the opportunity to choose how she feels most comfortable and secure when walking together with someone.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they walk together with their child with deafblindness.

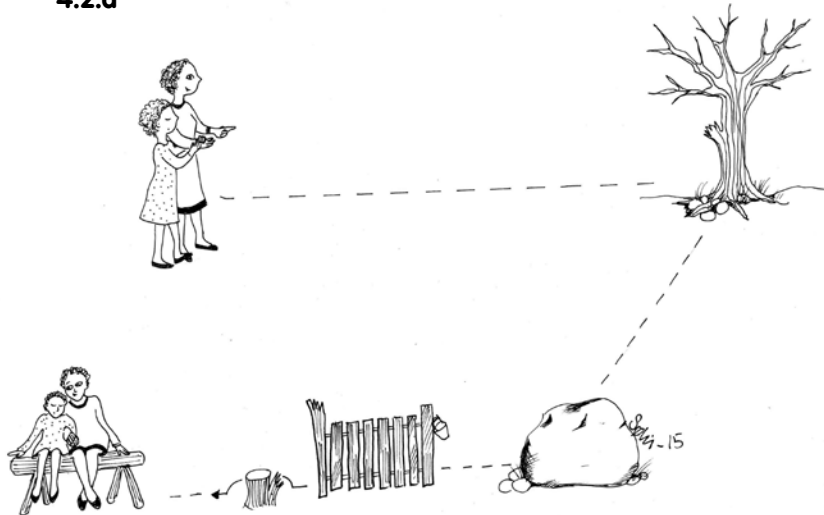
### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 1, 2 and 3.



## 4.2 Landmarks - Navigating the surroundings

### 4.2.a



Let the child get familiar with a set of route around in the surroundings. Walk together the same route many times to familiarize the child with the environment. Walk in straight lines.

### 4.2.b



Place your hand under the child's hand and allow the child to follow your hand to the things you would like to show the child.

Explore together. Use time.

Do not hold the child's hand or wrist and place the child's hand on objects. Always allow the child to choose to follow your hand.

### Description of illustration (4.2.a)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness walking together around the environment. The illustration shows how to walk in straight lines between landmarks.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When walking, stay close together to allow the child to feel the motion in your body. Then the child will know when you stop, when you are moving or going up and down, and the direction you are moving in.

The landmarks can take the form of a stone, a tree, a building, a fence etc. The important thing is that the child is able to familiarize himself with the route he is using, and that he will stay in the same place for a long time. Identify the landmarks together with the child, and try to find landmarks that are interesting to the child. Try not to move landmarks. Establish a natural route for the child, and repeat it several times. The aim should be that the child is able to navigate between places that are important for the child, and that the child can move independently.

Exploring objects together with a child with deafblindness is also described in chapter 1 - Communication, sub chapter Listening Hands - Talking Hands.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they walk together with their child with deafblindness. Look at the text in the parent's manual and discuss how they can do this together with their child using the principles described in chapter 1 (Talking Hands - Listening Hands).

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 1, 2 and 3.

### Description of illustration (4.2.b)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness walking together. The illustrations show suggestions for landmarks, and how they can be explored.

#### 4.2.c



Show the child landmarks along the route. The landmarks can be a tree, a stone on the ground, a fence, or whatever is suitable in your surroundings

#### Description of illustration (4.2.c)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness walking together. The illustrations show suggestions for landmarks, and how they can be explored.

#### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When walking, stay close together to allow the child to feel the motion of your body. Then the child will know when you stop, when you are moving, and which direction you are moving in.

The landmarks can be anything. A stone, a tree, a building, a fence. The important thing is that it is something the child can be familiarized with, and that will stay in the same place for a long time. Identify the landmarks together with the child and give a name for each landmark, and identify the landmarks that are interesting to the child. Landmarks, which are introduced to the child, should stay there all the time. Never try to remove them because they work as key points for the child to know his/her way in and out of the environment. Once the route has been established use it all the time and discuss with the child the features encountered on the way. The aim should be that the child is able to navigate between places that are important for the child, and that the child can move independently.

#### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they walk together with their child with deafblindness. Look at the text in the parents' manual and discuss how they can do this together with their child.

#### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 1, 2 and 3.

## 5. Activities of Daily Living

Activities of daily living are important to the child for several reasons. First, many of these activities deal with basic human needs: eating, drinking, and being clean and living in a clean environment. Activities of daily living are also important because they are repeated daily, sometimes several times a day. Therefore, these activities are very familiar to the child and an important part of the day. These activities can also give the child a sense of accomplishment. One last point about activities of daily living is that many of them are very tactile experiences. Washing, taking a bath, applying lotion, eating, drinking. All these activities happen on different parts of the child's body and will therefore be very real and direct experiences for the child. Activities of daily living are good opportunities for the parent to establish and maintain contact with the child. The parent must keep in mind some of the basic principles about being in contact with children with deafblindness, described earlier in this booklet. Look at chapter 1 about communication, chapter 2, about establishing and maintaining contact and chapter 4, about mobility and orientation.

The illustrations in this chapter are meant to be inspirational for parents and teachers. Many possible activities are not included. It is important that the parents understand that children with deafblindness are capable of doing a lot, despite of their sensory deprivation. If only these children are supported in the right way, they will develop their skills through doing many activities and chores in the home.

A child will learn and develop by being together with other persons in all the different activities during the day.

A child with deafblindness, who has no vision and no hearing, will have to learn about everything in the daily life through touch, smell and tactile senses.

Be together with the child in all activities.  
The child will then have access to  
you, to conversations, to experiences  
and to the surroundings.

[illegible]

5.a



Be together with the child in all activities. The child will then have access to you, to conversations, to experiences and to the surroundings.

5.b



### Description of illustration (5.a)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness washing hands. The mother stands physically close to the child when assisting, and their hands are in contact.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When a child with deafblindness washes her hands or face, the important thing for the parent is to do it together with the child. The parent should be in tactile contact with the child and help her to learn the necessary movements by repeating them together. The child must decide the pace of the activity and the parent must follow. Do not force the child to wash if she does not want to. The parent must try to motivate the child in a positive way by trying to make the activities interesting, safe and fun. This will give the child the right environment to learn.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they wash the hands and face together with their child with deafblindness. Are there any successes? Challenges? Is there anything that could be done differently? Can the child do the activity independently?

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 4.

### Description of illustration (5.b)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness washing hands. The mother stands physically close to the child when assisting, and their hands are in contact.



5.c



Be together with the child in all activities. The child will then have access to you, to conversations, to experiences and to the surroundings.

5.d



### Description of illustration (5.c)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness. The mother is assisting the child in taking a bath.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When a child with deafblindness does activities like taking a bath or getting dressed, the important thing for the parent is to do it together with the child. The parent should be in tactile contact with the child and help her to learn the necessary movements by repeating them together. The child must decide the pace of the activity and the parent must follow. Do not force the child to do the activity if she does not want to. The parent must try to motivate the child in a positive way by trying to make the activities interesting, safe and fun. This will give the child the right environment to learn.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they assist their child with deafblindness to take a bath and get dressed. Are there any successes? Challenges? Is there anything that could be done differently? Can the child do the activity independently?

### Description of illustration (5.d)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness. The mother helps the child to get dressed.

5.e



Be together with the child in all activities. The child will then have access to you, to conversations, to experiences and to the surroundings.

5.f



### Description of illustration (5.e)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness. The mother helps the child to apply lotion.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When a child with deafblindness does activities like applying lotion or brushing teeth, the important thing for the parent is to do it together with the child. The parent should be in tactile contact with the child and help her to learn the necessary movements by repeating them together. The child must decide the pace of the activity and the parent must follow. Do not force the child if she does not want to do the activity. The parent must try to motivate the child in a positive way by trying to make the activities interesting, safe and fun. This will give the child the right environment to learn.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they perform daily hygienic activities with their child with deafblindness. Are there any successes? Challenges? Is there anything that could be done differently? Can the child do the activity independently?

### Description of illustration (5.f)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness brushing the child's teeth together.

5.g



Be together with the child in all activities. The child will then have access to you, to conversations, to experiences and to the surroundings.

5.h



### Description of illustration (5.g)

These illustrations are meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness eating together. On the first illustration the child manages to eat independently, on the other illustration the child need more assistance from the mother.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When a child with deafblindness does activities like eating or preparing food, the important thing for the parent is to do it together with the child. The parent should be in tactile contact with the child and help her to learn the necessary movements by repeating them together. The child must decide the pace of the activity and the parent must follow. Do not force the child if she does not want to do the activity. The parent must try to motivate the child in a positive way by trying to make the activities interesting, safe and fun. This will give the child the right environment to learn.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how their child with deafblindness eats. Independently? Is he/she in need of assistance? How do they assist? You can also talk about making food together with the child with deafblindness. Do they do it, and how?

### Description of illustration (5.h)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness preparing food together. Together they stir the food.

5.i



Be together with the child in all activities. The child will then have access to you, to conversations, to experiences and to the surroundings.

5.j



### Description of illustration (5.i)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness cutting vegetables together.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When a child with deafblindness does activities like applying lotion or brushing teeth, the important thing for the parent is to do it together with the child. The parent should be in tactile contact with the child and help her to learn the necessary movements by repeating them together. The child must decide the pace of the activity and the parent must follow. Do not force the child to if she does not want to do the activity. The parent must try to motivate the child in a positive way by trying to make the activities interesting, safe and fun. This will give the child the right environment to learn.

When preparing a meal or setting the table, remember the principles of talking hands and listening hands. You can shift between the child holding the items with the parent's hands listening, and the parent's hands holding the items with the child's hands listening. In this way the two can communicate about the different items, the parent can demonstrate how to do the activity (parent doing the activity – child listening), and can confirm that the child is doing the right thing (child doing the activity – parent listening).

When setting the table also remember the principles described in chapter 4.2. Landmarks – Navigating the environment. The child needs

to learn to navigate in the kitchen, and to set the table in the same way each time. The kitchenware should be kept in the same place to make it easy for the child to find what she is looking for. The table should be set in the same way each time. This makes it easier for the child to do the activity independently.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how they prepare food, do the dishes or do any other kitchen activity together with their child with deafblindness.

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 4.

### Description of illustration (5.j)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness setting the table together.



5.k



Be together with the child in all activities. The child will then have access to you, to conversations, to experiences and to the surroundings.

5.l



### Description of illustration (5.k)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness doing the dishes together.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When a child with deafblindness does activities or chores, like sweeping the floor or washing clothes, the important thing for the parent is to do it together with the child. The parent should be in tactile contact with the child and help her to learn the necessary movements by repeating them together. The movements used in these two activities are quite similar, and they involve the whole body. The child must decide the pace of the activity and the parent must follow. The parents should try to emphasize the rhythm of these movements. Do not force the child if she does not want to do the activity. The parent must try to motivate the child in a positive way by trying to make the activities interesting, safe and fun. This will give the child the right environment to learn.

When doing dishes or washing clothes, remember the principles of talking hands and listening hands. You can shift between the child holding the items with the parent's hands listening, and the parent's hands holding the items with the child's hands listening. In this way the two can communicate about the different items and clothes, the parent can demonstrate how to do the activity (parent

doing the activity – child listening), and can confirm that the child is doing the right thing (child doing the activity – parent listening).

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how their child with deafblindness can participate in doing the daily chores. Do they do it? How?

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 3 and 4.

### Description of illustration (5.l)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness washing clothes together.

5.m



Be together with the child in all activities. The child will then have access to you, to conversations, to experiences and to the surroundings.

5.n



### Description of illustration (5.m)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness sweeping the floor together.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When a child with deafblindness does activities or chores, like sweeping the floor or washing clothes, the important thing for the parent is to do it together with the child. The parent should be in tactile contact with the child and help her to learn the necessary movements by repeating them together. The movements used in these two activities are quite similar, and they involve the whole body. The child must decide the pace of the activity and the parent must follow. The parents should try to emphasize the rhythm of these movements. Do not force the child if she does not want to do the activity. The parent must try to motivate the child in a positive way by trying to make the activities interesting, safe and fun. This will give the child the right environment to learn.

When sweeping or washing, remember the principles of talking hands and listening hands when holding the broom or the mop. You can shift between the child holding the broom/mop with the parent's hands listening, and the parent's hands holding the broom/mop with the child's hands listening. In this way the two can communicate about how to sweep, which direction to go etc.

Also remember the principles described in chapter 4.2 Landmarks – Navigating the

surroundings. Follow a fixed route each time the activity is done, sweep or wash section by section of the surface to be covered, identify landmarks that can be used and try to let the child be familiar with the route. This must be adapted to each environment the child is in.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how their child with deafblindness can participate in doing the daily chores. Do they do it? How? Discuss with the parents if they understand the principles of listening hands and talking hands. Collaborate with the parents to plan a smart route that can be used when sweeping or washing. Ask the parents to suggest sections and landmarks.

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 2, 3 and 4.

### Description of illustration (5.n)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness mopping the floor together.

5.o



Be together with the child in all activities. The child will then have access to you, to conversations, to experiences and to the surroundings.

5.p



### Description of illustration (5.o)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness watering plants together.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

When a child with deafblindness does activities like watering the garden or going to the market the important thing for the parent is to do it together with the child. The parent should be in tactile contact with the child and help her to learn the necessary movements by repeating them together. The child must decide the pace of the activity and the parent must follow. Activities that involve going outside of the child's close environment demands special attention from the parent. The child will be much more vulnerable in the marked than at home. Explore objects together with the child and help her to meet other people. Do not force the child if she does not want to do the activity. The parent must try to motivate the child in a positive way by trying to make the activities interesting, safe and fun. This will give the child the right environment to learn.

Remember the principles described in chapter 4.2 Landmarks – Navigating the surroundings. Follow a fixed route each time the activity is done. Collect water at the same place. Identify landmarks on the way to where the water is collected, and on the way to the crops to be irrigated. Irrigate section by section using landmarks to determine the size of the

sections. Let the child feel the flow of the water, and touch the ground to know that the crops have enough water.

When going to the market you should also follow the same route every time, identify landmarks, and navigate together with the child. Along the route there might be many interesting things to explore and communicate about. Let the child explore the surroundings using the principles of talking hands and listening hands.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how their child with deafblindness participates doing the daily chores, and how they experience taking their child to the market. What is successful and what is challenging? What new chores do they think their child can learn?

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 2, 3 and 4.

### Description of illustration (5.p)

The illustration is meant to show a mother and a child with deafblindness exploring fruit on the market together. The woman selling the fruit has her attention on the child.

## 6. Play Activities

6.a



Children with deafblindness need social contact with siblings and friends like any other child. Be together with the child in all activities. The child will then have access to the friends, to conversations, to experiences and to the surroundings.

6.b



### Description of illustration (6.a)

The illustration is meant to show children playing together. There is one girl with deafblindness together with four friends. The friends are in physical contact to support and to communicate with the girl.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

A child will learn and develop by being together with other persons in all the different activities during the day.

A child with deafblindness, who has no vision and no hearing, will have to learn about everything in the play activities through touch, smell and tactile senses.

The illustrations on this page are included to show different ways of being together in a play situation. Common for all illustrations in this chapter is that children with deafblindness should be included in all activities, all the time. It is important that the child with deafblindness is given an opportunity to experience different types of activities. The illustrations give some concrete examples. You should explore different types of activities the child can be included in with the child and the parents. When the child is included, the child will have access to people in her surroundings, to communication, and she will become more familiar in the surroundings.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how their child with deafblindness participates in play activities. Do the other children in the family play with her/him? Does the child have friends in the neighborhood? How can the families encourage other children to play with and be together with the child with deafblindness? Do the other children know what deafblindness is? What is successful and what is challenging? Which play activities does the parents think would be good for the child with deafblindness?

### Description of illustration (6.b)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness holding hands with another child. The two swing the hands back and forth



6.c



Children with deafblindness need social contact with siblings and friends like any other child. Be together with the child in all activities. The child will then have access to the friends, to conversations, to experiences and to the surroundings.

6.d



fig 35 - spile frommer

### Description of illustration (6.c)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness walking together/dancing in a line while holding their hands on the shoulder of the person walking in front of her.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

The illustrations on this page are included to show different ways of being together in a play situation. Common for all illustrations in this chapter is that children with deafblindness should be included in all activities, all the time. It is important that the child with deafblindness is given an opportunity to experience different types of activities. The illustrations give some concrete examples. You should explore different types of activities the child can be included in with the child and the parents. When the child is included, the child will have access to people in her surroundings, to communication, and she will become more familiar in the surroundings.

Walking/dancing in a line like illustrated is an excellent activity. The child will feel the movement of the person in front, and can communicate to him/her with her hands. The child will also get information from the person walking behind her.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how their child with deafblindness participates in play activities. Do the other children in the family play with

her/him? Does the child have friends in the neighborhood? How can the families encourage other children to play with and be together with the child with deafblindness? Do the other children know what deafblindness is? What is successful and what is challenging? Which play activities does the parents think would be good for the child with deafblindness?

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 3 and 4.

### Description of illustration (6.d)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness playing drums together with a friend.

6.e



Children with deafblindness need social contact with siblings and friends like any other child. Be together with the child in all activities. The child will then have access to the friends, to conversations, to experiences and to the surroundings.

6.f



### Description of illustration (6.e)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness playing with a ball together with a friend. The two are sitting across from each other with their feet in contact with each other. The legs form an enclosed area where it is easy to send a ball from one to the other.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

The illustrations on this page are included to show different ways of being together in a play situation. Common for all illustrations in this chapter is that children with deafblindness should be included in all activities, all the time. The important is not how you are together, but that you give the child with deafblindness an opportunity to experience different types of activities. The illustrations gives some concrete examples, but you should explore together with the child and the parents different types of activities the child can be included in. When the child is included, the child will have access to people in her surroundings, to communication and will get more familiar in the surroundings.

Playing with a ball is an activity that can be tried. Adapt the activity to the child's strengths. Sitting down like illustrated will create a space between the two where the ball can be played with, without the ball rolling away. The child will be able to feel the person she is together with through her feet, and she will feel the ball when it is touching her legs.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how their child with deafblindness participate in play activities. Do the other children in the family play with her/him? Does the child have friends in the neighborhood? How can the families encourage other children to play with and be together with the child with deafblindness? Do the other children know what deafblindness is? What is successful and what is challenging? Which play activities does the parents think would be good for the child with deafblindness?

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 4

### Description of illustration (6.f)

The illustration is meant to show a child with deafblindness playing with a ball together with some friends. One of the friends is in close physical contact with the child with deafblindness. Together they throw a ball to the other friend.

6.g



Children with deafblindness need social contact with siblings and friends like any other child. Be together with the child in all activities. The child will then have access to the friends, to conversations, to experiences and to the surroundings.

6.h



### Description of illustration (6.g)

The illustration is meant to show a girl with deafblindness playing on a swing hanging in a tree. A mother (or a sister or a friend) is assisting and supporting.

### Theoretical background for the illustrations

The illustrations on this page are included to show different ways of being together in a play situation. Common for all illustrations in this chapter is that children with deafblindness should be included in all activities, all the time. The important is not how you are together, but that you give the child with deafblindness an opportunity to experience different types of activities. The illustrations gives some concrete examples, but you should explore together with the child and the parents different types of activities the child can be included in. When the child is included, the child will have access to people in her surroundings, to communication and will get more familiar in the surroundings.

Playing on a swing is something some children with deafblindness may enjoy, whilst others may feel unsafe and may not want to do this. Make sure that the child feels safe and that she has physical contact with the one assisting her all the time. You can possibly start with the child sitting on someone's lap. This will give the child a feeling of security.

### Suggestions for discussions with parents/caregivers

Discuss with the parents how their child with deafblindness participates in play activities. Do the other children in the family play with her/him? Does the child have friends in the neighborhood? How can the families encourage other children to play with and be together with the child with deafblindness? Do the other children know what deafblindness is? What is successful and what is challenging? Which play activities does the parents think would be good for the child with deafblindness?

### Practical exercises

See Chapter 7, exercise no. 3.

### Description of illustration (6.h)

The illustration is meant to show two children with deafblindness playing on a swing. On the left, a child with deafblindness is sitting on the lap of a friend who is assisting her. On the right a child with deafblindness is sitting on her own, with a friend assisting and supporting.



## 7. Practical exercises

Working and interacting with children with deafblindness is a skill that needs practice. It is very difficult for anyone with vision and hearing to understand the consequence of living with deafblindness. Still, this knowledge, or understanding, is essential for anyone who wants to teach, assist or simply interact and communicate with children with deafblindness.

To increase the partner's understanding of how children with deafblindness experience the world, we have constructed a series of practical exercises.

These exercises are intended to give two important experiences. First, they will give a small glimpse on how it is to have deafblindness, through giving an experience of being in the world without the two primary senses; vision and hearing. Secondly, they will give the participants useful experience with guiding and assisting people with deafblindness.

To be able to perform these exercises you must find a way to simulate deafblindness. You must make sure that the participants can see and hear as little as possible. Use a piece of cloth as a blindfold. Earplugs are useful to reduce sound and simulate deafness. If you do not have earplugs, you can use rolled up toilet paper. Do not put the paper too far inside your ear; always make sure you can take it out when the exercise is finished.

These following practical exercises are examples of what you can do. The most important thing is to construct situations that can give the participants valuable information

about how children with deafblindness experience the world they live in.

When working with parents, you should always try to be creative and try to find practical exercises relevant for the parents and the child with deafblindness in the specific family situation and local community.

Whenever you do the practical exercises, the most important part is to discuss the participant's experiences after the exercise. The teacher who is in charge of the exercise should make sure that every participant is given an opportunity to share their experience.

Remember to make sure that the person with "deafblindness" is safe and protected during the exercises. The partner/guide has a responsibility to take care of the person with "deafblindness".

1. One person simulates deafblindness (blindfold and earplugs). The person with "deafblindness" should wait for 2 minutes alone, before another person (the partner) makes contact. The partner guides the person with "deafblindness" to walk around in the near surroundings. Can be done with two or more participants. Divide the group into two equally sized halves.
  - Good questions to ask the participants that had "deafblindness": Describe your experience. How did you experience sitting alone? How did you experience waiting? How long do you think you waited? How did you experience being

contacted? How were you contacted? How did you experience leaving your chair to start walking? Were you able to find out where you went?

- The partner should also be given an opportunity to describe his/her experience: How was it to guide the person with "deafblindness"? Difficult? Easy? Did you feel the person with "deafblindness" trusted you? Do you think you could have done things differently?
  - Recurring topics the teachers should be mindful of in the discussions: fear, time, touch, trust, orientation, confusion.
2. One person simulates deafblindness (blindfold and earplugs). The partner takes contact and guides the person with "deafblindness" on a walk. Let the person with "deafblindness" meet other people by touching them. Can be done with two or more participants. Divide the group into two equally sized halves.
    - Good questions to ask the participants that had "deafblindness": Describe your experience. How did you experience sitting alone? How did you experience being contacted? How were you contacted? How did you experience leaving your chair to start walking? Were you able to find out where you went? Describe the feeling of meeting other people.
  3. One person simulates deafblindness (blindfold and earplugs). The partner takes contact and guides the person with "deafblindness" on a walk. Let the person with "deafblindness" meet different obstacles; ascending/descending stairs, entering through doors, walking in crowded areas. This exercise can be expanded according to the surroundings; the teacher should use his/her imagination to evolve this exercise. Can be done with two or more participants. Divide the group into two equally sized halves.
    - Good questions to ask the participants that had "deafblindness": Describe your experience. How did you experience sitting alone? How did you experience

- The partner should also be able to describe his/her experience: How was it to guide the person with "deafblindness"? Difficult? Easy? Did you feel the person with "deafblindness" trusted you? How did you support the person with "deafblindness" when he/she met another person? Do you think you could have done things differently? Was it possible to prepare the person with "deafblindness" for obstacles on the way? How?
- Recurring topics the teachers should be mindful of in the discussions: fear, time, touch, trust, orientation, confusion. The tactile sense, touching and responding to other people's hands.



- being contacted? How were you contacted? How did you experience exploring the different objects? Did you recognize any of the objects? Was it interesting to touch the objects? Describe the different obstacles/challenges you met along the way. Did you have a good guide? Did you feel safe?
- The partner should also be able to describe his/her experience: How was it to guide the person with "deafblindness"? Difficult? Easy? Did you feel the person with "deafblindness" trusted you? How was it to introduce different objects for the person with "deafblindness"? Difficult? Do you think you could have done things differently? Was it possible to prepare the person with "deafblindness" for obstacles on the way? How?
  - Recurring topics the teachers should be mindful of in the discussions: fear, time, touch, trust, orientation, confusion, the tactile sense.
4. One person simulates deafblindness (blindfold and earplugs). Find many different objects that the person with "deafblindness" can explore. Use common objects that are easy to recognize, like food, utensils, fruit or clothing. Explore the objects together with your hands. Can be done with two or more participants. Divide the group into two equally sized halves.
5. In a group, give 2/3 of the participants' blindfolds and earplugs to let them experience how it is to have deafblindness. Do not tell them what is going to happen. Let the group of persons with "deafblindness" sit without any stimuli for two minutes. Tell the 1/3 of the group without blindfolds or earplugs to establish contact with the persons with "deafblindness". Both gentle and soft, but also sometimes a bit more firmly. Tell the participants to be careful and respectful of each other. All participants

should return to their places before blindfolds and earplugs are removed.

- Good questions to ask the participants that had "deafblindness": Describe your experience. How did you experience sitting alone? How did you experience being contacted? How were you contacted? On which part of the body did you prefer to be contacted? On which part of your body did you not like to be contacted?
- The partner should also be able to describe his/her experience: How was it to contact the person with "deafblindness"? Difficult? Easy? Did you feel that person with "deafblindness" trusted you?
- Recurring topics the teachers should be mindful of in the discussions: fear, time, touch, trust, sensitive parts of the body differ from person to person, being touched on the head is often uncomfortable.

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