University of Alberta, October 18, 2011

Understanding Young Children with Severe Multiple Disabilities through Child-guided Assessment Strategies
General Guidelines

We will follow Iris to demonstrate the process of functional assessment.

Prior to the Assessment
- Talk to parents/caregivers to obtain information on child’s interests, preferences, etc.
- Observe child while talking to parents/caregivers
- Process is guided by the child’s interests
- Start by following the child’s interests and movements
- Adapt to child’s level, interests, and emotions
Beginning the Assessment

- Assess in an environment that is comfortable and/or familiar to child. In this case the assessment took place in the child’s home. The assessment was carried out mainly by the mother, with guidelines from Dr. van Dijk.
Insert Video clip Iris 7
In this assessment, we were particularly interested in learning more about Iris’ abilities in the following Domains:

1. (social) relationships with her mother, teacher and sisters
2. interaction and communication
3. preferred sensory learning channel(s)
4. anticipation of certain events
5. neuro-biological states
6. problem solving skills
7. fine and gross motor skills
8. orienting behavior toward new events
9. imitation skills
10. understanding of a course of events - a routine.
Domain 1 - Relationship

The teacher has just arrived. She makes herself known by letting Iris play with the necklace which is the teacher's special object of reference.

Notice the affectionate bond between the two.
Insert Video clip Iris 1
Domain 2 - Interaction.

Observe in the following clip how teacher and child “meet each other with their eyes.”
Insert Video clip Iris 2
In the next clip, you can observe that Iris is interested in a visual task. (Domain 3 - preferred sensory channel)

Iris looks to mother’s face for approval. (Domain 2 - interaction)

When Iris encounters difficulties she does not get angry. (Domain 5 - neurobiological state)
Iris learns with a little bit of help to solve the problem of turning the pieces of the jig-saw puzzle. (Domain 6 - problem solving)

Observe the adequate fine motor skill. (Domain 7)
Iris also shows that she understands the course of events (a routine) by taking the puzzle to the corner where it belongs. (Domain 10)
Insert Video clip Iris 3
As it can be observed, Iris shows in making the puzzle that her eye-hand coordination is a rather well established. (Domain 7)
A very important aspect of learning is demonstrated in the following clip. This is anticipation. By selecting the key of the toy box, Iris shows that she is able to think ahead. (Domain 4)
Insert Video clip 4
When Iris puts a block in the compartment she waves it good bye. She *pretends* that the block is a person. This is an important precursor for *symbolic* development. (Domain 5)
Insert Video clip Iris 5
During snack time we can observe Iris’ social behaviour again. Without any prompting, she offers her little sister a cookie. (Domain 1)
Insert Video clip Iris 6
Iris has a cochlear implant, but her consequent responses to sound is not well established yet.

The sonorous voice of the assessor is new for her. When he speaks the word “koekje,” Iris orients herself to this new stimulus. (Domain 8)
Insert Video clip Iris 8
Iris attempt to *imitate* the assessor’s mouth movements (Domain 9) can well be observed in the following clip.
Insert Iris Video clip 9
In the next clip, you can observe how Iris imitates the combing of the hair of the doll.
Insert Iris Video clip 11
In the following clip, you can observe how Iris imitates the action she has observed of adults taking pictures.
Insert Iris Video clip 12
The 10 domains constitutes essential aspects of learning and behaviour. (see Nelson, Van Dijk, McDonell & Thompson, 2002 and 2010) on which the Individual Educational Plan can be built.