

## Workshop 17

**Interprofessional rehabilitation interventions improving functioning, participation, inclusion and quality of life in 0–6-year-old children with severe visual impairment.**

***How are activities of daily living (ADL) interlinked with, environmental factors, play, psychosocial skills, play skills and wellbeing?***

**September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
15.45-16.30**

By Psychologist Birgit Irene Puch Jørgensen, Synscenter Refsnæs, Denmark

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# Presentation...

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**Nordic Congress in the field of Visual Impairment, September 10-12,  
2025**

**Scandic Park Sandefjord in Norway**

Theme: Inclusion and quality of life in the field of Visual Impairment



# Two subjects tapping into the theme of the Congress – inclusion and quality of life

1. How are *activities of daily living* (ADL) interlinked with, environmental factors, participation in play, psychosocial skills, play skills and wellbeing?
2. Interprofessional rehabilitation interventions improving functioning, participation, inclusion and quality of life in 0–6-year-old children with severe visual impairment.



# Why are playskills important?

Play is crucial for developing social-emotional, cognitive, and physical skills, and parents and peers can play a significant role in promoting appropriate play ([Sacks et al., 1992](#)).

Children with visual impairment spend a higher proportion of their playtime alone compared to their typically developing peers ([Schneekloth, 1989](#)). They also tend to interact more with adults and have limited experiences with complex or social games that involve rules or creativity ([Rettig, 1994](#); [Tzvetkova-Arsova and Zappaterra, 2017](#)).

Therefore, it is important to support and encourage developmentally appropriate play for children with visual impairment.

Source:

Fatemeh Ghasemi, Hooshang Mirzaie, Seyed Ali Hosseini, Abbas Riazi, Abbas Ebadi (2023): Vision-related tasks in children with visual impairment: a multi-method study:

Link: <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2023.1180669/full>



# Sociocultural theory of development; Vygotsky highlighted

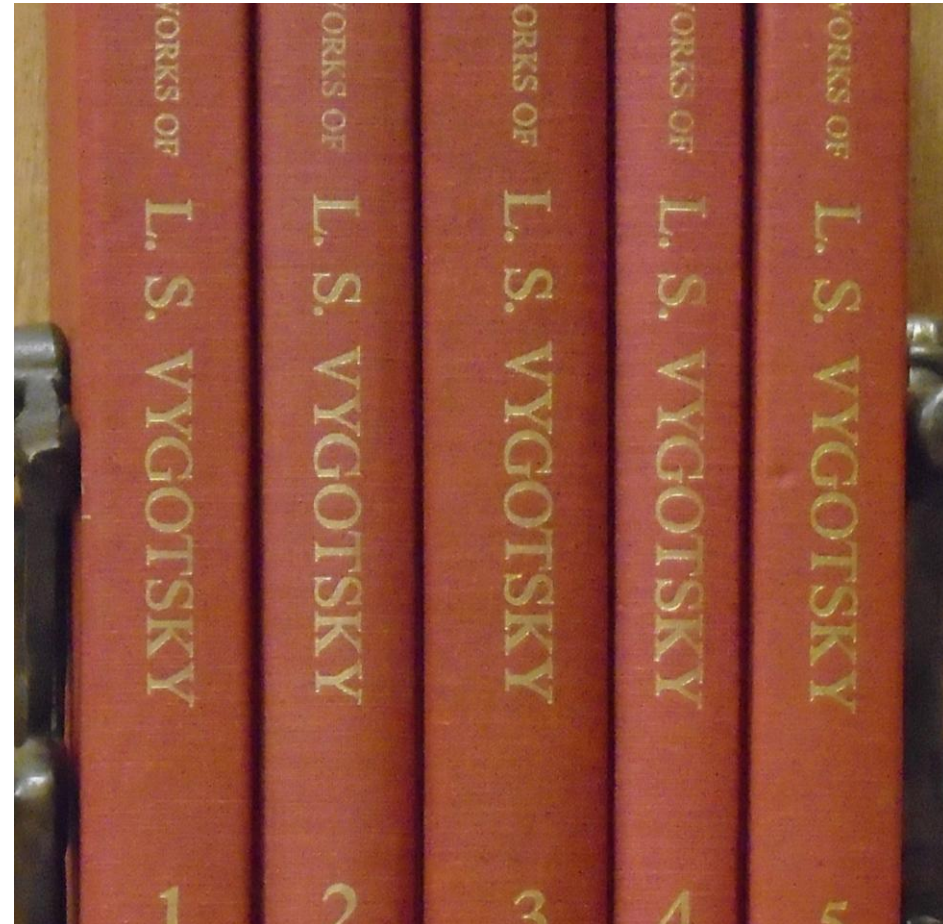
*"In the end there is no fundamental difference between the sighted and the blind child [...] and the whole process of development is one and the same for blind and sighted children"*  
(1983, s. 95)

Source:

Vygotsky, L.S. (1983)

Collected Works, Volume Five:

The Fundamentals of Defectology.



# Play, socio-emotional development and self regulation

- Sociality and self-control are essential for getting along well with others.
- *"Understanding the intentions of others, cooperating and being able to control one's impulses, for example, means more for success in school than intelligence".*
- Play is a strong motivation for the child; and when children play with others, they encounter conflicting desires/intentions and must learn to resolve conflicts.
- The child learns that not everyone understands the world 'as I do' – that is, there are different mindsets than the child's own.
- Developmental psychology refers to this understanding as **'theory of mind'**



Source: Sommer, Dion (2020, chapter 6)

Photo: Colourbox.



# Social cognition, perspective taking and prosocial development

**Perspective-taking can be divided into three different forms:**

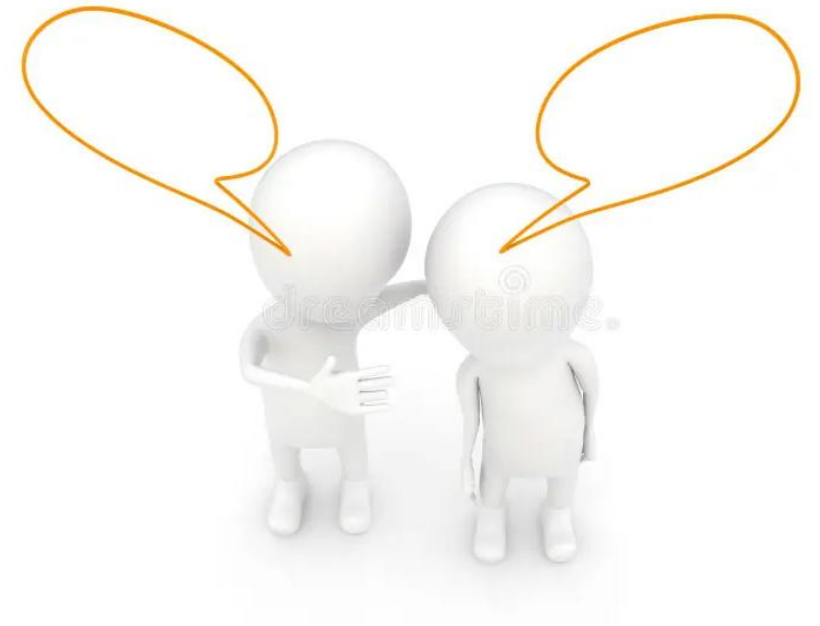
**Perceptual perspective taking** - for example spatial perspective

**Emotional perspective taking** - for example that a situation can arouse different emotions in another person than they do in oneself

**Cognitive perspective taking** - for example, the higher development of 'Theory of mind'.

Source: Poulsen, Arne (2008, p. 110).

Børns Udvikling (Children's development). Gyldendal.



# Mentalization ability – developing a theory of the mental state of others: TOM



# How are activities of daily living (ADL) interlinked with play skills in children with visual impairment?

Photo: COLOURBOX



# What happens psychologically before ADL and Play-activities?

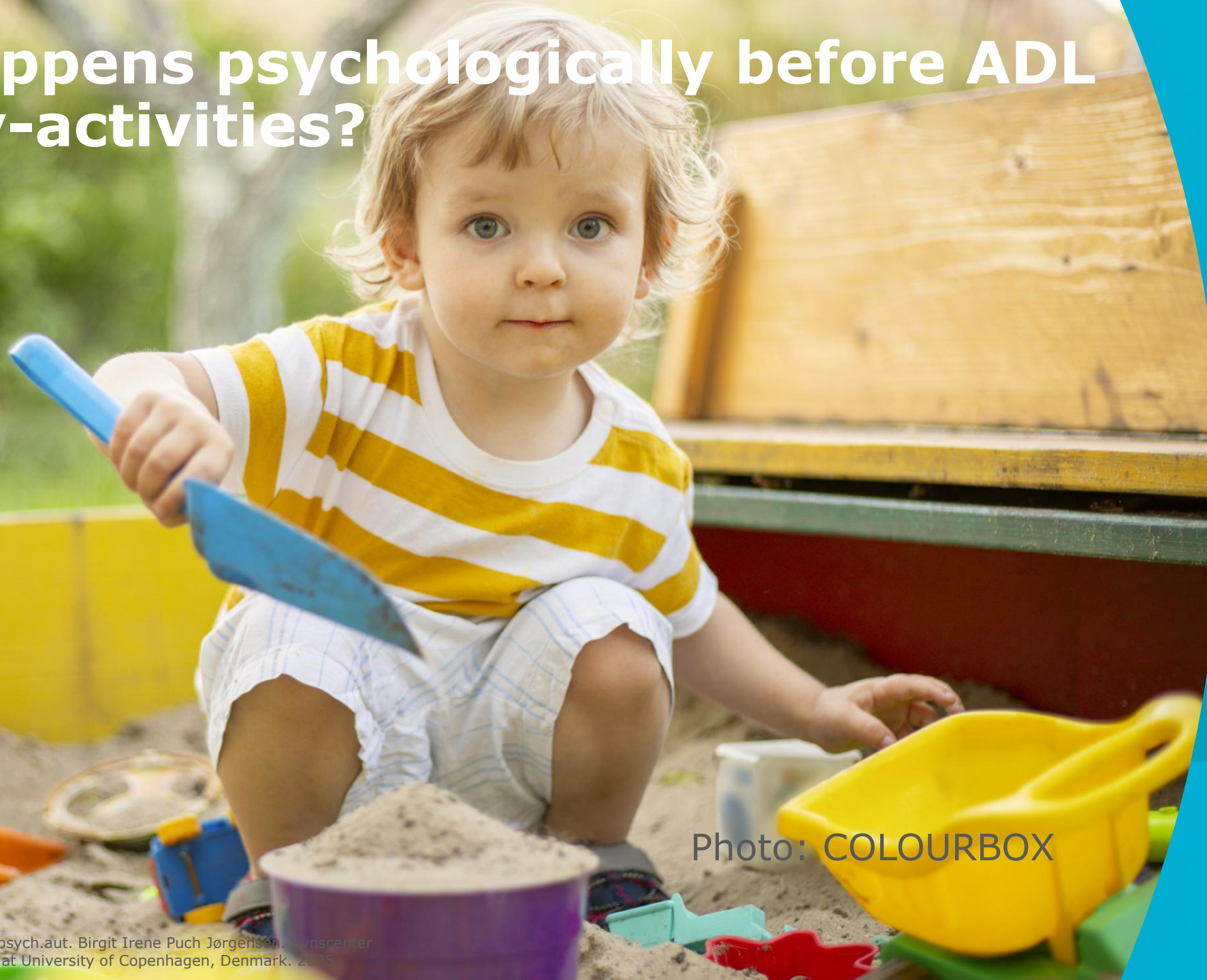
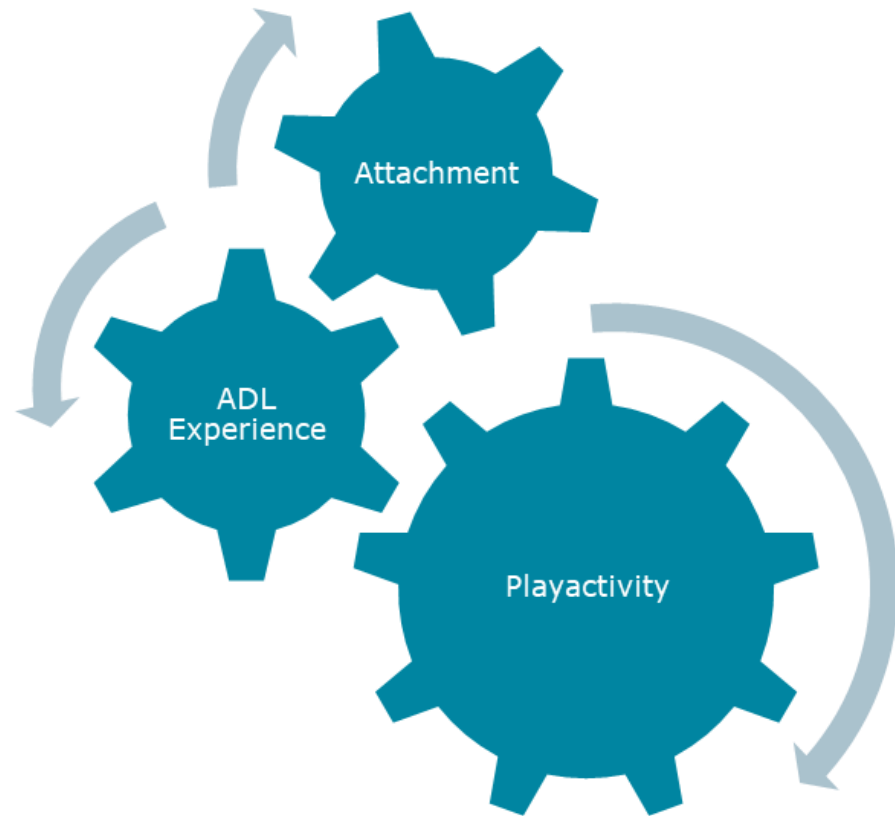


Photo: COLOURBOX



# Attachment and shared attention -> participation and play



# Shared attention, imagination, and playactivities

- **Emotional contact and attachment.** The grow-up is attentive, reassuring, takes turns ...
- **Shared attention.** The grow up shows the child attention and let the child take turns in speaking, pointing ...
- **ADL activities.** The adult shares the activity with the child and let them participate ...
- **Play.** Adults show the child things/toys, and let the child explore, and show the child new ways to play with the things/toys... and creates a zone of proximal development ...

Photo: COLOURBOX



# The adult shows the child and the child immitates ... and later takes initiative

+ Environmental factors

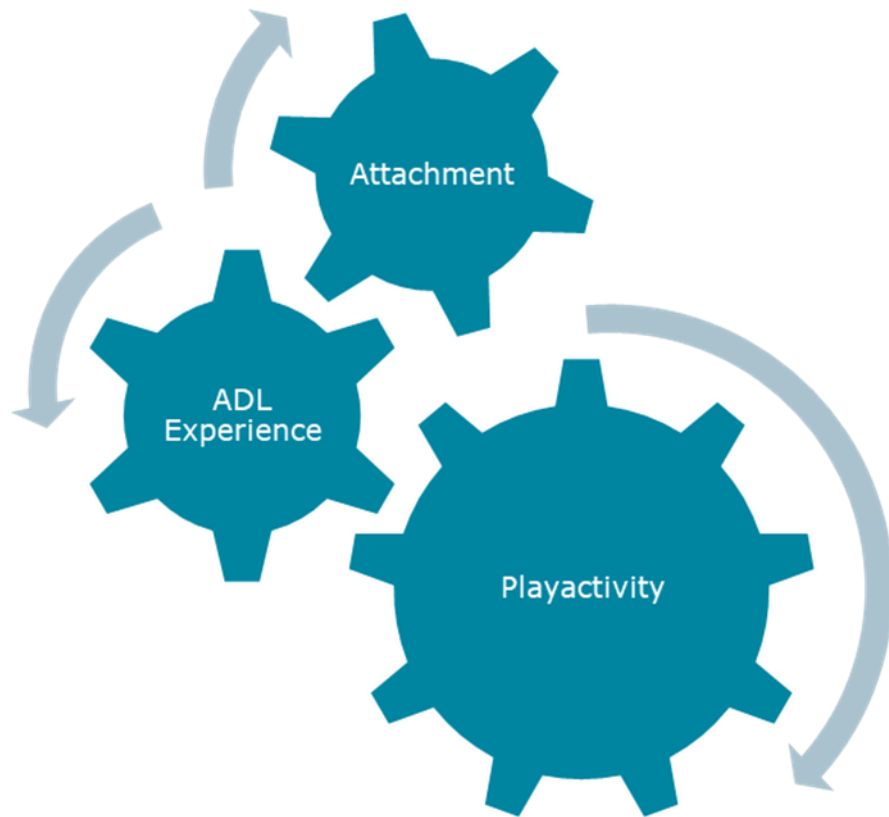


Photo: COLOURBOX



# From guided experience of everydaylife situations to imagination in playactivities



Photos: Colourbox



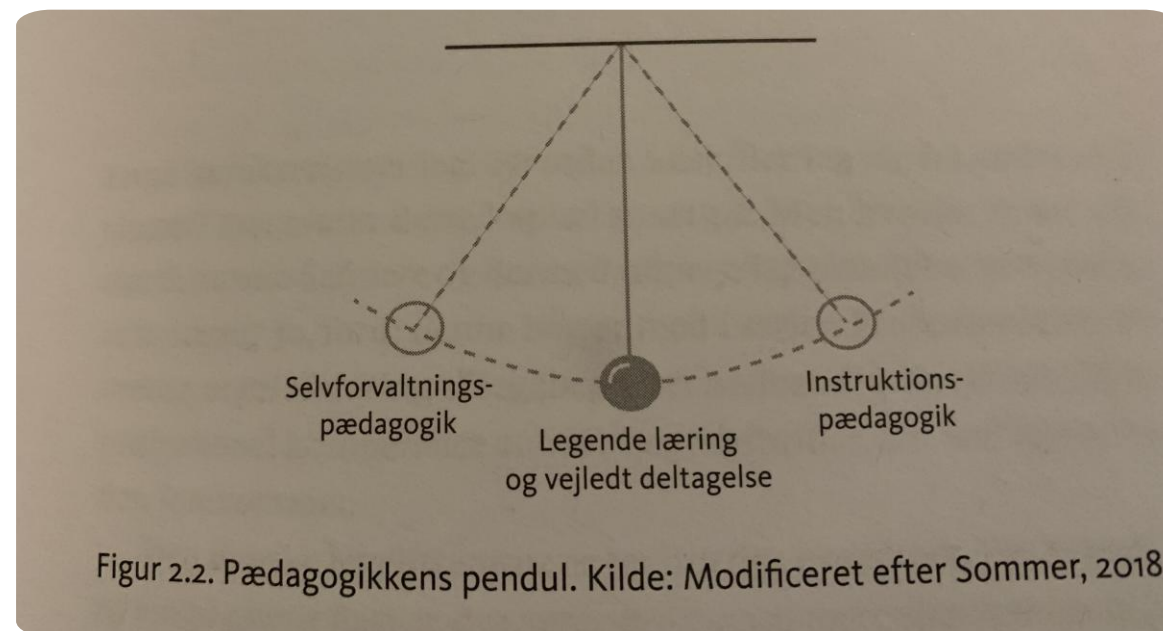
# Play is *conceptual glasses* and the pendulum of pedagogy (Dion Sommer 2020)

What you see the child doing, you continuously assign meanings; so that the actions make sense.

“Play vision is here the conceptual filter that ‘sorts’ and ‘arranges’ the play for us and makes it comprehensible. We thus actively use our concepts to see”. (p.33)

The pendulum must swing away from the governing agenda of instructional pedagogy, towards the middle position and further towards the pedagogy of self-management. (Figure 2.2., p.39).

***What is your experience – does it take longer for at child with visual impairment or blindness before you can practice self-mangement?***



# ADL - activities of daily living

- Before the child can imagine what to do with toys resembling (*symbolizing*) food, they need to be involved in smelling, tasting and eating food, touching food, handling food, buying food, smelling different kind of food ...
- Participate in preparing food, pouring water into a cup, scooping food onto a plate ...
- And then the child is introduced to play what you do in every day living activity .... but with toys ... for example, the child learn to **imagine** that there is water in a cup without water in it, and the adult just **pretend** to eat the cake they made of sand ...



Photos:  
COLOURBOX



# Activities of daily living (ADL) are interlinked with play skills in children with visual impairment

Photos: COLOURBOX

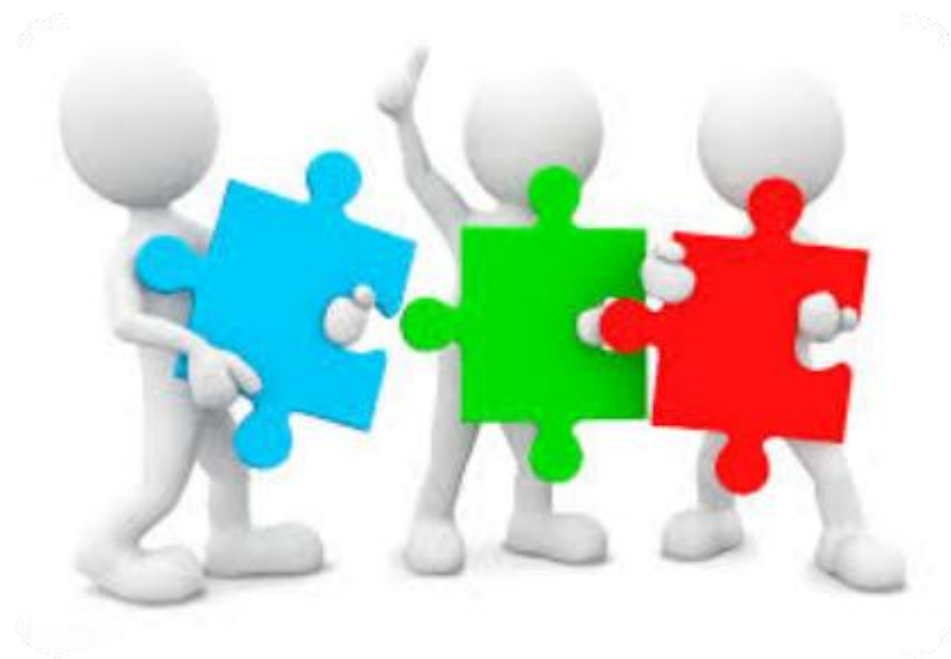


# Interprofessional rehabilitation interventions improving functioning, participation and inclusion ...

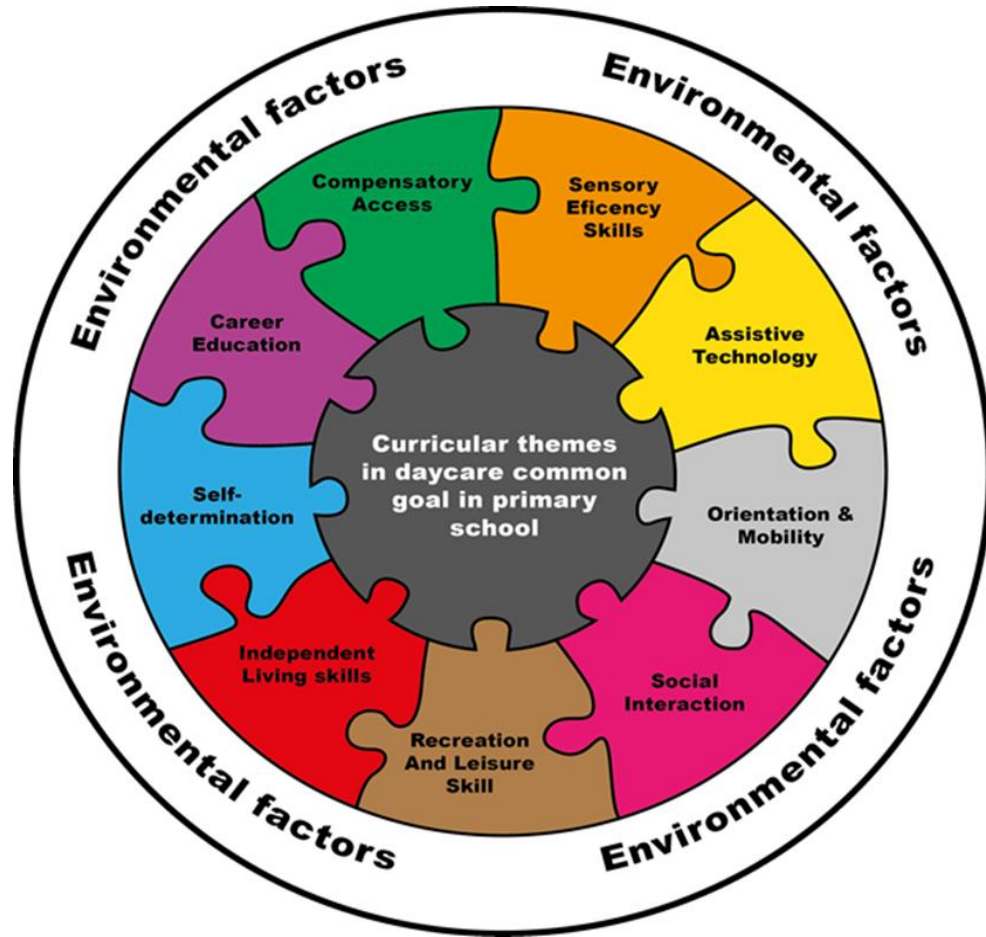
The **psychological** effort, coupled with **highly specialized knowledge about vision**, must be present to support the child/young person in connection with problems regarding, for example, personal development, difficult transitions or experiences of social exclusion.

In addition, support for the child's or adolescent's **mobility and movement**.

Source: The Danish National Board of Health and Welfare and the Danish Housing Authority: *Førløbsbeskrivelsen. Rehabilitering og undervisning af børn og unge med alvorlig synedsættelse*. Aldersgruppe 0-18. 2016 and 2020, p. 7.



# Extended Core Curriculum with fokus on ADL and play ...



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De udvidede læringsmål for børn og unge med synsnedsettelse 0-17 år i dagtilbud og skole  
 Handlingsansviseende vejledning til inkluderende fællesskaber og læringsmiljøer  
**SMÅBØRN 0-1 ÅR**

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A colorful illustration of six diverse children of various ethnicities and abilities. One child is sitting on the floor with a toy, another is on a bicycle, one is waving, one is carrying a backpack, one is holding a book, and one is using a cane.

De udvidede læringsmål for børn og unge med synsnedsettelse 0-17 år i dagtilbud og skole  
 Handlingsansviseende vejledning til inkluderende fællesskaber og læringsmiljøer  
**SMÅBØRN 1-3 ÅR**

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 Handlingsansviseende vejledning til inkluderende fællesskaber og læringsmiljøer  
**SMÅBØRN/FØRSKOLE 3-6 ÅR**

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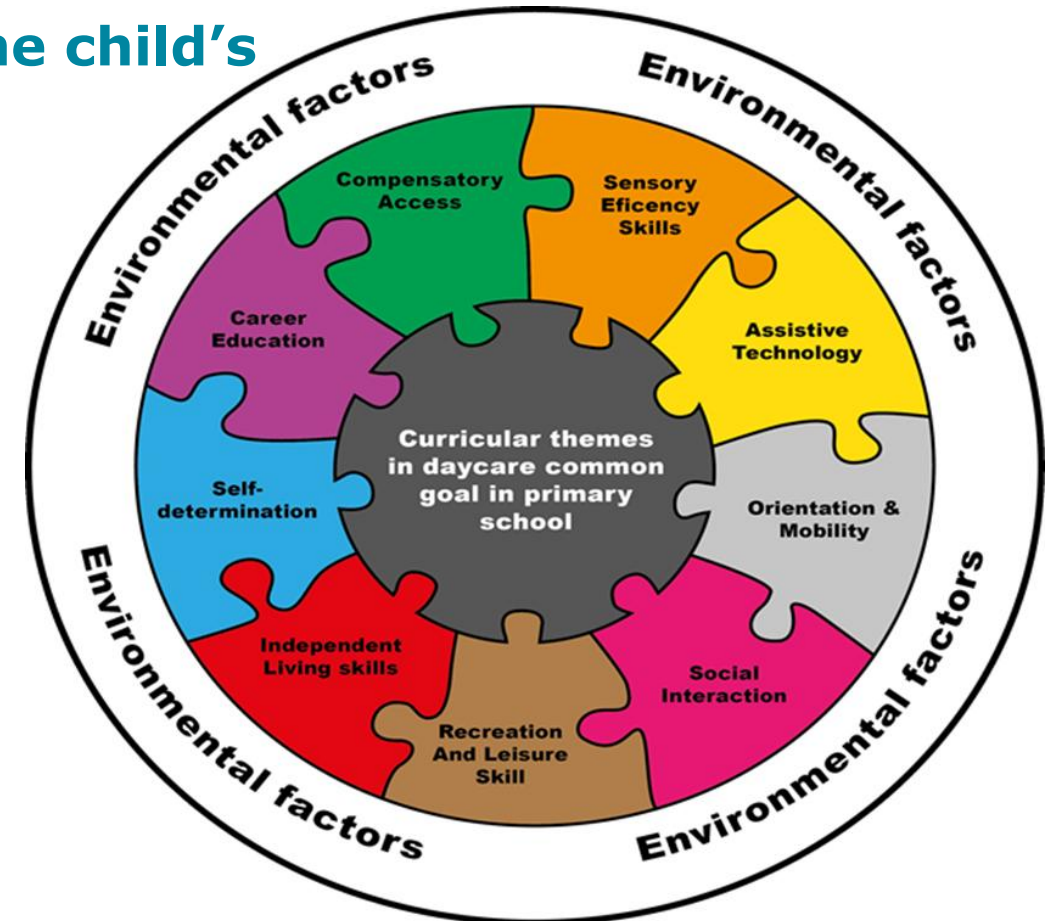
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# Environmental factors

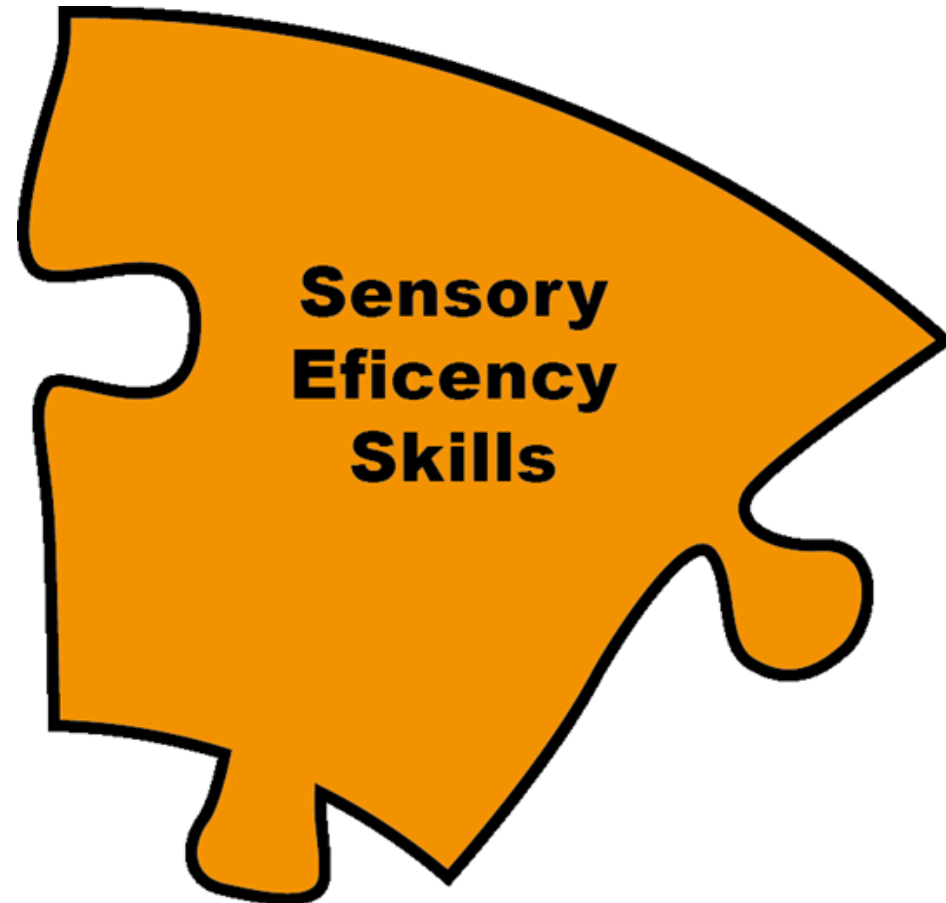
It's the environmental factors that influences the child's possibility to participation, development and learning experience.

The advisory about environmental factors concerns for example: lighting/illumination, the way the adults understands the child's perspective due to the visual impairment, making a pedagogical plan concerning the development, stimulation, inclusion and breaks during the day.



# Sensory Eficency Skills

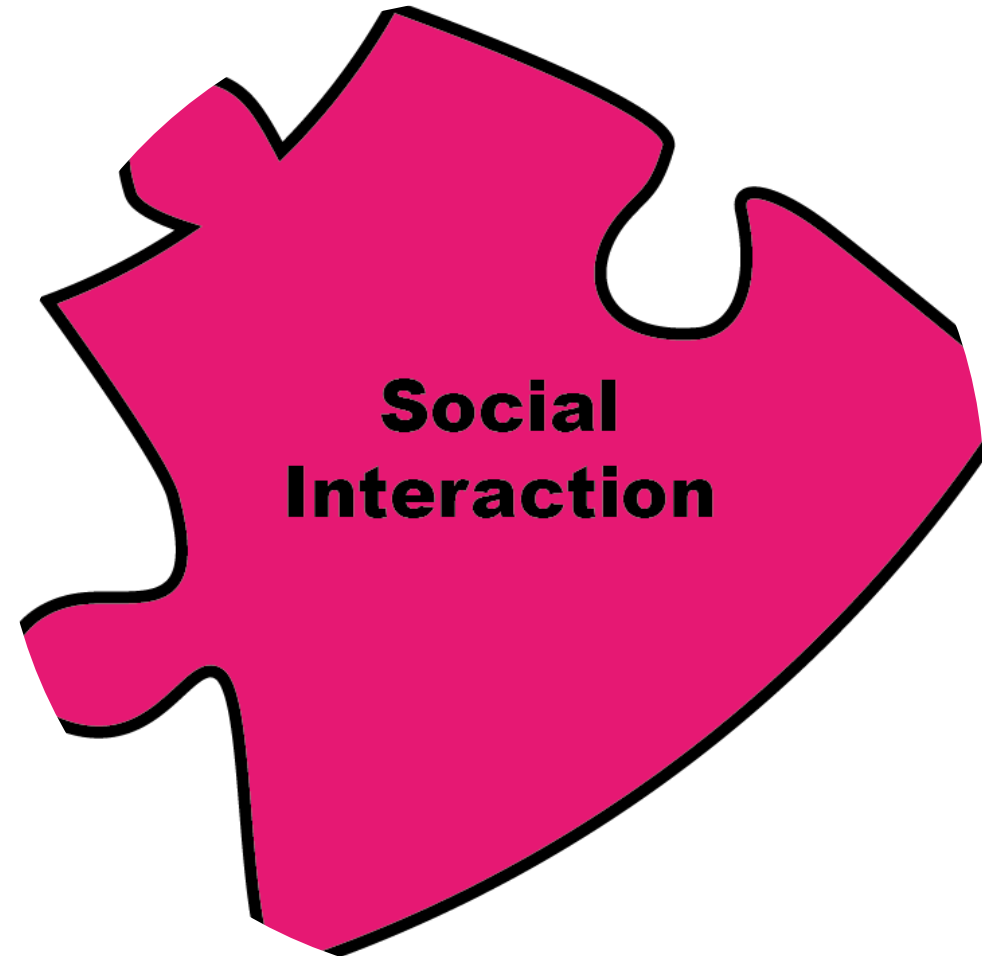
The infant, toddler and preschool child will try to make sense of the sensory inputs he og she is able to recieve. Advisory concerning all the child's sensory skills to compensate for the visual impairment or blindness. Both pedagogical advice concerning compensational issues about sight and perception, and from occupational therapist about other sensory skills and motor skills that can help the child.



# Social Interaction

Often the child have a hard time to interpret the social cues in the people they relate to. They have to be quite near – to see facial expressions.

This can affect their ability to interact – and special measures must be made to insure that the child gets help in situations and activities with social interaction.



# Selfdetermination

As the infant makes the transition from relying on others to recognize and meet its personal needs, the use of specific strategies and behaviors becomes organized into the infant's self-determination characteristics that take their beginning in early childhood.

The advisory often concerns the importance to protect the child's agency, and let the child try out and actively participate in activities in everyday life.



# Recreation and Leisure skills

The child with visual impairment often gets tired - if not exhausted from:

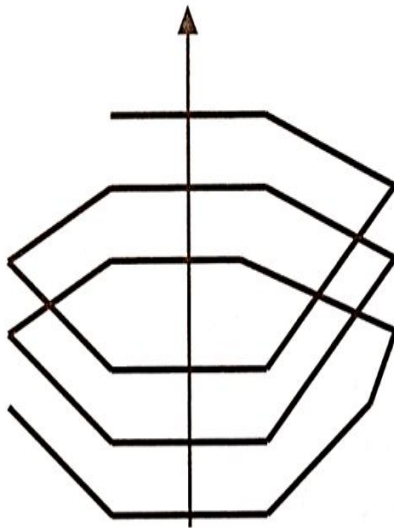
- visual fatigue,
- sensory overload/fatigue and
- mental fatigue.

It's often essential to establish several breaks for the child during the day.



# Developmental and environmental conditions for children with visual impairment and blindness

BARNETS UDVIKLING



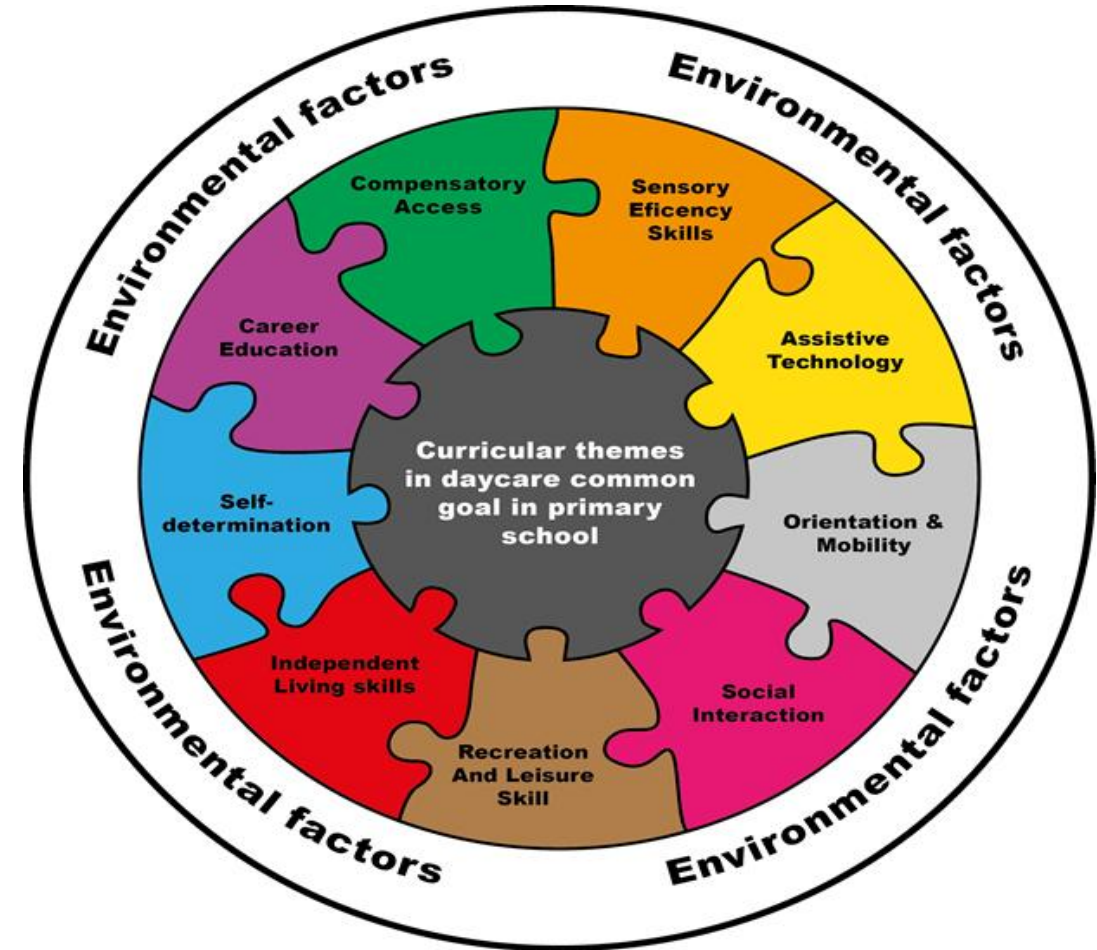
Barnets kognitive, sociale, motoriske færdigheder og funktionsnedsættelse.

Barnets deltagelse i aktiviteter i sociale og kulturelle praksisser.

Figur 1.1. Den dialektiske udvikling af barnet med handicap som en spiralformet bevægelse mellem dets individuelle forudsætninger og de aktiviteter, barnet deltager i.

Source: Bøttcher og Dammeyer;  
*Handicappsykologi* (2015, p. 35)

En model af den dialektiske handicapforståelse



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**Why do some children find it difficult to participate in ADL – and in playactivities?**

**How can we help when social participation difficulties occur during cooperative peer play?**

Discuss 2:2 in 5 min.



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## **Inclusion & Quality of life**

**How can we improve interprofessional rehabilitation interventions improving functioning, participation, inclusion and quality of life in 0–6-year-old children with severe visual impairment?**

**Thoughts on environmental factors?**



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# Thank you for your interest and participation

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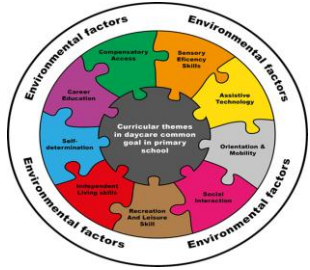
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# Links - Extended Core Curriculum



<https://mediateket.synref.dk/vare/dul-vejledning-metode/>

<https://mediateket.synref.dk/vare/dul-vejledning-smaaboern-0-1-aar/>

<https://mediateket.synref.dk/vare/dul-vejledning-smaaboern-1-3-aar/>

<https://mediateket.synref.dk/vare/dul-vejledning-smaaboern-foerskole-3-6-aar/>

