Interaction and Conversation in nonspeaking children with Cerebral palsy using Augmentative and Alternative Communication:

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Beskrivelse: This is a study of everyday conversation/interaction of individuals using Augmentative and Alternative Communication. The term Augmentative and Alternative Communication, AAC, is used about communication where an individual communicates by other means than speech or by other means in addition to speech. Due to various reasons the research on human communication under these different circumstances is meagre. The individuals who communicate with AAC have different medical diagnoses and varying cognitive, speech and language abilities. The difficulties can be temporary or permanent. Language comprehension and the need for augmentative and alternative communication can vary. Some of the individuals who communicate with AAC use communication aids and graphic AAC- modes apart from the natural modes of expression (e.g. eye gaze and body posture and movements). One of the graphic modes is called Bliss symbols.

This phd-project aims to describe interaction and conversation in everyday life where at least one partner uses Bliss symbols. The aim is also to compare interaction in different non-institutional and institutional settings where at least one partner uses AAC. The results will help in evaluating interaction with AAC and the insights can have an implication on intervention in the field of AAC. The insights may help in answering the questions: What does interaction/conversation with AAC look like? What kind of actions and activities do the participants construct using AAC? How do the participants involved achieve a common understanding? What can be useful to focus on in specific training for the person using AAC? What strategies are useful for the communication partner?

Data will be collected by filming children/youth using Bliss symbols at home and at school communicating with everyday partners as siblings, friends, parents and teachers. The
collection of data will start in spring 2009. The data will be transcribed and analysed using the method Conversation Analysis (CA).