

# Training Report - Rett Syndrome and AAC

**Date:** 13th - 19th October

**Location:** Tbilisi, Georgia

Introduction:

This report provides an overview of the one-week training program on Rett Syndrome, physical therapies and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) that took place from 13th to 19th October. The training focused on understanding Rett Syndrome, importance of physical therapies and the use of AAC strategies to support individuals with the different conditions including Rett syndrome. Distinguished specialists from the Netherlands, Gerna Scholte, Hanneke Borst, Kitty van der Werff, and the chairman of Parents Rett Syndrome Association Netherlands, Mariëlle van der Berg, were invited to conduct the training.

Training Objectives

The primary objective of the training was to enhance the participants' knowledge and skills in Rett Syndrome management, particularly in the context of AAC and physical therapy. The trainers aimed to deepen understanding on the main aspects of AAC, physical therapy and their applications in supporting individuals with Rett Syndrome. The training covered various topics such as AAC communication strategies, devices, implementation techniques, and the overall impact on quality of life of AAC and physical therapy.

Training Sessions

The training program was structured into a series of interactive sessions and workshops, combining theoretical knowledge and practical exercises in AAC and Physical therapy. The sessions were led by the invited specialists with extensive expertise in Rett Syndrome and AAC. The training sessions covered the following topics:

1. Introduction to Rett Syndrome
2. Communication challenges faced by individuals with Rett Syndrome and with other complex disabilities
3. Overview of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)
4. Physical therapy in Rett syndrome
5. Sensory issues in Rett syndrome
6. AAC strategies and interventions
7. Implementation of AAC systems
8. Success stories and case studies
9. Q&A and group discussions with the hands-on practice

The trainers utilized a variety of teaching methods, including presentations, videos, case studies, and interactive group activities, to engage the participants and provide a comprehensive learning experience.

3 The national TV report has been broadcasted during the training Sessions highlighted the importance of AAC and its modern techniques and strategies. During the 1 hour TV report Local Pediatrician Neurologist and chairman of Parents Rett Syndrome Association Netherlands, Mariëlle van der Berg emphasized the signs and symptoms of Rett Syndrome, emphasizing the impact it has on affected individuals and the importance of AAC with Rett Individuals. Furthermore, the report stressed the importance of Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) as a means to enable effective communication, enhancing the overall quality of life for individuals with Rett Syndrome. It is essential to continue raising awareness about this rare disorder and ensure that individuals with Rett Syndrome have access to appropriate AAC interventions and support.

#### Key Learnings

Throughout the training, the participants gained valuable insights into the main aspects of AAC and physical therapy and their significance in enhancing communication capabilities for individuals with Rett Syndrome and other complex needs. Some of the key learnings from the training include:

1. Understanding the communication challenges faced by individuals with Rett Syndrome.

2. Familiarity with different AAC strategies, including visual supports, sign language, and computer-based systems.
3. Knowledge of various AAC devices and technologies available.
4. Effective implementation techniques for AAC
5. Practical insights into AAC intervention planning and goal setting.
6. Recognizing the positive impact of AAC on improving the quality of life
7. Basics of Physical therapy in Rett syndrome
8. Understanding the physical challenges faced by individuals with Rett Syndrome.
9. Assessment and practical insights into physical therapy planning and goal setting.

#### Conclusion

The one-week training program on Rett Syndrome and AAC provided an enriching platform for the participants to deepen their understanding of AAC and Rett syndrome, the importance of physical therapy in Rett syndrome, and gain practical knowledge on the effective use of AAC strategies. The trainers, Gerna Scholte, Hanneke Borst, Kitty van der Werff, and Mariëlle van der Berg, contributed their expertise and facilitated a comprehensive learning experience for the attendees. The knowledge acquired from this training will significantly contribute to the participants' abilities to support individuals with Rett Syndrome through the implementation of AAC strategies.