

Hanna: Longer Sentences and Increased Vocabulary

Asa and Janne Pettersson, MNRI® Parents, Sweden

This is a story of our daughter Hanna who turned 12 years in August, 2013. In August 2010 we received a referral to the Oral Motor Center at the Speech Clinic, Danderyd Hospital in Stockholm, Sweden. It is located about 150 km from our home, and we came into contact with speech and language pathologist, Helena Björelus. Hanna was given a motor speech disorder diagnosis; childhood apraxia of speech and developmental dysarthria.

During her life she has undergone a fair number of tests assessed by physiotherapists, psychologists, speech and language pathologists, and teachers. She has regularly practiced oral motor and various speech and language exercises as well as memory and physical activities. Skills like walking and cycling (demanding balance) developed slightly later than average. She has been considered to be late in her gross and fine motor development. At 4-5 years of age she was diagnosed with a developmental delay (biological age minus 1½-2 years) and speech and language disorder. Hanna, however, has always been very communicative and found it easy to connect with people. She has compensated by observing and reading situations. She has a good order of things and generally has a good memory. Since Hanna started school, it was clear that Hanna's speech, language, and also several other areas had a general developmental delay. She then was diagnosed with mild intellectual disability and attends a small class. She still has difficulty with reading, writing, and mathematics.

At our first meeting, SLP Helena Björelus observed, in addition to Hanna's speech dysfunction, that she suffered from dysfunctions in primary motor schemes/reflex patterns associated with oral motor functions, speech, body movements during walking, running etc. Her specialist suggested working with MNRI® treatment.

Before we began to regularly practice MNRI®, Hanna seemed to be hypertonic in her body muscles, she could not sit still for long periods. Orally, she was hypo in tone, unstable in the jaw and used gross mouth and lip movements during speech. She had in periods difficulties with swallowing and also drooled a lot, especially when she had a cold coming up.

Hanna has improved considerably after nearly three years of regular training in various areas, in accordance with recommendations from Helena Björelus and the



Asa & Janne Pettersson



Hanna



Left, Hanna at a MNRI® Conference in Poland; right, Hanna sailing with her brother and little sister.



Above, Hanna outside her school

custom designed training programs offered at the meetings Hanna had with Svetlana Magutova, Ph.D (May 2011, November 2012, and March 2013). Hanna has been regularly visiting the Oral Motor Centre since the beginning of October 2010 ranging from two times a week to once a month and more – based on the guidance given to us by our specialist, Helena. We have been practicing with various basic programs at home. Hanna, also participated in two Camps in Mielno, Poland (November 2012 and March 2012) as Hanna worked very intensively with different types of exercises and got a new ‘base program’ to work on at home. We have experienced these events as very positive for Hanna, for us, and for Hanna’s development.

What we clearly see is that Hanna, since she began working with MNRI®, now has a much more mature body language, she has more coordinated movements, and her whole way of moving, walking, running, jumping, swimming, cycling etc. are made with a completely different body control than before. She can sit for longer periods without bagging up or get ‘ants in the pants.’ Also, her fine motor skills have improved, as evidenced for example, when Hanna writes, plays computer games, or uses their mobile. When she speaks, her face muscles move more adequately, which means she has a more relaxed facial expression and a softer, more restrained appearance. Hanna is now treated more age appropriately, which was a problem earlier. Drooling is significantly reduced and the sensitivity around the mouth has increased slightly. She still has trouble articulating but can often produce sound combinations that were previously impossible or difficult to do. Regarding word production and language structure, Hanna has still a big challenge ahead. She

has clearly made great development with expressive language since October 2010. The sentences are getting longer and vocabulary has increased. Receptive language and comprehension has improved. She has great social skills and several playmates of varied ages. The school has also remarked about Hanna’s performance since she started her training program. She can hold attention longer and focus better.

Hanna has developed in many ways in a relatively short time, although with a lot of training, support, and encouragement. We believe that a continued effort on this track can give Hanna a great foundation to challenge her disabilities!



Dear Hanna, Congratulations on your many successes with MNRI®! And how many more you will have because you are goal oriented and so motivated! Thank you to your parents for being your best friends! Smiles and joy from us! – The MNRI® Team from Poland