The Right to Be Heard

Making the process of investigation and testimony of people with complex communication needs accessible, using Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

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Israel

Access to Justice
G’S STORY
The organizations

Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Social Services
JDC-Ashalim
The Haruv Institute

Together with-
State Attorney within the Ministry of Law
Ministry of Education
National Insurance Institute
State Police Department
Issaac Israel
The Maurice and Vivienne Wohl Foundation
The Law for Investigation and Testimony (Adjusted for People with Disabilities), 2005

- For people with
  1. Cognitive developmental disability
  2. Another cognitive disability
  3. Pervasive developmental disability, including autism

- Special investigator

- Using alternative or augmentative communication
  - includes computer-based aids, communication boards, pictures, symbols, letters and words
  - can also include the assistance of a person
The special investigator recommends adjustments/accommodations for the court testimony.
The pilot program

- Writing manuals
- Conducting trainings for special investigators and speech language pathologists
- Developing AAC kits for investigations and purchasing relevant technological equipment (computers, iPads)
- Raising awareness - professionals, parents
- Providing professionals using AAC with sexual education courses
- Conducting research
How many?
Impact (Hershkovits, 2016)

- In 26/30 investigations, **significant information** was discovered.

- In 25/30 investigations, an **accusation** was achieved.

- Investigations using AAC attained less details compared to investigations involving people with other disabilities.
Impact (Rozov- Hindi, 2016)

- Promoting the values of justice
- Increasing access to justice
- Revealing the truth, stopping the abuse and offering therapy
- Increasing personal safety and confidence of people with disabilities and their families
- Developing new professions
- Raising awareness of healthy sexual behavior within the education system
Financing

Development

 Developing Trainings
 Working with services that interface
 Raising awareness
 Cameras
 AAC kits

345,695$ for 4 years

On-going service

SLP
 Longer investigations
 Cameras
 Trainings

28,000$ per year
The next steps

- Point person
- SLP
- Knowledge and training
- Testimony
- Access to AAC