**From Intensive Care Unit to School**

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How did it happen that my daughter born in asphyxia, mechanically ventilated for the first few months of life started her school classes with her peers, when she was six?

Ann was born on April 1st, 2004 and spent her first 8 months of life in PICU of Children's Memorial Hospital Institute in Warsaw. She was tracheotomized just before she turned two months. At that time she was ventilated for all day. After some time we noticed that Ann could breath when she wasn't asleep. There was then a diagnosis of CCHS.

In her first few years of life Ann had a lot of problems. Epilepsy, sensory-neural hearing loss, chronic otitis with effusion, high number dental caries, recurrent pneumonia were diagnosed. We also observed developmental delays, especially of speech.

Every child who goes to school should hear, speak and have possibilities to learn new things.

Ann and people who were looking after her did a lot of work to make her going to school possible.

**Psycho-motor development**

Ann was intubated for two months, she couldn't move like healthy newborns. She had some neurological problems due to hypoxia during her birth ( reduced muscle tension for example).She also received antiepileptic drugs in that time. They calmed her down and made her less reactive. It was a hard time during which what we could do for her was to be in hospital, to touch and stroke her, to talk to her. And we did that every day. In her third month of life, professional physical therapy was started. Ann was trached, so there was much more opportunities to free movement. Ann was making progress and had only a little delay in motor development in her second year of life. She has been receiving physical therapy until now.

All relatives who took care of her had a positive influence on her psychological development. Schooling was started when she was 5 yrs. She was in very good classes with teachers, therapists, psychologists. She learned a lot and liked it very much.

**Development of speech**

It is known that making sounds is impossible when intubated. When Ann was trached, we started to hear her voice sometimes when she cried. Then single syllables could be heard.

After some months we got a phoniatry valve from our doctor. And then the long and hard process of speech learning started. At the beginning Ann used a valve only for few minutes. Then this period was becoming longer. Severe pneumonias seriously impacted the sppech reeducation. The extraction of all decayed teeth made the situation more difficult. At last Ann used phoniatric valve for all the day when she was almost 3 yrs. Since then, she had a very good speech therapist.

**Hearing**

Ann was diagnosed with sensory-neural hearing loss in the age of 6 months. At once she started to use hearing aids. Fortunately, this problem didn't impact Ann's development. Chronic otitis with effusion which was diagnosed had an impact on hearing, too. She had two laryngological operation of drain implantation. Now we are waiting for adenoidectomy.

In spite of many problems which had to be overcome, we have now a happy school-girl with normal school problems, not only such connected with her illness.