**Creating the optimal and safe conditions at school for a child with CCHS in Poland**

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There are a very few children with CCHS in Poland and most of them are in pre-school age. There are no available standards about the care of these children in school. We want to share our own experience.

Ann was born in 2004 and diagnosed with CCHS. In 2010, she was ready to go to school. But the school was not ready to accept children with tracheostomy, epilepsy, hearing loss, required specialist care. A stepwise action plan has been set up in order to open school to Ann.

**Step one - psychological- pedagogic outpatient clinic.**

Specialists from the hospital/clinic (i.e. psychologists, educators and physicians) issue a statement about school readiness of a child. They define his specific educational needs and determine the specialists needed in the educational process such as speech therapists, special teachers and others. This certificate is required for severely ill children to enter an integrated class, in which there are fewer pupils than average, some with various diseases requiring more help in learning or additional care. There are two teachers working all the time with pupils.

**Step two – school with integrated classes.**

There are many schools with integrated classes in Poland. It is important to choose a school where the director and teachers accept new challenges : creating optimal learning conditions for a child with CCHS and some other medical issues and still providing a good care. All this can be done by a professional but also sympathetic staff.

**Step three - training of nurses.**

Nurses working at school have a good education, but CCHS is a rare disease and a sick child needs a really specialistic care. An additional training is necessary. The physician who takes care for CCHS child could organize some kind of schooling. It should contain the main information about the disease, how to care for tracheostomy (suction) and the guide of first aid.

An individual support at school is required during the first months, during which the child get used to school practices and the staff to know a new child and its needs.

**Step four – training of teachers.**

Teachers may be scared when having to teach a child with unusual disease. The best way to reduce the fear is talking a lot about specific problems of a child. It could be made by parents, nurses or doctors. Some kind of medical training could be very helpful, too.

**Step five – training of schoolmates.**

This may be the easiest part of making good conditions for children at school. The teacher should explain to the pupils why their schoolmate has tracheostomy or has to go to the nursery during the breaks.

Ann has been going to school for year and a half now. We all learned a lot during this time and we are still learning.