Sofia and her incredible hearing aids
The Special Kindergarten was founded in 1986. It is housed in a privately owned space at 1-3 Feidiou and Patriarchou Gregoriou Street in Argyroupoli.

It is a public school and is funded by the Municipality of Elliniko - Argyroupoli.

The transportation of students to and from the Kindergarten is done by hired vehicles of the Attica Region, at no cost to the parents.

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Athens 2022
SOFIA
and her incredible hearing aids
At Sofia’s birthday party, everyone, young and old, gathered and blew out the candles of the cake!

What a perfect day!
Everyone had fun, except Sofia!
Sofia was sad, as she could not understand her birthday song
« Happy birthday, dear Sofia
Happy birthday to you...."
She went to school every day but did not understand the lesson, because she did not hear what the teacher was saying.
Παιχνίδι της ημέρας:
ΧΑΛΑΣΜΕΝΟ ΤΗΛΕΦΩΝΟ
During recess Sofia tried to play with the other children, but she could not hear what they were saying to her and many times she cried very loudly, trying to communicate. She felt frustrated, so she was left alone.
The school sent a note to her mother, while Sofia quickly ran to watch TV.
She turned on the TV to see her favorite cartoons, but she laughed without understanding what they were saying.

The volume of the TV was at the end!

Her siblings covered their ears as they couldn't stand so much noise.
Sophia's mother called the pediatrician and asked:

"What should I do to help my daughter?"

"You should go to a doctor specializing in the ears," the pediatrician replied.
Next week Sofia went with her parents to see the expert doctor for the ears, in a Children's Hospital.

In the waiting room she met other children who are not hearing, just like her.

He looked at them shyly and felt relief.
After some time, a doctor greeted Sophia's mom and said:

"Good morning, Sophia! It's your turn for the doctor to examine you. Are you ready?"

Sophia gestured that she was ready and walked into the room.
"Let's see what we have here!" said the doctor as she looked at Sophia's ears.

Sofia was very brave and was not afraid at all, because her mother had explained where they would go and what would happen.

"Sofia, you have to do an examination for the ears called an audiogram. It's very easy!

This way we will learn how much you hear," the doctor told her.
"Hello Sophia, together we will look at your hearing," the audiologist said, and Sophia walked into the chamber.

"Are you ready to play the game with the sounds? When you hear the sound, you will throw a ball in the toy box, look... like me. It's easy!", the doctor explained to her and gave her to put on the headphones.
"This is the audiogram, an examination that shows the results of our hearing in both ears. That's why, Sophia, you have a hard time hearing. You should wear hearing aids to help you hear better."
АКООГРАММА
"To make hearing aids, we first have to make a cast. We're going to put something like plasticine in the ear to make just the right shape of the hearing aid."

Sofia worked together perfectly and was very calm.
After a few weeks Sofia went to the audiologist to test her hearing aids.

What an important day!

"Now you don't have to shout loudly anymore," the doctor told her. "We're going to have to set up your hearing aids and you're going to have to be trained in sound recognition."
As soon as she walked out of the doctor's office, Sofia was surprised! So many sounds were reaching her ears for the first time!

It felt a bit strange and it took time and patience to get used to the hearing aids.

She was looking around...

Everything she heard was so intense!
It wasn't long before Sofia was used to her hearing aids. She watched TV and enjoyed it, without turning up the volume loudly. She could hear better now.
At school she sat at the first desk
so that she could read the lips,
alongside what she was hearing for the first time.
And so, she was attending class more easily now.
Her classmates knew that they should not speak all at the
same time, but one by one and without fuss to help Sofia
better understand the lesson.
She felt so happy! She felt equal!
During the break, Sofia would approach the other children and they would all play her favorite game, "Apples". How much easier it was now to understand the rules of the game.

And so, the time came when she really enjoyed it!
Sofia was very careful with her hearing aids.

At night, before going to bed she would take them out and put them in their case, so that they would not break.

She even learned how to change batteries on her own!
How happy she was to be able to hear! On her next birthday she felt much better.

Her classmates had prepared for her a surprise! All together they sang "Happy Birthday" to her and then presented it in Sign Language!
ΧΡΟΝΙΑ ΠΟΛΛΑ ΣΟΦΙΑ
Appendix for parents

1. Stages of Development of Hearing and Speech of the Child - Checklist

2. What is an audiogram, audio game and how do we prepare for it.
The speech checklist describes behaviors that we expect from the child at the various age stages they are going through. The child unfolds her language abilities with time. All children are different from each other and each one has its own rhythm. The stages of development described, are based on average. If your child repeatedly fails to respond to what the checklist suggests, there may be a problem that requires further evaluation. In this case, you should contact your own pediatrician, who will accordingly direct you to the appropriate specialty, such as pediatric otolaryngologist, speech therapist, or to other professionals.
Stages of Development of Hearing and Speech in the Child - Checklist

0 - 4 months:

The infant reacts reflexively, such as eyelid movement, scaring with sounds, body movement, etc. When she hears a low volume she can open the eyelids, wake up, but not always. While in loud noise we notice surprise the blinking of the eyelids. The infant begins to turn its head towards the source of sound at the 3rd-4th month.

4 - 7 months:

- The head turn towards the stimulus is stabilized at the age of 4 months, where the infant responds confidently to the sound source. Then after the 6th -7th month she turns her head directly towards the sound stimulus, that is, she turns her head when she hears the sound.
- produces pleasure sounds
- reacts to sounds and turns her head according to her needs
- He recognizes voices and laughs when they talk to her
- imitates sounds
- her voice shows variety in sonority and tone she uses gestures to indicate what she wants
Stages of Development of Hearing and Speech in the Child - Checklist

7 - 9 months:

• At this stage it can locate the audio source, even with low volume.
• listens when they talk to her
• slowly begins to change the baptism and deliberately uses speech
• has an expressive vocabulary of 1-3 words
• uses mainly nouns
• understands simple commands

9 - 13 months:

• At the end of this period the infant can immediately detect general sounds, as the auditory system has matured.
• understands the no and the yes
• corresponds to the name of
• mimics more sounds
• show first words, baptism
• bold prosody and intonation elements
• listens when they talk to her
• slowly begins to change the baptism and deliberately uses speech
• has an expressive vocabulary of 1-3 words
• uses mainly nouns
• understands simple commands
Stages of Development of Hearing and Speech in the Child - Checklist

- Uses adult intonation patterns

**13 - 18 months:**

- Uses echolalia and unintelligible speech (neologisms)
- Omits some initial consonants and almost all final consonants
- Here are simple commands
- Recognizes 1 to 3 parts of the body
- Has an expressive vocabulary of 3 to 20 or more words (mostly nouns)
- Combines gestures and speech
- Appeals for most of the items she desires

**19 - 24 months:**

- Uses words more often than incoherent speech (neologisms)
- It is 25 – 50% understandable to foreigners
- Begins to use pronouns
- Uses appropriate coloring in the voice for the questions
- It answers the question "what is it?"
- Has fun listening to stories
- Knows 5 parts of the body
- Names exactly a few familiar objects
- Expressive vocabulary 50-100 words or more
- Perceptual vocabulary over 300 words
- Begins to use sentences with nouns and verbs
- Uses personal pronouns (me, you, he)
- Understands and follows commands with two parts
Stages of Development of Hearing and Speech in the Child - Checklist

2 - 3 years old:

- The ratio is understandable 50 – 75%
- He continues to sound when she encounters difficulties in speech
- He understands the "one" and the "many"
- Expresses the need for a toilet (before, during or after)
- Asks for items with their name
- Shows the pictures in a book by naming them
- Recognizes different parts of the body
- Follow simple commands and answer simple questions
- Enjoys listening to short stories, songs and rhythms
- Asks questions in 1 or 2 words
- It uses phrases of 3 – 4 words, with Subject – Verb – Object
- Uses partial prepositions, articles, verbs in the present tense, smooth plural, and irregular forms in the past tense
- Has a perceptual vocabulary of 500 or 900 or more words
- It has an expressive vocabulary of 50 to 250 or more words (rapid growth during this period)
- Presents multiple grammatical errors
- He understands most of what is said
- Speaks in a loud voice
- Uses vowels correctly
  - Correctly uses consonants in original position
- It uses about 27 phonemes
- Uses the auxiliary "is"
- Uses some smooth verbs in the past tense, possessive morphemes, pronouns, and imperative
Stages of Development of Hearing and Speech in the Child - Checklist

3-4 years old:

- Understands the function of objects
- Understands differences in concepts (stop – start, inside – out, small – large)
- This is followed by commands consisting of 2 and 3 parts
- Asks and answers simple questions (who, what, where, why)
- He often asks questions and asks for details in the answers
- Uses speech to express emotions
- Uses 4 to 5 words in sentences
- Identifies objects by name
- Deftly handles adults and observes
- Uses nouns and verbs more often
- Has a sense of the past and the future
- It has a perceptual vocabulary of 1200 – 2000 words
- It has an expressive vocabulary of 800 – 1500 words
- The ratio is 80% understandable
- Grammar improves although some errors persist
- Appropriate use of "I am" and "is" in sentences
- Puts two events in chronological order
- Participate in discussions
- Consistent use of smooth plurals, possessive pronouns, and indefinite verbs
Stages of Development of Hearing and Speech in the Child - Checklist

4 - 5 years old:

- Understand the meanings of numbers up to 3
- Recognizes 1 to 3 colors
- Has a perceptual vocabulary of 2800 or more words
- Has an expressive vocabulary of 900 to 2000 or more words
- Counts up to 10 mechanically
- Uses grammatically correct sentences
- Uses 4- to 8-word sentences
- Answers complex questions consisting of 2 parts
- Asks for word definitions
- He speaks with a frequency of about 186 words per minute
- The total number of repetitions is reduced
- Produces according to 90% accuracy
- The number of continuous sound omissions and substitutes is significantly reduced
- His speech is usually understood by strangers
- He talks about experiences at school, at friends' homes, etc.
- Accurately relays a long story
- Pay attention to a story and answer simple questions about it
- It uses possessive pronouns, future tense and comparative morphemes in sentences
Stages of Development of Hearing and Speech in the Child - Checklist

4 - 5 years old:

1. Knows and names 6 colors
2. Names 3 shapes
3. Understands about 12000 words
4. He constantly increases her vocabulary
5. Participates in dialogues
6. It counts automatically up to 30.
7. Participates in team games and follows the instructions
8. Executes complex commands with 3 parts
9. Names the days of the week
10. Uses conjugations and verb tenses (past tense, future)
11. Replaces minimal phonemes
12. Grammatically complete sentence
13. Communicates easily with adults
What is an audiogram, an acoustic game and how do we prepare for it?

Deaf and hard of hearing children will have to undergo several times in their lives the process of an audiogram, so as to clarify the number of sounds they hear in various frequencies and intensities and make the necessary adjustments to their hearing aids (hearing aids and cochlear implants).

The audiogram gives us a lot of information about how each child hears and how they can also be educated. For this reason many specialties (special educators, speech therapists, audioprosthetics) need a good visualization of what the child is listening to in order to formulate appropriate individualized education and intervention programs.

As soon as a child grows old enough to reliably respond to sounds, clear-tone audiometry can be done. Using a machine called an audiometer, sounds of different frequencies and volumes are reproduced by the speakers. The child is asked to somehow respond when she hears the sound (that is, to put a ball in a tube, a cube in a bucket, raise her hand, say "yes", pressing a button given to them). If your audiologist thinks it is important to receive information about each ear separately, this examination can be done with small hearing aids placed in her ears your child or sometimes through a speaker (when the test is known as sound field audiometry).
There are several things parents can do before an audiogram to prepare it:

1. Practice playing the "audio game" with your child. A person sits with the child at a table, having a toy in front of her (wedges, cars and highways, balls and tubes, cubes and buckets). A third person produces a sound with a drum or other musical instruments with different frequency (rattle, flute, etc.) We help the child understand that when she hears the sound she must "answer", putting e.g., the ball in the tube, the cube in the box, etc. We repeat the process, with lower intensity of the musical instruments. When the child understands the process, we leave her alone to give answers.

2. Help your child get used to having something in their ears by putting on hearing aids while doing something they like. You can play music through the hearing aids as long as it is not possible. Child or sometimes through a speaker (when the test is known as sound field audiometry).
How to help your child wear their hearing aids regularly.

When a child begins to wear hearing aids or a cochlear implant), it is important to wear them regularly and as much as possible. It is important that she gets used to sounds and can make proper use of her residual hearing. Sometimes, however, for young children exposure to sounds is not very pleasant and they refuse to wear their hearing aids. For this reason parents are given some advice from parents on how to help their children systematically wear their hearing aids.

Slowly increase the amount of time your child wears hearing aids /processors. If necessary, start by having your child wear their hearing aids for a few minutes several times a day, increasing the time gradually. If your child keeps taking them off, try again later when you're both more relaxed. Remember to try to make it a positive experience. You could also encourage your child to wear a headset at first and slowly extend the time they wear it. When they wear it all day enter the other earbud.

You could use a sticker chart to record every time your child wears their hearing aids or processors and give them a special reward if they wear them satisfactorily.
Make the use of hearing aids/processors part of a routine such as dressing, bathing.

Take care that the hearing aids are applied correctly and do not "whistle", causing discomfort to the child. If the "whistle" persists, new casts may be needed.

Hold the earbuds in your hand for a few minutes before trying to put them in. This makes them warmer, softer, easier to install and more comfortable.

Use distraction techniques when fitting your hearing aids and processors. Try to distract your child with their favorite toy when you put on the aids or put them on while your child concentrates on something, such as the TV.

If you see systematic discomfort of your child in loud sounds, check with the help of your audiologist the settings of the hearing aids.
Let your child see other hearing aid/cochlear implant users.

Try to meet other families with a deaf child so that your child sees that she is not the only one. It can also be useful to meet adults with hearing aids so that your child can see that people of all ages are wearing them. You can also apply hearing aids to a doll or a stuffed animal.

Read her books where the heroes also wear hearing aids (there are many such books mostly foreign)

Make hearing aids/CI processors attractive to your child. Hearing aids and cochlear implants are available in a variety of colors, and you can also decorate them.
Little Sofia will wear hearing aids.
But not everything is easy from the moment of diagnosis to its application.
In this book, she tells us her story so that she can, through it, help other children who are experiencing the same situation.

A book useful for teachers, parents and deafness experts.