

Group Media Release

Sonova highlights need for early hearing care in children on World Hearing Day

Stäfa (Switzerland), February 26, 2026 – Childhood hearing loss often starts quietly. Children compensate, and adults may not see it. By the time challenges surface, speech, learning, and confidence can already be at risk. Yet approximately 90 million children and adolescents aged 5–19 live with hearing loss globally, and more than 60% of cases are preventable through timely ear care and early intervention.¹ As World Hearing Day approaches on March 3, Sonova, the leading provider of innovative hearing care solutions, calls attention to actionable solutions.

Early identification and intervention change outcomes. This year's World Health Organization's theme "From communities to classrooms: hearing care for all children," reflects this reality. When hearing loss goes unaddressed, it can strongly limit language development and educational progress.² Hearing is also a key socio-emotional sense: language and verbal communication connect children to their families, friends, and wider social world.³ "Early signs of hearing loss in children are often subtle, and families or teachers may not immediately recognize them", says Eric Bernard, CEO of Sonova. "Healthy hearing underpins how children learn, emotionally and socially communicate, and experience the world. When issues are detected sooner and listening environments are supportive, the impact on a child's development can be profound."

Sonova emphasizes that practical steps, from safe listening habits to accessible hearing screenings in schools and communities, can prevent or address hearing issues before they shape a child's prospects for the future. Raising awareness among parents, teachers, healthcare providers, and community members helps build a proactive support network to address hearing-healthcare issues.

Key actions include recognizing warning signs through simple observation, integrating hearing screenings into school health programs, supporting safe listening habits to prevent noise-induced hearing loss, addressing stigma around experiencing hearing loss among children and their parents, and creating classroom environments that reduce background noise and improve speech understanding.

Sonova's commitment

"Hearing is a cornerstone of communication and social interaction, therefore early identification and intervention can change the trajectory of a child's life", states Jean Anne Schnittker, Global Pediatric Clinical Research at Sonova. Beyond raising awareness, Sonova supports the pediatric hearing care ecosystem through evidence-based fitting protocols and educational materials for professionals globally. Phonak's pediatric hearing aids and Roger™ wireless technology improve speech understanding in noisy classrooms.⁴ Advanced Bionics cochlear implants can support children with profound hearing loss.⁵ Founded by Sonova, the Hear the World Foundation partners with NGOs worldwide to expand access to ear and hearing care in underserved communities through hearing screenings, intervention and rehabilitation.

"World Hearing Day reminds us that childhood hearing loss is often preventable and, in many cases, manageable, and it is important to act early", adds Bernard. "Every adult who interacts with children can play a role in identifying those who might be struggling to hear. That awareness, combined with accessible care pathways, ensures more children can fully participate in learning and life."

For resources on recognizing early signs and supporting children with hearing loss, visit

<https://www.sonova.com/en/world-hearing-day-2026>

References:

¹ WHO. (2026). World Hearing Day 2026. World Health Organization. Found at <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-hearing-day/2026>

² Lieu, J. E. C., Kenna, M., Anne, S., & Davidson, L. (2020). Hearing loss in children: A review. *JAMA*, 324(21), 2195–2205. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.17647>

³ Roland L, Fischer C, Tran K, Rachakonda T, Kallogjeri D, Lieu JEC. (2016). Quality of Life in Children with Hearing Impairment: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Otolaryngology–Head and Neck Surgery*. 155(2):208-219. doi:[10.1177/0194599816640485](https://doi.org/10.1177/0194599816640485)

³ Wolfe, J., Neumann, S., Schafer, E., Towler, W., Miller, S., Dunn, A., Jones, C., Nelson, J. (2021). Evaluation of a Dual Adaptive Remote Microphone System. *Journal of Educational, Pediatric & (Re)Habilitative Audiology (JEPRA)*, 25, 2021-2027.

⁴ Hendrikse, M. M. E., Goedegebure, A., Tjepkema, K. R., & Vroegop, J. L. (2025). Evaluation of the automatic classifier AutoSense Sky OS for pediatric cochlear implant users using a virtual classroom environment. *Hearing Research*, 467, 109414. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heares.2025.109414>

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About Sonova

Sonova is a global leader in innovative hearing care solutions: from personal audio devices and wireless communication systems to audiological care services, hearing aids and cochlear implants. The Group was founded in 1947 and is headquartered in Stäfa, Switzerland. Sonova operates through four businesses – Hearing Instruments, Audiological Care, Consumer Hearing and Cochlear Implants – and the core brands Phonak, Unitron, AudioNova, Sennheiser (under license) and Advanced Bionics as well as recognized regional brands. The Group's globally diversified sales and distribution channels serve an ever growing consumer base in more than 100 countries. In the 2024/25 financial year, the Group generated sales of CHF 3.9 billion, with a net profit of CHF 547 million. Around 18,000 employees are working on achieving Sonova's vision of a world where everyone enjoys the delight of hearing.

Sonova has a long-standing commitment to innovation and was ranked no. 12 among the most innovative companies in Europe in 2025 by Fortune magazine, selected from 300 companies across 21 countries and 16 industries. For more information please visit www.sonova.com.

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