

Parent-to-Parent Support

Meet the family:

Mom: Erika
Dad: Keener
Child: Erik, 1, deaf,
 profound hearing loss
Communication Method: Oral
Newborn Screening: Yes
Age at Diagnosis: Newborn
Uses cochlear implant

Dear Parent:

Our son is 14 months old and his hearing loss is severe to profound. The day that Erik was diagnosed with hearing loss was a very sad day for us. We started searching for the best option for him and heard about a cochlear implant which allowed kids to learn to hear and talk.

But we were hoping that maybe with time his hearing would improve without an implant, since we didn't want to get to the point of doing a surgery. When we finally accepted that his hearing loss was profound, we started getting more information about the implant and we realized it was a good option that could have good results. So, we decided to give him the opportunity.

Now Erik has had the implant for two months and the results are surprising. He's hearing things we didn't expect him to hear in such a short time, like the phone ringing, his name and many new sounds. We and Erik are enjoying the results and feel very happy because we know we made the right decision for our family and that we gave him the opportunity to hear the wonderful things in this world.

In Mexico, where we're from, I knew a family that had a deaf son. The lady treated him badly, yelling at him all the time. It's awful that people would treat innocent kids that way. Here near our apartment I took Erik to play on the slide and the other kids asked me questions. When I explained he hears through the implant instead of his ears, one girl said, "Aw, the poor thing." I didn't say anything out loud but inside I said no, because he's not a poor thing and I don't want people to pity him. I want people to see him, ask questions, and know he's a normal person.

Thanks for the guidance of everyone who is helping us help our son live a life full of caring words and love, and above all we thank God for sending us a special and wonderful little angel.

Best wishes,

Erika and Keener

* This letter also is available in Spanish.

For information about how to connect with a family like this, please contact the Family Support Connection at 1-866-DHOH-KID, or 651-265-2435 in the Twin Cities. Or, you can email fsc@lifetrackresources.org.