

From the second Sadie was born, we knew she was perfect. She came into the world curious, with eyes open wide. She was healthy in every way and the doctors were happy with all of her tests, so when the tech came in to do the routine newborn hearing screening, I didn't think anything of it. After failing in the hospital, and again at follow-up visits, we were referred to an audiologist who confirmed our baby was profoundly deaf in both ears. The shock of hearing that news quickly turned to fear. I went from trying to figure out how to be a mother to a newborn baby, to having to figure out how to be a parent to a deaf child. I think the hardest part for me was not knowing what her life would look like as a deaf individual.

With family rallying around us and Sadie, we were ready to dive into the world of hearing loss, and prepare ourselves with any and all resources to help Sadie acquire language. Sadie's first language was American Sign Language, however, we knew that we wanted to give her access to sound and spoken language, if possible. Once we found out that Sadie was a candidate for Cochlear Implants it was an easy decision for us to move forward with the Cochlear Implant surgery. We were very fortunate to work with supportive professionals who prepared us for the long journey ahead after the Cochlear Implant activation. Knowing the intensive services that Sadie's success would require, we are beyond grateful that we were led to Desert Voices!

Learning how to help our baby girl navigate a whole new world full of new sensations and sounds was both exciting and frightening, and Desert Voices helped us through it all. It seemed like an eternity waiting for Sadie's first spoken word, (which of course was "no") but once she started talking she began to progress so quickly it was hard to keep track of her word count! Now in her second year of preschool at Desert Voices, not only is Sadie's speech on par with hearing peers, but she is confident in telling others about her hearing devices and starting to advocate for herself. At four years old she is able to tell me that she prefers to have her "ears" on and her favorite sounds are wolves howling at the moon and "Here Comes the Sun" by the Beatles.

As a parent, seeing Sadie happy and confident is all that I could ask for. Me being confident that Sadie will have a great start to her education when she mainstreams into Kindergarten next year is the very sweet cherry on top.

