

Better Hearing and Speech: Sophia's Story

Sophia was born on February 13, 2009, in Phoenix, Arizona. She was born full term and healthy, weighing 7 pounds and 2.2 ounces and measuring 21 inches in length. Sophia had the newborn screening tests done a day after birth. Unfortunately, Sophia failed the hearing test portion.

When I was told the news, the medical professional added that it could not be a serious issue. She believed that Sophia had fluid retained in her middle ears and this is what I was hoping for as well. However, when Sophia had her follow-up two weeks later to get retested, I was told that she had failed it once again. As procedure has it, they scheduled her for an Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) examination. Still hopeful, we attended the appointment but then it was confirmed that Sophia was diagnosed with bilateral, profound hearing loss at 8 weeks old, having failed the ABR examination.

Three days later, we enrolled Sophia in Early Intervention services through the state program. Sophia was fitted with hearing aids shortly thereafter. Sophia was not benefitting from her hearing aids at full potential. As a result, my family and I began researching and obtaining information regarding cochlear implants, as I was told that she was a perfect candidate. With bilateral cochlear implants, I believed it would be possible for Sophia to hear and speak as her sisters did. In the end, it was decided that Sophia would get implanted at a year old.

After Sophia's first cochlear implant surgery, my family and I began to search for programs that would enhance Sophia's speech and language development. While reading through some information, I found a flyer promoting Desert Voices Oral Learning Center and their services. After touring the school, we immediately decided that the school provided exactly what Sophia needed to be able to progress.

Currently, Sophia is 4 years old. She attends the preschool program at Desert Voices. Sophia is doing amazingly well and surprises me everyday with her spoken language. She is always happy to come to school and is always very eager to learn new material. When we are home, Sophia enjoys teaching us what she learns at school and even corrects our speech and language! She does this with a teacher's attitude. I have very high hopes for her future. I am sure that she will be successful in life and will progress to her full potential with the services she is receiving now and the early awareness of her diagnosis.

