

India

Age at Implantation: 21 months

Age Today: 24 years

I am a mother from India, and my son, who is now 24 years old, received a cochlear implant at the age of 1 year and 9 months. Our journey has been full of questions, fears, learning, and, eventually, hope.

We came to know about our child's hearing problem when he was just six months old. At that time, the biggest challenge for us was not only accepting the diagnosis but also worrying about his future. One question kept running in my mind again and again: How will my child compete with other children across the nation? As parents, we feared whether he would be able to speak, study, socialize, and live confidently in a world that largely depends on sound.

Living in a low-resource setting made this journey harder. Awareness about hearing loss and cochlear implants is limited, and many people do not understand the importance of early intervention. Information was scattered, and every decision felt heavy. Financial concerns, access to specialists, and long-term rehabilitation were also major worries. At times, the road ahead looked uncertain and emotionally exhausting.

What helped us most during this phase was support. We are fortunate to live in a joint family, and my family stood by us strongly at every step. Their belief in our child gave me strength on days when I felt weak. Family played a very important role in our journey. Their patience, guidance, and constant encouragement helped us move forward with confidence. They not only supported our child but also supported us as parents, teaching us how to help him every single day.

Our greatest achievement is a moment that still brings tears to our eyes. When our child spoke his first word — “pa-pa-pa-papa” — my husband and I became extremely emotional. Even today, when we think about that moment, our eyes fill with tears. That one word erased months of fear, doubt, and struggle. It reminded us that all the effort, therapy sessions, and sleepless nights were worth it.

Speech therapy played a major role in our child's progress. But we also learned that therapy does not end inside the clinic—it must continue in daily life. When he was very young, we made special efforts to expose him to different sounds in natural environments. We took him to zoos so he could recognize animal sounds, made him watch monkeys dancing, helped him listen to duck sounds in the pond near India Gate, and encouraged him to notice sounds around him. At home, we would ring a bell from different directions so he could learn to identify where the sound was coming from. These small activities made learning fun and meaningful for him.

To achieve better access to cochlear implantation, we educated ourselves, followed professional guidance strictly, and made changes in our daily routine. Travel for therapy sessions, consistency in device use, and active parental involvement became part of our life. It required discipline, patience, and sacrifice—but we were determined to do everything possible for our child.

If I were to give advice to another parent, I would say: do not lose hope. Progress may feel slow, but every small step matters. Trust your doctors and therapists, stay consistent with therapy, and most importantly, believe in your child. Early intervention and parental involvement can change a child's life. Connect with other parents, ask questions, and never feel ashamed or afraid to seek help.

Our journey shows that even in a low-resource country like India, with the right support and awareness, children with cochlear implants can thrive. Our story is one of struggle, learning, and deep emotional strength—but above all, it is a story of hope.