

COLOMBIA

Caregiver Names: Marcela & Alejandro
Age at Implantation: 3

Child: Nicolás
Age today: 10

Nicolás was born hearing, and every day he would speak on the phone with his maternal grandmother. When he was two and a half, his nursery teachers began telling us that he wasn't following instructions. It was the year of the 2018 Football World Cup, and every time we shouted "Goal!", he no longer reacted or joined in the celebration. Nico had always played football with his brother, happily shouting "Goal!" whenever they scored.

As we began noticing small changes—and with the teachers expressing concern about his ability to follow instructions—we decided to take him for an immediate hearing test. The last audiometry he'd had before entering nursery had shown normal hearing, yet this new one revealed a 30% hearing loss.

From that moment, we began a series of tests to understand the cause. He underwent surgery to place ventilation tubes, and we started the process of using hearing aids. A month after receiving them, he had another audiometry, which showed that his hearing loss continued to progress. The cause was still unknown.

During a routine follow-up, the ENT specialist informed us that Nico already had severe hearing loss in his right ear, and referred us to an otologist, as he might be a candidate for a cochlear implant. We received thorough explanations and guidance, and we immediately began navigating the authorization process with our health insurance.



Nicolás received his cochlear implant in June 2019. Today, six years later, it continues to be nothing short of a miracle to witness him hearing again and living his life fully and joyfully.

Today, Nicolás is one of the top students in his class. He has begun learning several languages, and above all, he radiates happiness, confidence and love in his everyday life. His achievements are our greatest pride. His hearing loss profoundly changed our lives, gifting our family a deep sense of patience, perseverance, generosity and resilience.

At the beginning, our greatest challenges were our lack of knowledge about hearing technologies and the uncertainty surrounding the correct functioning of both the implant and the hearing aid. We did not know how much the surgery or the device would ultimately cost, nor whether our health insurance would authorise such a significant investment.

Finding the right speech and language therapist also took time. Many of the professionals recommended to us by the insurance provider had limited experience with cochlear implants. And, perhaps most importantly, we worried endlessly about giving Nicolás every possible tool to ensure an independent and fulfilling future.

Once the administrative hurdles were resolved, and after an exhaustive search, **we were fortunate to find an exceptional group of specialist's ENTs, an otologist, speech therapists—who have become far more than healthcare professionals. They are guides, companions, and honorary members of our family, helping us navigate this journey with greater peace and confidence.**

As volunteers, we have been able to share our story with other families. This has become a meaningful way to support parents facing the same fears and questions we once had, and to help them approach each stage of this beautiful process with trust and hope.

For our family, choosing the cochlear implant as Nico's hearing solution has been the best decision we could have made. It has been the greatest gift for our son. Having access to technology capable of restoring a child's ability to hear is truly invaluable.

Our advice to parents starting this journey is simple but essential: be persistent, be patient, and encourage your children to wear their implant as consistently as possible to achieve the best results. And with all the love in the world, teach them that their implant is their ear, something precious, something to protect like a treasure.



In the end, the purpose shared by all families should be to raise awareness about the importance of hearing. A cochlear implant is not simply a medical device. For Nicolás and for countless children like him, it is the beginning of a life filled with sound, possibility and dreams.