

COLOMBIA

Caregiver Name: Alejandra
Age at Implantation: 1

Child: Rafael
Age Today: 2



My name is Alejandra, and I am Rafael's mother. Rafael is a 2-year-and-9-month-old boy who was born prematurely at 28 weeks. One of his complications was severe bilateral sensorineural hearing loss, for which he received a cochlear implant in his right ear in 2024. **Throughout this process, one of the biggest challenges has been that he was diagnosed with cerebral palsy.** However, despite everything, he has progressed remarkably well in his auditory therapies. Luckily, with a very strong support network, we as a family have been able to keep moving forward and fighting for his progress every day.

Despite his diagnosis, Rafael is a very intelligent child and already says words like "papa" and "mama," he waves "hello" and "goodbye" with his little hand, he can point to his eyes and he is very observant. However small his achievements may be, for him and for us as parents, they are the greatest; we celebrate everything. Not only do we have to attend auditory rehabilitation twice a week, but because of his condition, we also must attend other therapies.

Based on his diagnosis, the otologist has decided to leave only the right implant. At first, it was difficult to accept that he wouldn't have both implants, however, we now consider it a good decision because it is a great challenge to have a child with special needs and have to manage two implants, since sometimes, due to his motor skills, it falls out a lot or he also takes it out a lot.

I know there are parents who may be going through similar situations right now, with children who have more than one disability. When the diagnosis comes, it feels like you're dying, but God gives so much strength, and I believe that each child arrives and is exactly where they're meant to be. **They chose us as their parents because they knew we would take care of them and that we had the strength to face any situation.** Many times, we feel alone, living on an indescribable emotional rollercoaster, but in the end, the greatest reward is seeing them smile and witnessing their progress each day. Ultimately, the most beautiful thing of all is the immense and boundless love that you feel and receive from that being. **So, to all the parents who read this, I just want to say that we must keep going because our children chose us to raise them with love and strength.**