

COLOMBIA

Caregiver Name: Saray
Age at Implantation: 21 Months

Child: Samuel David
Age Today: 4

Samuel David was born on November 3, 2021, surrounded by immense love and longed for even before his conception—not only by us as his parents, but also by his older brother, who had always wished for a younger sibling.



His pregnancy and birth were entirely normal, and his early months unfolded peacefully. Samuel was a cheerful, playful, and happy baby. At four months of age, however, he began to show signs of torticollis. Doctors explained that this condition was gestational in origin and recommended immediate physiotherapy. Although the therapy sessions were painful, they marked the first moment in which our son showed us his remarkable strength and resilience.

After overcoming torticollis, we began to notice developmental behaviours that concerned us. At seven months old, Samuel was not yet able to sit independently and showed no signs of crawling. When seated, he would repeatedly move his head from side to side while gazing fixedly at the ceiling. Once again, we turned to physiotherapy and swimming therapy, which gradually enabled him to sit on his own, crawl, and eventually walk. Witnessing our child take his first steps was a moment of profound joy and gratitude for our family.

Just when we believed that the most difficult stage of therapies and medical appointments had passed, we were faced with the greatest challenge of all—one that would test Samuel and our family in ways we could never have imagined.

At one year and three months of age, Samuel had not yet begun babbling, nor did he respond to our voices. We therefore began speech and language therapy at home. Shortly thereafter, the therapist expressed concern that Samuel might not be hearing through his left ear, as he showed no reaction during sound-based assessments. Further diagnostic tests were recommended.

On May 16, 2023, Samuel underwent auditory evoked potential testing, which revealed a diagnosis of profound bilateral hearing loss. Although the news was devastating, we remained strong, holding on to the hope that medical solutions were available.



Seeking greater clarity, we got a second opinion. On June 19, 2023, repeat auditory evoked potentials and an MRI scan of the ears were performed. These confirmed a more complex diagnosis: profound bilateral hearing loss caused by bilateral Type I cochlear hypoplasia. In

that moment, it felt as though our world had collapsed. We found ourselves standing at the threshold of an unfamiliar and overwhelming reality. The treating otologist carefully explained the diagnosis and guided us through what cochlear implant surgery would entail.

Without hesitation, we said yes. Yes to giving our son the opportunity to hear, yes to embracing every challenge that this path would bring. As a family, we chose hope, courage, and action. Samuel underwent bilateral cochlear implant surgery on August 28, 2023. The procedure was successful, and the implants were activated in October 2023. Upon returning home, the long process of rehabilitation began. Unfortunately, in some regions there remains limited experience in the specialised care of cochlear implant patients. **Building a truly interdisciplinary team with adequate knowledge and expertise became one of our greatest challenges as parents.**



Despite this, we are profoundly grateful for the medical insurance coverage we have received. Their unwavering support has been instrumental in every step of Samuel's progress. Without it, much of what we have achieved would simply not have been possible. They have enabled us to access all recommended therapies and interventions, making an immeasurable difference in our son's development.

Today, Samuel's greatest achievement is something we once feared might never come; he has begun to babble. He is more attentive, more responsive, and increasingly connected to the world around him. Each small step forward is a victory, and each sound represents hope.

To any parent facing a similar diagnosis, I would say this: do not be afraid. Have the courage to seek solutions, to consider cochlear implantation, and to advocate tirelessly for your child. With perseverance, support, and faith, it is possible to offer our children a fuller, richer quality of life—and the chance to discover the world in all its sound and wonder.